

# The Pulse

Fall 2004  
Volume 9 Issue III

at the heart of OCCUPANT PROTECTION in the State of Kansas

## Positive Re Enforcement

The Bucks for Buckles campaign kicked off Labor Day weekend on a positive note; rewarding Kansans for wearing safety belts.



You're kidding! This Shawnee, KS, woman beams in shock and disbelief as Trooper Curt Gabbert, of the Highway Patrol, explains: wearing a safety belt just earned her a buck.

Almost everyone knows to be on the lookout for extra enforcement over a long holiday weekend, especially when traveling on the Interstate. But, who would suspect it in the drive through line at McDonald's, or the parking lot of a local donut shop?



"No, I'd like to give YOU a dollar," KC Metro SAFE KIDS Coordinator Phyllis Larimore explains, "thanks for wearing your seatbelt."

On Friday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Kansans were pleasantly surprised by unsuspected safety belt "checkpoint" locations across the state. Representatives from State Farm Insurance partnered with the Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP), Kansas SAFE KIDS, and other traffic safety advocates; to reward both children and adults for being properly restrained. One dollar per vehicle was distributed to adults wearing safety belts and children in car seats received teddy bears. Volunteers also passed out informational fliers.

Groups gathered Friday morning and early afternoon in parking lots, drive through lines, intersections, shopping centers and convenience stores to accomplish this mission. KHP Trooper Curt Gabbert participated with the idea of saving himself

work in the long run. "Hopefully, we can get our point across today so I won't have to write as many tickets this weekend on the Interstate." Teams thanked motorists for buckling up and wished everyone a safe holiday weekend.

By the end of the day, a total of \$7,000 was distributed to restrained motorists at eighteen different "checkpoint" locations across the state. Overall, public response was very positive and ranged from shock to disbelief. Overjoyed, one woman yelled "Woo hoo" as Trooper Howard Dickinson of the Highway Patrol explained wearing her safety belt had just earned her an extra buck.



Cheese! The Lenexa team poses with their most valuable player, State Farm's Good Night/Bear!

Another gentleman was quite stunned. As he walked into the donut shop, he turned and smiled, "That was the easiest dollar I've ever made!" Motorists were amazed to be

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After just six-months on the job, Boosters to Belts Road Team Members have delivered Booster Rooster's message

# "BUCKLE UUUUUP!"

to more than 3,000 parents, children and caregivers across the State of Kansas

## Booster Rooster has visited these KS counties:

- Cloud
- Douglas
- Ford
- Franklin
- Johnson
- Lyon
- Ness
- Pratt
- Rush
- Saline
- Shawnee

To participate in the Second Annual Boosters to Belts Road Team training, dates TBA, please call KSBEO and request to be placed on the Road Team waiting list.

Ask the right Kansan what Booster Rooster says to **always** do and you're likely to get a passionate response. For about six months now, *Boosters to Belts* (B2B) mascot, Booster Rooster has reminded Kansas kids to Buckle Up!

And, they seem to be catching on. When Booster Rooster appears on the presentation screen, everyone in the audience is encouraged to scream Buckle Up! "The kids usually start off pretty shy," Melissa Nelson, KSBEO Traffic Safety Specialist, shared. "They hesitate to yell too loud, especially indoors. But, once they realize the louder they are; the greater their chances of being rewarded, they scream *Buckle up!* so loud their little faces turn red."

**The kids usually start off pretty shy...**

Special guests Vince and Larry, the crash test dummies, select the loudest group and distribute free promotional items; like pencils, coloring books and key chains. "Having the crash test dummies on hand is a real plus, Vince and Larry do an excellent job of bringing the presentation to life" Trooper Tim McCool, Road Team member, Topeka said. "The kids love them." In addition to being excellent assistants, Vince and Larry are also the perfect examples of how **not** to travel. The audience is reminded

they're called dummies because they don't wear seatbelts!

Aside from encouraging people to Buckle Up!, the B2B curriculum also stresses proper safety belt use; especially for children ages 4-9, who are often too small to use a safety belt alone. In fact, until a child weighs at least 80 pounds and measures more than 4'9" tall; a booster seat should be used to bridge the gap between a car seat and safety belt. Without a booster seat, a safety belt is likely to fit these children improperly.

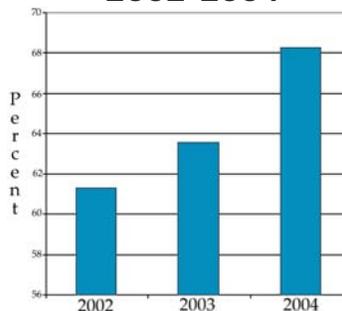
Using the B2B curriculum, the Road Team has made quite an impact; giving 86 presentations in just six short months. As a result, over 3,000 parents, children and caregivers in 11 Kansas counties now understand the booster seat message. Trooper Gary Warner, Road Team Member, Wichita, attributes the program's success, at least in part, to its clever design. "Overall, the entire *Boosters to Belts* package is a very positive, and not to mention fun; way to provide booster seat information to students." KSBEO thanks Road Team members for their contribution to the success of this program. Keep up the good work everyone!

# SURVEY SAYS...

**Background:** This survey conforms to the specified requirements of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and includes a total of 548 randomly selected sites in 20 randomly selected counties that contain 85% of the state's population. This survey is conducted on six different road types in June and July of each year. Each site is observed for 40 minutes and belt use, or non-use, by drivers and front-outboard passengers is recorded. The data are tabulated to produce the annual estimate\* of safety belt use.

\*An estimate is not as rough as it sounds. This official term simply means the entire state was not observed; instead, a sample was selected. In this case, "estimate" indicates survey results are based on a sample and not the total population

**Kansas Safety Belt Usage 2002-2004**



Each summer, roughly 60,000 Kansan's habits are represented by the Observational Safety Belt Usage study. In years prior, the data have been fairly stable—not moving in any one direction; however, a recent emphasis on safety belt education seems to be having an effect on the latest survey results. As demonstrated in the chart, the

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# SAVED BY THE BELT

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rewarded for a habit they considered a no-brainer. A Lenexa woman shared, "I never go anywhere without my seatbelt."

Overall, public response on event day was very positive and feedback after the fact has also been encouraging. Katie Schatte, Johnson County SAFE KIDS Coordinator commented, "This was a great first time event. I think we definitely made an impact on our state. I'm already looking forward to next year." KSBE0 thanks State Farm, Kansas SAFE KIDS, KHP and other agencies involved for their support of this year's Bucks for Buckles event.



**Existing conditions.** The weather was definitely a factor as roads were icy and packed with snow.

**"As I was about to buckle my own seatbelt I had a feeling something wasn't right."**

**M**y 16-month-old son, Dawson, and I were going to a doctor's appointment in Salina. I had already put him in his car seat and buckled him in. But, as I was about to buckle my own seatbelt, I had a feeling something wasn't right; so, I turned around to make sure his seat was buckled in properly and it wasn't. Apparently, my husband, had forgotten to re-buckle the seat when he transferred it from his pick-up to my vehicle. So, I buckled it in, then fastened my own safety belt and we began down a dirt road covered with ice and snow.

Once we got a few miles away from home, my tires hit a patch of ice and I lost control of the truck. Even though I was only going about 30 mph, the truck spun; then rolled until a post came through the windshield, hit the dash and stopped us from rolling even more. I hit

my head on the driver's side door and was knocked unconscious.

When I woke up, I could hear Dawson crying. I turned around and found him hanging upside down still strapped in his car seat. Everything happened so fast. I don't even remember taking off my seatbelt to get him out. I wrapped him in a blanket, rolled down the window and started yelling for help since my cell phone didn't work.

Luckily, about that time my father-in-law, Junior Kratzer, drove down the road to our rescue. He took Dawson to his truck to warm him up; then called my husband, Darin, and the police. I believe God told me to check Dawson's car seat before we took off that day. I'm sure if we both hadn't been buckled in, we may have been very seriously injured.



**After the fact.**

Dawson and Jessica walked away from this accident without injuries, but their Chevy Silverado has seen better days.

*Jessica and Dawson Kratzer, Kanopolis, KS*



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safety belt usage rate in Kansas has jumped about seven percentage points in the past three years. In 2002, about 61% of the sample were belted; in 2003, about 64%; and, this year, about 68% were observed wearing their safety belts during the survey period.

While a 68% safety belt usage rate demonstrates improvement, comparatively speaking, there is still progress to be made. At this rate, Kansas still ranks 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation for low seatbelt use—only Arizona, Mississippi,

Massachusetts and New Hampshire report lower compliance rates. The national rate is 79 percent. But, in several states, like Washington, California, Hawaii and Puerto Rico the compliance rate exceeds 90 percent.

As Kansas Department of Transportation Secretary Deb Miller stated, this "increase in seatbelt usage is a step in the right direction;" however, we can do better. And, further improvements may only mean greater safety on Kansas roadways. Many other

states have found that as safety belt usage rates go up, traffic fatalities also go down. It is this relationship that motivates an emphasis on achieving higher rates in the future. According to Miller, Kansas will "continue to do what it takes to get more motorists to buckle up every time they get into a vehicle and reduce the number of fatalities."

The KDOT Bureau of Traffic Safety contracts with DCCCA, Inc. of Lawrence to conduct this, and other studies related to safety belt usage in Kansas.

**DCCCA Inc.**

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# SAFETY BELTS

Save lives  
and reduce  
injuries.

KANSAS **Safety Belt  
Education** OFFICE

This information is available in alternate accessible formats.

## INSIDE

Saved by  
the Belt

● Preview

Bucks for  
Buckles

● Survey Says

● Road Team  
Update

## CALENDAR of EVENTS

October 6-10

Drive Safely to Work Week

October 7

Corridor Enforcement: K-4 / US-24

October 10

Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day

October 20

Enforcing Underage Drinking  
Laws (EUDL) Conference

November 24

Corridor Enforcement: US 36 / US 75

December 2004

National Drunk & Drugged Driving  
Prevention (3D) Month

February 8-14

Child Passenger Safety Week

## PREVIEW EUDL SEMINAR

On Wednesday, October 20th, KDOT will host the Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) Community Seminar at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Topeka. This one-day event will equip communities to reduce the incidence of underage drinking in Kansas. The seminar features a keynote address and breakout sessions for law enforcement officials, community activists and youth. For more information call (785)841.2880 or send questions via e-mail to [knorwood@dccca.org](mailto:knorwood@dccca.org).

● Attention: CPST's Attention: CPST's Attention ●

As a CPS technician, it is important to remain current. A great way to do so is by participating in Car Seat Check lane events. While you're there, ask a CPS Instructor to observe your installations. Then, visit [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) and log your seat activity by following the screen prompts. Before you logoff, you may also want to double check to make sure your SAFE KIDS contact information is current. If you have any questions call KSBEO at 1.800.416.2522. We can help.

**Don't  
forget to  
update  
your  
profiles!**

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