

STATE OF KANSAS

EISENHOWER STATE OFFICE BUILDING
700 S.W. HARRISON STREET
TOPEKA, KS 66603-3754



OFFICE: (785) 296-3585
FAX: (785) 368-7415
WWW.KSDOT.ORG

GOVERNOR JEFF COLYER, M.D.
RICHARD CARLSON, SECRETARY

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For more information:

Chris Bortz
785.217-8628

Kansas transportation safety award winners honored

TOPEKA, KS - The Kansas Department of Transportation honored six Kansans with Transportation Safety Recognition Awards for their efforts to improve traffic safety. The awards were presented at the 24th Annual Transportation Safety Conference that took place April 17-18 in Topeka.

Recipients are honored in two categories - People Saving People Award and the Hero Award.

The People Saving People Award recognizes an individual or organization that has made outstanding contributions to the improvement of transportation safety behavior in Kansas. The 2018 recipients are:

Jeff Collier, Fort Scott – Collier served as state coordinator for the Drug Recognition Expert program and the Standardized Field Sobriety Testing training program. He not only built the DRE program “from the ground up,” he organized and established standards for both programs. Collier, who recently retired from the Kansas Highway Patrol, worked to see that Kansas law enforcement officers and prosecutors are well-trained, informed and prepared to handle impaired drivers.

Kevin Gamble, Columbia, Mo. – Gamble advanced traffic safety issues in Kansas communities through his position as Public Affairs Specialist with State Farm Insurance. He managed and distributed more than 58 State Farm grants to Kansas traffic safety programs, including the SAFE program, for a monetary amount exceeding \$560,000.

Christopher Mann, Lenexa – Mann provided legal representation to drunk driving victims and their families in lawsuits against the drunk drivers. He helped pass significant drunk driving legislation in Kansas, including the aggravated battery DUI law and the DUI ignition interlock law that requires first-time offenders to install ignition interlocks on their vehicles.

Kendall Schoenekase, Overland Park – Schoenekase shared her personal story to help promote the “Don’t Text and Drive, Just Drive” pledge campaign across the state during her year as Miss Kansas 2016. She visited universities throughout Kansas and 40 Kansas high schools in the SAFE program as well as was the featured speaker at numerous events.

The Hero Award recognizes the individual who has risked his or her own life to save someone else when they happen upon a crash or while trying to prevent the likelihood of a crash. The 2018 recipients are:

Deputy Jason Klepac, Johnson County – While off-duty, Klepac observed a car slowly traveling through an intersection that appeared to not have a driver. He ran after the vehicle and found an unconscious driver with no pulse. Klepac performed CPR, saving the man's life and possibly preventing a multi-vehicle crash.

Lt. Tom Reddin, Johnson County – After a head-on crash that flipped one of the vehicles on its side, Lt. Redden entered that vehicle that also had smoke coming from its engine compartment. He climbed on the car to remove a passenger, then climbed through a window to remove a baby from the car seat as well as the driver.

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