

# The Pulse

at the heart of traffic safety in Kansas

## Enforcement official saved by the belt

Lieutenant speaks out about crash to emphasize "Click it. Or ticket." campaign

With all the high-tech safety features available on new cars, it could be easy to forget seat belts are the single most effective safety feature equipped in any car.

But Lieutenant Brenda Dietzman of the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office won't be forgetting any time soon.

Dietzman came within an inch of her life when a driver made an illegal turn in front of her and crashed into her fully-marked patrol car.

The impact sent her car through a telephone pole, after which it rolled two and a half times before sliding on its roof for about 60 yards and coming to a stop with the help of a pile of railroad ties.

Dietzman spoke about her experience at the Wichita Police Headquarters during the recent nationwide "Click it. Or ticket." campaign in May.

"You will never read a headline, 'Sgt. Brenda Dietzman was killed in a car ac-



Courtesy Photo

**When Lieutenant Brenda Dietzman's patrol car was hit by another car, it went through a telephone pole, rolled and slid about 200 feet. Dietzman survived the crash to tell her story during this year's "Click it. Or ticket." campaign.**

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cident because she wasn't wearing her seat belt,' and there's a lot of things we can do as individuals to help protect that," Dietzman said.

Dietzman emphasized if a driver could make such a dangerous mistake in front of a marked patrol car, similar mistakes leading to such a crash could happen at any time, to anyone.

"Life is fragile and it's so precious and as a person you have a responsibility to your friends, your family, your community to protect that fragile, precious gift and this (buckling up) is one of the ways to do that," Dietzman said.

In Kansas in 2006, 60 percent of all traffic fatalities were not wearing their seat belts.

The adult seat belt usage rate has

continued to increase in Kansas, from 69 percent in 2005 to 73 percent in 2006 and 75 percent in 2007.

Yet this is still below the national average of 82 percent, leaving Kansas ranked 44th in the nation.

When worn correctly, seat belts have been proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and by 60 percent in trucks, SUVs and minivans.

Still, nearly one in five Americans (18 percent) fail to wear a seat belt regularly when driving or riding in a motor vehicle.

Dietzman knows she won't be caught without her seat belt and hopes others will make the same smart choice.

"If I could say one thing, it's 'Buckle up. Don't be a dummy.'"

# Law looks to curb underage drinking

“Paul’s Law” established the new crime of “unlawfully hosting” minors

Alcohol-related crashes are the number one cause of death for teens.

But the problem doesn’t start when youth get behind the wheel, it starts when teens are provided with alcohol illegally.

On average, Kansas youth begin drinking alcohol regularly at about age 14. Research indicates they primarily obtain it from their parents (with or without their knowledge or consent) or from another adult.

In 2004, Kansas passed a social hosting law known as Paul’s Law, named for Paul Riggs, a Lenexa teen killed while driving home from a friend’s party where he and other teens had been drinking. The friend’s parents had been home during the party while the minors drank alcohol.

To protect teens, Kansas’ social hosting law established a new crime of “unlawfully hosting” where persons under the

age of 18 consume alcoholic beverages. The crime is now a Class A misdemeanor that carries a minimum fine of \$1,000 and could result in up to a year of jail time for the offenders.

During the 2007 Legislative session the law was changed to define a minor as “under the age of 21” instead of 18, which prevents confusion about the legality to serve alcohol to underage individuals, despite their “adult” status.

Kansas law states no person under 21 years of age shall possess, consume, obtain, purchase or attempt to obtain or purchase alcoholic liquor or cereal malt beverages except as authorized by law. The law also states that directly or indirectly selling to, buying for, giving or furnishing any alcoholic liquor or cereal malt beverage to any minor is illegal.

Despite these laws, ac-

cording to research from the Kansas Department of Transportation in 2006, 47 percent of Kansas high school students had attended a party within the last month where alcohol was served.

According to information from the Kansas Family Partnership, about 18 percent of teens reported their parents don’t have clear rules about alcohol and other drugs.

Parents can do their part by establishing firm rules about alcohol for their teens. Parents should talk with their teens about their responsible expectations and discuss guidelines

and boundaries for their teens.

Parents should encourage open communication about

alcohol and drugs and know where teens are and who they’re with. Have a teen

check in regularly from a landline if staying with friends and let your teen know that drinking alcohol is not acceptable at any time.

Individuals as well can each do something simple to protect youth.

Don’t provide alcohol to minors and report underage drinking toll-free and anonymously at 866-MUST-BE-21 (866-687-8221).



## Upcoming Traffic Safety Events

- Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office’s “Controlling the Game: Know the Rules, Call the Fouls”
  - Symposium to address teen traffic safety and the enforcement of underage drinking laws
  - July 16th, 2008
  - Ramada Hotel and Convention Center - Topeka, Kan.
- Sixth Annual School-Based Policing Conference
  - Sponsored by the Kansas Association of School Resource Officers and the Kansas D.A.R.E. Officers’ Association
  - July 14th- 17th, 2008
  - Ramada Hotel and Convention Center - Topeka, Kan.

For more information, please contact KTSRO at 800-416-2522 or [ktsro@dcca.org](mailto:ktsro@dcca.org)

# Seat belt safety pays off for one teen

## "Buckle up Butler" program finds increased belt use again

"Seat belts pay off."

That was one sentiment from recent Douglass High School graduate Jessica Martin, who won a brand-new Volvo S70 at the end of the school year.

"I was frozen," Martin said. "So shocked I couldn't say anything."

Martin was eligible to win the car after her school had the best safety belt usage percentage in this year's fourth annual "Buckle Up Butler" contest in Butler County, Kansas.

Ten Butler County high schools participated in the contest this year, which starts at the beginning of the school year.

Officer Kurt Spivey of the El Dorado Police Department explained the contest, which he coordinated this year with Phil Wickwire of the Butler County Sheriff's Office.

"An officer goes out and does a survey. Then we give them promotional material," Spivey said. "Then we do a second survey. The school that has the best percentage is the winning school. Then a student from that school gets to win a car."

The program is designed to encourage high school students to buckle up.

After an initial survey, each school is provided a promotional packet of materials about seat belt safety from the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office and is encouraged to promote seat belt usage.

After the second survey is completed, the school with the best seat belt usage rate between the two surveys wins the contest.



KTSRO Photo

**Jessica Martin of Douglass High School poses for pictures with her new Volvo, which she won as part of the "Buckle Up Butler" program to increase safety belt usage among teens.**

Douglass High School finished the contest this year with an 86 percent usage rate, 14 points higher than last year's winning school, Remington High School, which had an overall 73 percent usage rate.

This year, Augusta High School was awarded a special plaque for being the most improved school from the first to second survey with a 31 percent increase in usage.

The program appears to have increased seat belt awareness throughout the participating schools.

Overall, there was an improvement in usage from last year's totals – from 60.5 percent usage in 2007 to 68.2 percent usage this year. Spivey said this year's increase was nothing new.

"Every year we have done this there has been a growth," Spivey said. "We have never had a decline."

## Alcohol and seat belt safety grants awarded

The Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office has awarded \$750 mini-grants to four high schools throughout the state.

The mini-grants were awarded based on students' proposed programs designed to focus on alcohol use and safety belt use awareness for the 2008-2009 school year.

Schools across the state competed for the grants by developing a program

emphasizing student involvement in raising awareness among other students about alcohol use and seat belt safety. The programs were required to be media-related, among other criteria. The winners will now be able to use the grant monies to implement their ideas.

The following schools were awarded the grants to assist in the development of

the students' proposed programs:

- 1) Russell High; Russell, Kan.
- 2) Chase County High (SADD Chapter); Cottonwood, Kan.
- 3) Louisburg High (STAR Warriors); Louisburg, Kan.
- 4) Northwest Magnet High; Wichita, Kan.

# Act to improve vehicle safety standards

## U.S. Department of Transportation to focus on injury prevention

Every week, at least four children are killed in non-traffic automobile incidents.

These injuries are not only tragic and life changing for the families involved, but they are also preventable.

According to Kids and Cars, an organization dedicated to the prevention of child injury or death due to non-traffic motor vehicle incidents, over 1,350 children have died in non-traffic incidents since 2000, with at least 227 fatalities recorded in 2007 alone. Back-over incidents have increased as well, claiming the lives of 474 children from 2002-2006 compared to 128 fatalities from 1997-2001. These back-over incidents now account for half of all non-traffic

fatalities involving children. Since the government does not currently collect data about non-traffic incidents, the real fatality numbers could actually be higher.

In 2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported about 9,100 children are treated in emergency rooms due to non-traffic incident injuries in a one-year period.

This year the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act was signed, which requires the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue new safety regulations to reduce the number of non-traffic injury and death to children in and around motor vehicles.

The Act establishes im-

portant rule making deadlines regarding child safety for all passenger motor vehicles in three different ways.

Firstly, the Act ensures power windows and panels would reverse automatically if an obstruction was detected. This would prevent children from being strangled or otherwise injured or killed from being trapped by the power windows in the vehicle.

The Act would also require a more stringent rearward visibility standard for vehicles in order to prevent back-over injuries or fatalities.

The standard will provide drivers with the means to detect the presence of objects – especially children – before they drive the vehicle in

reverse.

Lastly, the Cameron Gulbransen Act would require vehicle service brakes to be depressed when the vehicle is taken out of park to prevent roll-away incidents due to accidentally having the vehicle taken into gear.

The Act also establishes a child safety information program to be administered by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.

This program will include collecting data on non-traffic incidents, educating parents and other drivers about the risks posed to children by these types of incidents and will also make this information available to the public through the Internet or other means.

## Kansas updates DUI consent law

The Kansas Senate and House of Representatives passed a bill this year to amend Kansas' implied consent law.

The law now requires a law enforcement officer to request an individual to submit to a test for alcohol or drugs, or both, when the law enforcement officer has probable cause to believe the person was:

- 1) operating or attempting to operate a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- 2) the person was driving a commercial motor vehicle while having drugs or alcohol in their system
- 3) the person was under the age of 21 while having drugs or alcohol in their system
- 4) the person operating or attempting to operate the vehicle under the influence was involved in a crash resulting in serious injury or death and the person could be cited for any traffic offense, unless the officer has reasonable grounds to believe the actions of the operator did not contribute to the crash.

## New model DUI law presented

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has worked with National Committee on Uniform Traffic Laws and Ordinances to develop a new "Model Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Law" to amend an earlier version of the model law (the Millennium DUI Law). The new model law will allow the law to be consistent with the provisions of SAFETEA-LU and to reflect current priority initiatives.

It has revised grant criteria to establish minimum penalties for high BAC (blood or breath alcohol content) offenders and provides for installation of ignition interlock devices under state administrative license revocation and high BAC laws.

The new model law is available to the public through the NCUTLO Web site at <http://www.ncutlo.org/2007dui.htm>.



# Plan ahead, stay safe this 4th

Make this Fourth of July holiday a blast, not a bust.

Celebrate responsibly and designate a driver before you decide to drink alcohol.

In 2006, 27 percent of all drivers involved in traffic-related crashes during the Fourth of July holiday period possessed a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher – the legal limit in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

During that same period there were a total of 650 traffic-related fatalities. Out of that number, 37 percent involved a driver or motorcyclist with a BAC of .08 or higher.

More than 42,600 people were killed in a motor vehicle crash in 2006. Of that number of fatalities, 13,470 people

were killed in crashes that involved at least one driver or motorcyclist with a BAC of .08 or higher.

The easiest way to avoid a crash or injury to yourself or others is to plan a safe way home before you begin celebrating.

If you can't designate a driver, call a cab or utilize local public transportation. Keep the numbers to local cab companies in your wallet and familiarize yourself with bus routes before you leave your home.

If you're hosting a celebration – be sure there's a designated driver to accompany guests home or allow guests to stay the night. No one wants to send a friend home after a happy celebration only never

to see them again.

Whether you've had way too many or just one too many, it's not worth the risk. Impaired driving has serious consequences.

The tragedies and costs from driving impaired do not just end at the potential death, disfigurement, disability and injury caused by impaired drivers.

It is illegal in every state to drive with a BAC or .08 or higher, yet according to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, over 1.4 million people were arrested for driving under the influence in 2006.

People caught driving under the influence often face jail time, revocation of their driver's license, higher insurance rates and many other expenses from attorney's fees, fines, court costs, car towing, lost time at work and more.

In the end, no one wants to remember the Fourth of July holiday as a time when a loved one was lost or a life was changed for the worse.

Remember – "Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving" – and celebrate safely this holiday.



## KANSAS Traffic Safety Resource OFFICE

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KTSRO Photo

A highway patrol officer hands out *Smarties* to Washburn Rural High School students caught wearing their safety belts.



KTSRO Photo

Howard Dickinson of the Kansas Highway Patrol explains rollovers before giving a demonstration at Quest Diagnostics in Kansas City, Kan.