



Increasing Seat Belt Use in Rural America

The majority of fatal traffic crashes take place on rural roads. This may not be surprising in light of the fact that rural areas have lower seat belt use rates than do cities. Increasing seat belt use

among rural residents would help prevent traffic-related deaths and injuries. In 1997 and 1998, the Partners for Rural Traffic Safety project, funded by NHTSA and implemented by the National Rural Health Association (NRHA), demonstrated that a 30-day public education campaign combined with increased enforcement could increase seat belt use. In 2001–2002, the Minnesota Rural Health Association, with funding from the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety, replicated this program in seven communities in Minnesota. Gary Wingrove, project director, explains:

We decided to have EMS and public health agencies collaborate, because, in Minnesota, they were conducting most of the occupant safety programs. This is a natural fit, given the public health benefits that occupant safety programs provide. We hoped this program would encourage these two components of the health care system to work together in other ways.

Program leaders from each community were trained in the NRHA model. They conducted community assessments that revealed what type of campaign was needed in their specific community. Each community then developed a different approach. Dodge Center
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Partners for Rural Traffic Safety Action Kit

The *Partners for Rural Traffic Safety Action Kit* helps health professionals and other community leaders plan, implement, and evaluate a high-profile 30-day campaign to increase seat belt use. The kit includes resources and a presentation on marketing the program to potential collaborators, including notes for speakers and slides in both overhead and PowerPoint formats (provided on a disk). The *Partners for Rural Traffic Safety Action Kit* can be downloaded or ordered on-line from the NHTSA website at www.nhtsa.dot.gov or ordered by fax at (301) 386-2194.

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Mock crash event in Park Rapids, Minnesota




Increasing Seat Belt Use

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uses a “traveling trophy” that is awarded annually to the school with the greatest increase in seat belt use. Park Rapids incorporated occupant protection education into Women, Infants, and Children programs and preschool screenings. Stearns County focused on school bus safety. Redwood County’s local radio station devoted five minutes of its morning program to traffic safety, followed by an opportunity for listeners to call in and win \$10 in “tourism bucks” by correctly answering a traffic safety question.



A majority of the participating communities increased their seat belt use. A majority of the communities also established coalitions that continue to play an active role in traffic safety.

For more information, contact Gary Wingrove at (612) 839-9991 or <Wingrove.gary@mayo.edu>. 

Resources on Alcohol and Youth

Law Enforcement Workshops


The International Association of Chiefs of Police, with funding from NHTSA, has developed *Youth Enforcement: Alcohol, Drugs, and Driving*, a three-day workshop for law enforcement officers on developing a community program to combat youth alcohol and drug abuse and impaired driving. The workshop is targeted to sergeants, lieutenants, and other officers in a position to influence their departments’ policies and operations affecting youth alcohol and drug use and impaired driving. Topics covered include legal issues, marketing strategies, program evaluation, involving departmental leadership, and working with community coalitions. Agencies interested in sponsoring a training in their area should call Rick Larson at (703) 836-6767, ext. 263.

Youth Alcohol Fact Sheets

The Youth Fatal Crash and Alcohol Facts series includes a summary of general facts on youth crash fatalities, such as fatality rates, the percentages of fatalities that are related to alcohol, the consumption of alcohol and other drugs by young people, and breakdowns of the leading causes of death among youth ages 15 through 20. The series can be found on NHTSA’s website at <www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/2002YFCAF/index.html>.


SADD Quarterly Campaign Packets



Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) issues quarterly resource packets that help SADD chapters and other community groups plan timely events to help reduce drinking and driving and to increase safety belt use and other positive behaviors among young people. The packets include event planners, posters, media kits, stationery, curricula, and other materials. These packets, along with other resource materials, can be downloaded from the SADD website at <www.saddonline.com/>. For information about locating or starting a SADD chapter, contact SADD National at (877) SADD-INC. 



Morris County Safe Communities

 Morris County Safe Communities (MCSC), located in north central New Jersey, exemplifies three key aspects of the Safe Communities approach: fostering cultural diversity, expanding a program's focus beyond traffic injuries, and involving local businesses and the private sector.

Morris County is home to a substantial South and Central American immigrant community. In the town of Dover, many of these new immigrants find employment as day laborers. Lester Kelem, who works with the Morris County Organization for Hispanic Affairs, explains:



Many of the laborers travel by bicycle to their jobs in the communities surrounding Dover. They cannot afford to buy a car or take a taxi, and find even public transportation to be expensive. They are also very much at ease riding bicycles, since, in their countries of origin, many people use bicycles as their principal mode of transportation.

Many of the day laborers do not use bicycle helmets. In addition to the usual excuses (i.e., helmets are unfashionable, expensive, and uncomfortable), many of the day laborers come from countries in which helmet use is rare. Working with MCSC, Mr. Kelem distributes free bicycle helmets to day laborers he finds riding bicycles in the Dover area. With each helmet, Mr. Kelem also provides a brief lesson in the importance of using a helmet while bicycling on the busy roads of Morris County.

In addition to serving Morris County's immigrant population, MCSC is actively working to broaden its focus and work with local businesses. Karen Jean Feury, injury prevention coordinator for Morristown

Memorial Hospital (the lead agency for MCSC), explains how these two strategies proved to be an especially powerful combination in Morris County:

The whole conceptual framework of Safe Communities is to go beyond traffic safety, which helps draw partners into the program. Kings Supermarkets, for example, were originally not very interested in traffic safety, but they were interested in food safety. And now we can use their parking lots for child safety seat clinics and seat belt surveys. Other coalitions call and ask if our business partners give us money. Some do. Some do not. But in-kind contributions are often worth much more than the money they could donate. Next year, we hope to be able to print safety messages on grocery bags. It won't cost anything, since the grocery bags have to be printed anyway. The project will increase public awareness and show that the markets are good neighbors. It's a win for all.

For more information on MCSC, see their website at www.co.morris.nj.us/mchtsc/ or contact Karen Jean Feury at (973) 971-4327 or at karenjean.feury@ahsys.org.

Albany Safe Communities



Albany Safe Communities is located in Dougherty County in southern Georgia. The coalition's lead agency is the Traffic Division of the City of Albany's Engineering Department. Albany Safe Communities is an active participant in several national traffic safety campaigns, including Click It or Ticket, NHTSA's seat belt law enforcement program. Albany tailors its Click It or Ticket activities to the local community by distributing hand fans featuring seat belt messages, using Spanish-language brochures, and involving the local chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority. Albany Safe Communities also partners with


both the Georgia NETS program and Operation Drive Smart, a program initially used in Gwinett County that educates students about traffic safety.

In an especially fruitful collaboration with WALB-TV, Albany Safe Communities developed a public safety announcement (PSA) campaign that includes messages on distracted driving, driving-under-the-influence by teenagers, and drowsy driving. The program keeps the cost of the PSAs at \$800 each by using volunteers and a crew from the local television station, rather than paid actors, a private video production company, or a public relations firm. The PSAs are run by the local television station. Coordinator Michele DeMott reports:

We only have one major television station. It broadcasts in 36 counties of southwest Georgia. The peak daily viewership is more than 300,000. That's nearly everyone. FCC regulations require that television and radio stations reserve a certain number of spots for public service announcements. Our station would rather run a local PSA than a national one. The station has been great about giving us time during prime viewing hours. We have consistently run during the Today Show and the 5:30 and 6:00 news, as well as other "hot slots."

Albany Safe Communities uses the Traffic Division's local crash data to identify the county's top 10 crash locations, which are then publicized in their materials and activities (including the PSA campaign). The top 10 crash locations are based on a number of variables, including the number and severity of crashes and the number and severity of injuries.



For more information on Albany Safe Communities, contact Michele DeMott at (229) 878-3139 or at michele_demott@yahoo.com. 

Juvenile Holdover Programs

Juvenile holdover programs provide short-term care and supervision for young people taken into custody. These programs can encourage the enforcement of underage drinking laws by relieving law enforcement agencies of the responsibility of housing and supervising the young people arrested for alcohol offenses. It is important for law enforcement agencies to enforce alcohol-related traffic violations by youth. These violations endanger not only youthful drivers and their passengers, but the general public as well. Alcohol-law enforcement offers “teachable moments” to show youth that they will be held accountable for their actions—a lesson that can affect their behavior (and the public’s safety) for the remainder of their lives.



Yet, enforcing youth alcohol laws can create difficulties for many police departments. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 mandates that a juvenile taken into custody be held in the “least restrictive” environment appropriate to his

or her age and offense. This can present a problem for law enforcement officers, especially in rural areas, who lack ready access to a juvenile detention facility. The prospect of driving a young person 100 miles to a detention facility or sitting with a juvenile overnight at the police station until his or her parents can be located can be a disincentive to enforcing laws on underage drinking.

Juvenile holdover programs relieve police officers of the need to supervise or transport juveniles who have been taken into custody, while providing the youth with a safe environment and services consistent with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The American Probation and Parole Association’s Juvenile Holdover Project developed and piloted a process that helps multi-jurisdictional teams design and implement juvenile holdover programs, based on the needs of and resources

available in their communities. The project was piloted in communities in Wisconsin, Colorado, New Mexico, and Kentucky; their experiences were used to create *An Implementation Guide for Juvenile Holdover*



AMERICAN PROBATION AND PAROLE ASSOCIATION

Programs, which contains the information a community needs to design and implement such programs. The guide discusses funding, recruiting and training staff, identifying and involving stakeholders, and legal issues, and includes sample forms and risk assessment instruments.

An Implementation Guide for Juvenile Holdover Programs can be downloaded from the NHTSA website at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/juvenile/. An Executive Summary, which provides a brief introduction to juvenile holdover programs, is also available. For information on juvenile holdover training, contact Keyona King at the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America: (703) 706-0560, ext. 243. [BSC](#)

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Booster Seat Plan

While progress has been made in educating the public about booster seats, much remains to be done. *A National Strategy: Increasing Booster Seat Use for Four-to Eight-Year-Old Children* is NHTSA's five-year plan to increase restraint use, including the use of booster seats, among children in this age group. The plan builds on NHTSA's Buckle Up America campaign, which has increased the use of child safety seats and reduced traffic-related injuries and fatalities for children from birth through four years of age. This campaign has four elements: public-private partnerships; strong legislation; active, high-visibility law enforcement; and effective public education. Additional information on implementing the booster seat plan will be featured in upcoming issues of *Building Safe Communities*, as well as on the NHTSA website. For more information on booster seats, visit the NHTSA website at <www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/childps/Boosterseat/index.html>.

LATCH

Installing child safety seats correctly is not always easy, given the number of models that exist and the various seat belt systems used in different passenger vehicles. Seats that were correctly installed by a certified child passenger safety seat technician can loosen over time or may need to be moved to another vehicle. The NHTSA-promulgated Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children (LATCH) system requires



that most new automobiles and safety seats have hardware allowing any child safety seat to be installed in any passenger vehicle without having to use the seat belt. Using LATCH, parents do not have to learn a new installation process when they change safety seats or move a safety seat from one vehicle to another.

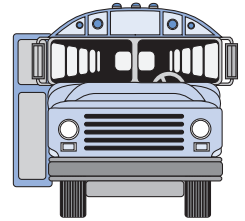
As of September 2002, most new passenger vehicles manufactured for sale in the United States will have the LATCH hardware installed in the factory. Over the course of a few years, a wider range of LATCH-compatible child safety seats will be available in retail outlets. This system will make it easier for parents to correctly install child safety seats. Both the NHTSA (www.nhtsa.dot.gov/) and *Safe Ride News* (www.safetidenews.com) websites offer information, installation instructions, and fact sheets to help practitioners and consumers learn about the LATCH system and how to use it.

Seat Belts and School Buses

The question of whether seat belts should be installed on school buses has been a concern for parents, educators, school officials, and transportation providers for several years. In response to this question, NHTSA and the Transportation Research Board undertook two major research studies. Results from both have recently been published.


School Bus Safety: Crashworthiness Research, a NHTSA report to Congress, evaluates three different types of safety systems on school buses: compartmentalization, lap belts, and lap/shoulder belts. The report concludes that “lap belts appear to have little, if any, benefit

in reducing serious-to-fatal injuries in severe frontal crashes.” The report also indicated that compartmentalization is comparable to lap/shoulder belts in effectiveness. The report issued three recommendations: (1) raise school bus seat backs from 20 inches to 24 inches, (2) require lap/shoulder belts on small school buses that weigh less than 10,000 pounds, and (3) develop voluntary national performance standards for lap/shoulder belts on large school buses.



School Bus Safety: Crashworthiness Research can be found on the NHTSA website at <www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/departments/nrd-11/SchoolBus.html>.

The Transportation Research Board's *The Relative Risks of School Travel: A National Perspective and Guidance for Local Community Assessment* reveals that “children are at far more risk traveling to and from school in private passenger vehicles—especially if a teenage driver is involved—than in school buses.” This report is consistent with previous studies showing that school buses are by far the safest form of school transportation. The publication includes a risk-management framework that schools and communities can use to help make decisions that can safeguard children on their way to and from schools.

The Relative Risks of School Travel: A National Perspective and Guidance for Local Community Assessment is available for free at <www.nap.edu>. Hard copies can be purchased from the Transportation Research Board at (202) 334-3213 or <TRBSales@nas.edu>. 

Building Safe Communities

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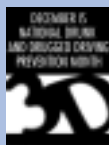


Safe Communities Calendar

November 25–December 1, 2002: *Click It or Ticket/
Operation ABC Mobilization*



December 2002: *National Drunk & Drugged
Driving (3D) Prevention Month*



December 20–22, 2002: *Operation CARE and National Holiday
Lifesavers Weekend*

December 20, 2002–January 5, 2003:
You Drink & Drive You Lose. Mobilization



February 10–16, 2003: *National Child Passenger Safety Week*

March 18–20, 2003: *12th International Conference on Safe Communities,
Hong Kong*

The Safe Communities Service Center

The *Safe Communities Data Toolkit* is now on-line at the Safe Communities Service Center (SCSC) website. This easy-to-use kit was developed to help coalitions collect and analyze injury and crash data. The toolkit includes a guide to creating a community profile; automated cost templates for deaths, injuries, and medical costs; and tools for analyzing contributing factors by demographic category and location-mapping by zip code. A special motor vehicle injury version of the toolkit will be available soon. Visit the SCSC website to learn more about this resource.

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