

For Consideration by the Officers of the Town of Mentone  
At the Regular Mentone Town Council Meeting

March 14, 2005

Rob Hammond, Mayor  
Larry Sanders, Councilman  
Wesley Griffith, Councilman  
John Paul Verdon, Councilman  
Gail Chambers, Councilwoman  
Gerald Bailey, Councilman

Re: Accidents on State Road 117 between  
Dempsey Avenue and the Highway Above the Clouds

Ms. Chambers and Gentlemen:

Attached is a "Summary of Accidents" document which briefly describes sixteen accidents which have occurred on State Road 117 between Dempsey Avenue and the Highway Above the Clouds. There are accident reports on fourteen of these accidents in the files of the Town of Mentone. Additional accidents probably occurred prior to 1989, the time of the earliest accident reports in Mentone's files.

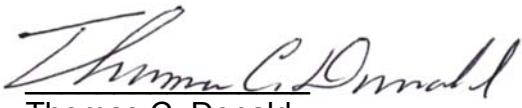
Most of these accidents probably could have been avoided if the actions described in the attached "Prevention of Accidents" document had been taken. It is reasonable to believe that similar accidents will continue to occur until such remedial actions are taken to prevent them. Please give this issue your most serious consideration and take whatever actions are necessary to make sure that no one else is needlessly injured or killed on this stretch of road.

Actions which the Town Council can take include passing a resolution in which the problems are acknowledged and in which the Alabama Department of Transportation is encouraged to immediately take whatever measures fall within its area of responsibility. Also, the Town Council can help area residents to understand the nature of the accidents so that residents can avoid situations likely to be dangerous. Finally, the Town Council can make sure that the lower speed limits necessary to avoid such accidents are rigorously enforced.

With regard to speed limits, there is a rumor that Mentone's Public Safety Officers have been discouraged by Town Hall from issuing traffic citations. It would certainly be to everyone's benefit if this misunderstanding could be cleared up immediately, without any ambiguity.

Thank you for your time and attention to this very serious issue.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas C. Donald

## Summary of Accidents

**28Oct2004** — Battles (tractor/trailer), Young (car), Campbell (pickup), Huff (tractor/trailer) — Huff rounded the blind curve going too fast and side-swiped Battles, Young and Campbell who were crossing the bridge. Campbell was injured. All vehicles were badly damaged.

**03Jun2004** — Millican (truck with wide trailer), McDonald (pickup) — McDonald rounded the blind curve as Millican exited the bridge. There was not enough room between the guard rails for Millican's 13-foot-wide load and McDonald. McDonald was injured and his vehicle was badly damaged.

**14Dec2003** — Little (car), Diaz (car) — Little was stopped behind another car at the southeast end of the bridge waiting for a tractor/trailer to exit the bridge. Diaz rounded the blind curve and crashed into the rear end of Little.

**16Jan2003** — Fisher (car), Kilgore (car) — Kilgore lost control of his car as he rounded the blind curve and crashed head-on into Fisher as Fisher exited the bridge. Both vehicles were badly damaged.

**14Jul2002** — Carter (pickup), Unknown (truck) — Carter rounded the blind curve and was side-swiped by a garbage truck exiting the bridge.

**25Apr2002** — Lawson (pickup), Ballenger (pickup) — Lawson was stopped at the southeastern end of the bridge waiting for a tractor/trailer to exit the bridge. Ballenger rounded the blind curve and crashed into the rear end of Lawson.

**27Jul2001** — McNutt (truck), Fussell (pickup) — McNutt was slowly entering the bridge from the southeast to avoid a pedestrian. Fussell rounded the blind curve and crashed into McNutt's rear end. Fussell's vehicle was badly damaged.

**08Nov2000** — Guerrero (car), Williams (tractor/trailer) — Guerrero was stopped at the southeast entrance to the bridge waiting for a tractor/trailer to exit the bridge. Williams rounded the blind curve and crashed into Guerrero's rear end. Guerrero's vehicle was badly damaged.

**21May1999** — Essex (pickup), Nicely (pickup with trailer) — Essex, entering the bridge from the blind curve, and Nicely, crossing the bridge, side-swiped each other.

**23Feb1999** — Cockburn (truck), Morley (pickup with trailer) — Cockburn, entering the bridge from the blind curve, and Morley, crossing the bridge, side-swiped each other.

**24Apr1997** — Carter (tractor/trailer), Heard (truck) — Carter was stopped at the southeast entrance to the bridge waiting for a car to cross. Heard rounded the blind curve and crashed into Carter's rear end. Heard's vehicle was badly damaged.

**08Apr1997** — Bowman (car), Hawkins (van) — Bowman was stopped at the southeast entrance to the bridge waiting for a log truck to exit the bridge. Hawkins rounded the blind curve and crashed into Bowman's rear end.

**05Sep1996** — Crider (car), Browder (truck) — Browder was stopped at the southeast entrance to the bridge waiting for a log truck to exit the bridge. Crider rounded the blind curve and crashed into Browder's rear end. Crider's vehicle was badly damaged.

**?????1995** — School Bus, Truck — School Bus and Truck crossed bridge at same time and knocked off each others mirrors. The date of this accident is estimated. The school bus driver retired after the accident.

**15Jun1989** — Ledbeller (tractor/trailer), Croley (suv) — Croley rounded the blind curve, spun sideways and was hit on the passenger side by Ledbeller who was crossing the bridge. Croley's car was pushed back 110 feet by Ledbeller, and Croley was injured. Both vehicles were badly damaged.

**?????1954** — Gipson (car) — Gipson rounded the blind curve, not going too fast. The road was damp and Gipson slid across the road and crashed head-on into the bridge rail. Two were injured, one was killed. The vehicle was badly damaged.

## **Prevention of Accidents**

The following actions will greatly reduce the probability of accidents on State Road 117 between Dempsey Avenue and the Highway Above the Clouds:

**First:**

Lower the speed limit on State Road 117 between Dempsey Avenue and the Highway Above the Clouds to no more than 30 miles per hour, and rigorously enforce the lower speed limit.

**Second:**

Remove the vegetation on the northeast side of State Road 117 which hides the bridge from drivers of vehicles approaching the bridge from the southeast.

**Third:**

Straighten the curve southeast of the bridge in a manner such as is illustrated below.

