

Northwest District Office  
312 S. Second  
Norton, KS 67654-0350



phone: 785-877-3315  
fax: 785-877-2531  
[www.ksdot.org](http://www.ksdot.org)

Mike King, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

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**News Contact:** Kristen Brands (785) 877-3315 cell (785) 871-2137  
[kristenb@ksdot.org](mailto:kristenb@ksdot.org)

## **KHP Trooper Hileman Wins *People Saving People Award***

Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) Trooper and Public Relations Officer (PRO) Tod Hileman, Troop D - Hays, is a 2013 recipient of Kansas' "People Saving People" award.

The award was presented to Hileman last week during the annual Traffic Safety Conference, which was held in Wichita.

Sponsored by the Kansas Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration, the "People Saving People" award was presented to Trooper Hileman for his dedication to the cause of teen driving safety – for his personal establishment of the peer-to-peer SAFE (Seatbelts Are For Everyone) program in 11 high schools across Northwest Kansas.

SAFE is an student-driven cooperative effort of students, educators, law enforcement and community leaders to increase teen seatbelt use through positive rewards and enforcement. It is designed to bring awareness to the importance of wearing a seatbelt and therefore reducing the number of motor vehicle related injuries and fatalities among Kansas high school students. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for individuals between the ages of 15-17. In 2009, only 61% of Kansas teens aged 15–17 were wearing their seatbelt. Seventy- six percent of teens aged 14–19 that were killed in 2009 were not wearing their seatbelt

The SAFE program began in Crawford County during the 2008–2009 school year. It has grown steadily with 40 participating Kansas counties and 100 high schools across the state.

Three years ago, Trooper Hileman assisted in implementing the SAFE program in six schools in three western Kansas counties. In 2012, he aided and supported the six original schools and helped three more start their own SAFE programs. In 2013 he has helped establish three additional SAFE programs. In total, he has been involved in helping start 11 of the 102 SAFE programs in

Kansas. The six counties in northwest Kansas that participated in the SAFE program in 2012 experienced an average of 14% increase in teen seatbelt usage and their compliance rates were 5.7% higher than the state teen average.

Trooper Hileman uses his personal time to help secure funds that supports each SAFE program. After each program is established, he routinely visits the schools to provide education and support.

Tod has been a trooper with the KHP for 15 years. He and his family live in Hays.

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