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Kansas transportation safety awards announced

The Kansas Department of Transportation has selected six Kansans as recipients of Transportation Safety Awards for their efforts to improve traffic safety. The awards will be presented at the 26th Annual Transportation Safety Conference on April 20-21, 2021, in Wichita.

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 2020 recipients are:

Riley County Police Department – The Riley County Police Department (RCPD) partnered with Kansas State University (KSU) to build Operation ARC, a traffic enforcement campaign around the tenets of procedural justice. With procedural justice, decisions are accepted as legitimate by those affected if the decision maker gives them a voice, has trustworthy motives, is neutral and respectful.

Cherie Sage, Topeka – Sage is the State Director of Safe Kids Kansas, a network of partners and local coalitions across the state dedicated to preventing childhood injury. She is passionate about child passenger safety. Since being named director in 2009, more than 75,000 car seats were checked at more than 4,000 events, and more than 125,000 bike helmets were distributed.

The Hero Award recognizes the individual who risked his or her own life for someone else when they happened upon a crash or while trying to prevent the likelihood of a crash in a one-time traffic safety-related incident. The 2020 recipients are:

Technical Trooper Ryan Wolting, Kansas Highway Patrol, Topeka – Wolting applied a tourniquet to the nearly amputated arm of a semi-truck driver injured in a crash to stop profuse bleeding. A trauma nurse at the Salina Regional Hospital reported to KHP that Wolting's application of the tourniquet saved the driver's life.

Game Warden Ross L. Uhrmacher, KS Dept. of Wildlife Parks and Tourism, Chanute – Uhrmacher launched a SeaArk boat into the fast-flowing flood waters of the Verdigris River to save an 88-year-old driver trapped in his almost submerged vehicle. Uhrmacher's skills played a significant role in the successful rescue of the driver.

Officer Benjamin Schaefer and Officer Jared Thomas, Wichita Police Dept – Schaefer and Thomas arrived at the scene of a motorcycle crash before EMS and began first aid. They applied a tourniquet as the knee was almost severed and treated severe wounds. The trauma surgeon at St. Francis Hospital said the officers helped keep the driver.

Deputy Mark Davis, Johnson County Sheriff's Office, Olathe – While off-duty, Davis saw a vehicle stalled on train tracks as a train was approaching. When he and a bystander could not move the vehicle, he told the driver to exit the vehicle. The driver refused. Davis physically pulled the driver from the vehicle just seconds before the train hit it.

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