

FINAL REPORT

# 2019 STUDDERED TIRES CAMPAIGN LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

PREPARED FOR THE WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PREPARED BY



Public Relations • Advertising  
Branding • Research • Digital

## CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

From the revenues generated by the five dollar per studded tire fee under RCW 46.37.427 and at the request of the Legislature, WSDOT implemented a pilot media-based public information campaign regarding the damage of studded tire use on state and local roadways in Spokane County.

The 2018 Supplemental Budget included funding for this pilot public information campaign. ESSB 6106, Section 217 (3) reads as follows:

From the revenues generated by the five dollar per studded tire fee under RCW 46.37.427, \$150,000 of the motor vehicle account state appropriation is provided solely for the department, in consultation with the appropriate local jurisdictions and relevant stakeholder groups, to establish a pilot media-based public information campaign regarding the damage of studded tire use on state and local roadways in Spokane county. The reason for the geographic selection of Spokane county for the pilot is based on the high utilization of studded tires in this jurisdiction. The public information campaign must primarily focus on making the consumer aware of the road deterioration, financial impact for taxpayers, the safety implications for other drivers, and, secondarily, the alternatives to studded tires. The pilot must begin by September 1, 2018. By January 14, 2019, the department shall provide the transportation committees of the legislature an update on the pilot public information program. It is the intent of the legislature that the public information campaign will be a two-year pilot program with a report to the legislature upon completion of the pilot program.

WSDOT utilized their on-call public involvement list to obtain a consultant to conduct the public information campaign. Spokane-based marketing firm Desautel Hege (DH) was the successful vendor in this process and began work in Fall 2018.

## CAMPAIGN SUMMARY

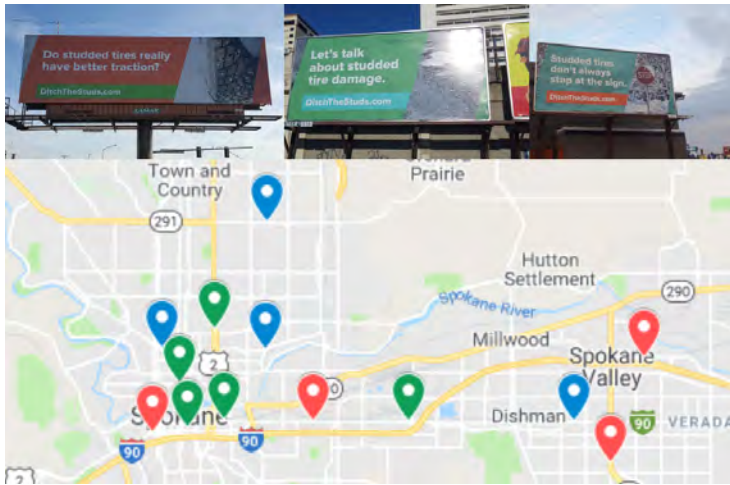
The campaign focused on the damage studded tires cause to roadways, but also raised questions regarding safety and performance. The latter are messaging areas more relevant to individual consumers' mindsets when it comes to their tire-buying decisions and are more likely to lead to behavior change as compared to a sole "damage" message.

WSDOT worked with DH to develop a campaign strategy, create assets and place media buys. At key milestones, like concept presentations and final creative presentations, DH and WSDOT consulted with an advisory group made up of tire industry professionals and government officials. This group included:

Senator Andy Billig, State Senate  
Erica Bramlet, Senate Transportation Committee Staff (recently added to the group)  
Bryon Moore, Senate Transportation Committee Staff  
Mayor David Condon, City of Spokane  
Kate Burke, City of Spokane  
Theresa Sanders, City of Spokane  
Scott Simmons, City of Spokane  
Heather Trautman, City of Spokane  
Mary Kuney, Spokane County  
Pat Dunn, Tire Industry  
Bruce Gryniewski, Tire Industry  
Tammie Hetrick, Tire Industry  
Rick Nordness, Tire Industry  
Jennifer Ziegler, Tire Industry

The group provided feedback throughout the entire process.

The campaign ran from November 1 through the end of December, which are traditionally heavy winter tire buying months. In consultation with the stakeholder group, it was determined that the majority of funds would be expended this season to ensure that drivers saw public awareness efforts in a variety of media within the Spokane area. Dividing the funding across two seasons would result in very little market penetration and resulting driver awareness.

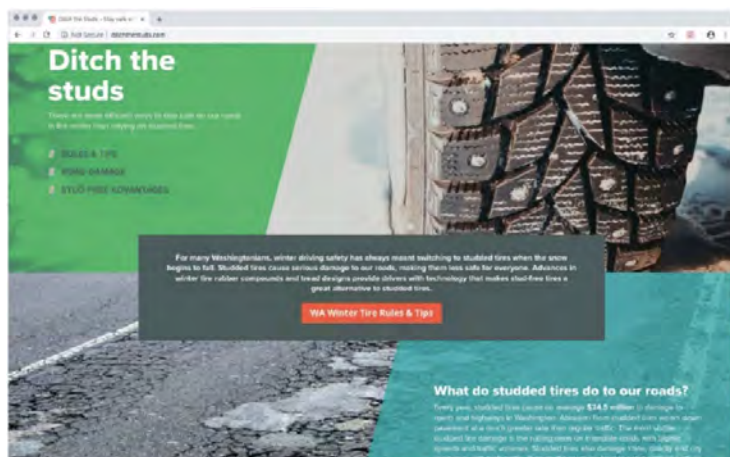


The campaign placed 13 billboards in the Spokane market during this time period in high traffic areas and on roadways with noticeable damage (see map and billboard examples above).

Radio was another key tactic that was deployed to reach people when they were driving and receptive to messages regarding tire decisions. 1,791 total radio spots ran during the campaign across seven stations in the region. To round the campaign out, DH deployed digital display advertising and Facebook advertising that targeted drivers in the Spokane region (see examples below).



Finally, DH created a landing page for the campaign: DitchTheStuds.com (see screenshot below) which contained more detail regarding the damage studded tires cause to the roads as well as information on safety



and performance. All campaign media (billboards, radio, and digital/Facebook) encouraged audiences to visit the landing page.

Early on in the discovery phase of the project, it was recognized that no clear baseline exists for the actual usage of studded tires in the region. To address this, DH suggested, developed and deployed an awareness and usage survey to 450 drivers in the Spokane region to understand the current usage of studded tires as well as the awareness of their contribution to road damage. The survey was recruited through Strategic Research Associates and consisted of online and telephone collection. This survey was deployed at the beginning of the campaign and will be repeated in April of 2019 to measure change in usage and awareness in the market.

## EARLY RESULTS AND BASELINE SURVEY

### Paid Media

The 13 billboards placed in the Spokane region delivered over 5 million impressions over the course of the campaign.

Facebook and contextual targeted digital display ads delivered over 4 million impressions (the number of times the posts were displayed) and generated 6,886 clicks on the ads.

Radio ads for the campaign were run 1,791 times achieving a reach of 43.4% (the percentage of people hearing the ad) and frequency of 18.1. (the number of times each person heard the ad.)

### Website Traffic

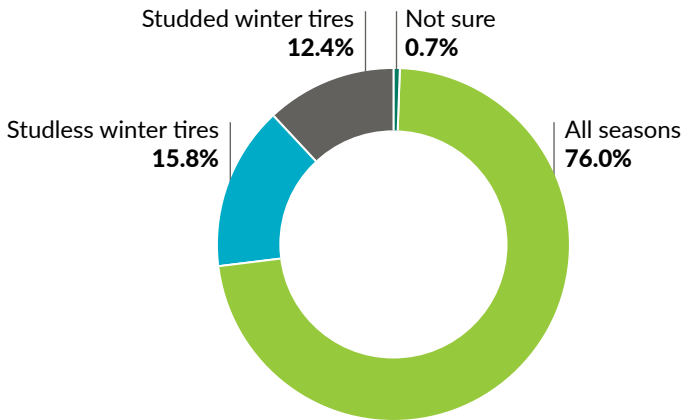
Overall, the campaign generated 5,215 sessions to the landing page. 50.6% of traffic can be attributed to social/digital and 32.7% stemming from direct advertising which can be attributed to radio and billboards.

### Baseline Survey

The survey was deployed to 450 individuals and skewed 60% male, 40% female to match actual tire-buying gender distribution from the industry. Age ranges were 25 years and older and distributed appropriately to the region's population. 56% of respondents resided in city limits, and 44% were rural.

When asked, “What type of tires do you use during winter months on your primary vehicle, the one you drive most often?” 12.4% of respondents claimed they use studded tires.\*

### What type of tires used during winter months



\*Multiple responses were allowed; total percentage exceeds 100%

When asked, “Are you aware that studded tire usage contributes to road damage in Spokane County?” 95% of respondents claimed they did indeed know that studs contribute to damage.

Of those who do drive on studded tires, “I believe they are the safest option,” was the most common reason for why they choose studs.

63% of respondents claimed that knowing that studded tires cost \$24.5 million in damages on average to roads every winter would make them less likely to consider studded tires in the future.

## NEXT STEPS

The survey will be deployed again in April 2019 to measure changes in preference and awareness after the deadline for studded tires removal.

DH and WSDOT will also coordinate with advisory group members in the tire industry to include available information on historical sales data of studded tires as another way to measure the effectiveness of the overall campaign.

The results of the second survey and available historical sales data will be incorporated in a legislative update in January 2020.

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