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NEWS RELEASE

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Safety Event to Highlight Free Inspections of Child Passenger Safety Seat Installations

Salina mom will tell how kids survived rollover crash that destroyed SUV

TOPEKA – Amanda Meier of Salina had a nationally certified technician inspect the installation of the child safety seats in her SUV. That’s why her children are alive today.

John Drees oversees the seat installation inspection program in Lawrence. He has seen first hand how many well-meaning parents incorrectly install the seats, unknowingly putting their children at risk. He estimates about 80 percent of those he sees need adjustments.

Meier and Drees will join several traffic safety advocates from across Kansas at 10 a.m. Friday, Sept. 17, at the official child passenger safety station for Douglas, Jefferson and Leavenworth counties at Lawrence Memorial Hospital. **The event will focus on the life-and-death implications of installation issues for these vital pieces of safety equipment, and the free statewide program designed to help parents ensure they are installed properly.**

The event is designed to kick off Kansas’ observance of the national Child Passenger Safety Week, which runs Sept. 19 through 25. Of particular importance is the focus on ensuring that

children ride in properly installed child safety seats, especially those in the 4-to 8-year-old range, who should be riding in booster seats.

Drees explained that, between the number of different vehicle makes and models, and the number of different child safety seats on the market, there are about 100,000 potential combinations of seats and vehicles. Getting the seat properly installed for maximum protection can be a real challenge. Often, he said, parents who are certain they have installed a seat properly visit one of the inspection stations available statewide (a full list of Kansas inspection stations can be found here: <http://ktsro.org/images/CPS%20List%202009.pdf>) staffed by nationally certified technicians, only to find they need an adjustment.

Meier and her two children are lucky – Meier’s mother is a certified technician, and she had checked and adjusted the child safety seats in Meier’s SUV regularly. That vigilance paid off in February, when the vehicle was struck by a speeding motorist who ran a red light while fleeing from police.

The crash impact rolled the vehicle 360 degrees. It landed back on its tires, but facing the opposite direction. The force of the impact knocked the shoes off the feet of all three passengers, and the vehicle was totaled.

Neither Meier, nor her 3- and 6-year-old children, suffered so much as a scratch.

Meier and Drees will be joined by Cherie Sage, State Director of Safe Kids Kansas; officials from KDOT’s Bureau of Transportation Safety and Technology, and the Kansas Highway Patrol; and other safety advocates for a media event at the Lawrence Memorial Hospital inspection station. They will describe the free inspection program and how families can take advantage of it. Members of the media attending the event will be able to witness and photograph actual inspections of vehicles taking place immediately after the program, as well as interview officials in attendance.

Cherie Sage will discuss the vital importance of booster seats for children in the 5 through 9 age group. While surveys show 97 percent of Kansas families using recommended child safety seats for infants and toddlers in the age group from birth through age 4, the rate drops to an alarming 76 percent for the 5 through 9 age group.

Also on hand will be Jim Hanni, Executive Vice President of Public and Government Affairs of AAA Motor Club of Kansas, who will present a \$19,000 donation to the SAFE Program, a special peer-directed seat belt advocacy program for Kansas teens. Jason Hammes, President of the Kansas Motor Carriers Association, will donate 105 booster seats to a representative of the Kansas Highway Patrol.

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