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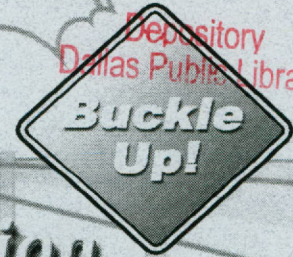
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On The Road With...

Summer 2000



Rural Passenger Safety Education

Vol. 1 No. 12



Texas Agricultural Extension Service
THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Getting to School Safely

As summer gradually comes to an end, thoughts turn to getting children back to school. In an effort to increase the safety of all students traveling to and from school and school related activities, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in conjunction with many partners is developing the "Getting to School Safely" program. The program will provide everyone involved in student travel, including parents, care givers, school administrators, teachers, police officers, crossing guards, and the many other community organizations concerned about student safety, the resources they need to improve the safety of students traveling to school.



- Always wear a bicycle helmet.
- A bicycle helmet should fit comfortably and securely. It should be worn level on the head (not tilted back on the crown or pulled low over the forehead). The helmet should not be able to be moved more than an inch in any direction.

- Know local traffic laws; cyclists must obey the same rules as motorists.
- Wear brightly colored clothing that makes one more visible. At night, use lights and wear retro-reflective clothing.
- Children should check the route they travel with a parent or other adult to be sure it is a safe route for bicycling to school.

Students are at much greater risk traveling to and from school than at any other time in their school day. During the 1997-98 school year about 800 children age five through 18 were killed while traveling to or from school. These students were traveling by passenger car, foot, bicycle and school bus.

There are many safety rules parents and care givers can teach their children about the different ways of getting to school safer.

BICYCLE SAFETY

- Make sure a bicycle is the proper size and is safely and properly maintained.
- Buy a bike that is the right size, not one a child will "grow into." Oversized bike are especially dangerous.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

- Establish a safe route to school.
- When possible, always cross at intersections. Stop at the curb or edge of the road; look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT for traffic in all directions; cross when it is clear; and keep looking for cars.

see *Pedestrian Safety* page 3

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Keep It Moving

by Chief Harry Crum

It's about that time again for drivers to really start watching out for all those kids and young adults heading back to the classrooms. They're everywhere! The challenge continues with school starting soon, and more and more children being placed at risk. Enforcement of traffic laws such as school zone speeds and safety belts, become even more important for law enforcement to monitor during the school year. Unfortunately in 1998, 580 pedestrians under the age of sixteen lost their lives, and 21,000 more were injured in vehicle crashes.

What's even more important to ponder, is that in 1998, Texas led the nation in traffic fatalities with 3,577! Fifty percent of those were alcohol related.

So what can be done to stop this waste of precious life and needless pain and suffering? You've heard me say many times before that law enforcement plays the most significant role in reducing the number of injury and death in motor vehicle crashes. You've also heard me speak about "Operation Blue TALON" before. That's an acronym for the states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico and the Indian Nations. These states along with the Indian Nations make up Region VI of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Operation Blue TALON 2: Crash Crackdown" goes into action during the Labor Day Holiday.



Officers across Texas and the other Region VI states will join together to crackdown on traffic violations. As an example - if you are on Interstate 35 in Texas speeding to Oklahoma - if Texas doesn't get you, then Oklahoma will. You can't beat the odds of getting caught driving under the influence, speeding, not wearing a safety belt or other traffic viola-



National Goals*

- ✓ Increase safety belt use to 85% by the year 2000*
- ✓ Reduce child passenger fatalities 15% by the year 2000**
- ✓ Increase safety belt use to 90% by the year 2005*
- ✓ Reduce child passenger fatalities 25% by the year 2005**

Texas is dedicated to meeting the national goals and is an active partner in Buckle Up America.

* Baseline data from 68% in 1996
** Reduced to 515 in 2005

tions that often result in crashes, injuries and even death. Contact Chief Harry Crum for more information on "Operation Blue TALON 2: Crash Crackdown."

Source: Chief Harry Crum NHTSA, Region VI, 819 Taylor St. Rm. 8A38, Ft. Worth, TX 76102 or call 817-978-2021, 2000.

Resources Available:

Educational material available from the Passenger Safety Resource Library to support *Getting To School Safely*:

Printed Material:

Helmet Your Head, Texas! Brochures
Back to School Safety Tip Sheet
Back to School Safety Pledge

Fact Sheets:

Bicycle Safety
Pedestrian Safety
School Bus Safety

Videos:

Bee a Safe Ped
Neighborhood Adventure in Bicycle Safety

Educational Program Packets:

Bicycle Helmet & Pedestrian Safety (K-5)
Bicycle Safety Script & Slide Show
Pedestrian Safety Tool Kit

Contact Myrna Hill at 979-845-1104 for assistance with any resource materials.

- Wear brightly colored clothing in the daytime and carry flashlights or wear retro-reflective materials at night.
- Walk facing traffic when there are no sidewalks so you can see what's coming.
- The WALK signal and the green traffic light indicate that it is time to cross the street, but they do not mean it is SAFE to cross. The WALK signal and the GREEN light mean LOOK, and then go if no traffic is coming your way.
- When crossing railroad tracks, stop well away from the tracks, look in both directions for an approaching train, listen for the sound of an approaching train, or its whistle. Once it is safe, cross quickly and watch very closely; don't stumble or fall.

VEHICLE SAFETY

- All motor vehicle passengers need to always be secured in an occupant protection system appropriate for their age and size in the vehicle they are in. Children less than 20 pounds and less than one year of age should ride in a rear-facing child safety seat.
- Children over age one and at least 20 pounds may ride in a forward-facing child safety seat.
- Children 12 and under should sit in the back seat away from the force of a deploying air bag.
- When children outgrow forward facing safety seats, at around 40 pounds, they should be restrained in booster seats until they are big enough to fit in an adult safety belt.



Keep Your Goblin Safe on Halloween

Costume Safety

- ✓ No masks or hoods that obscure vision.
- ✓ No "costume" shoes that make walking difficult.
- ✓ Make sure costumes do not impede walking (or driving) ability.
- ✓ Add reflective tape to back, chest, arms and legs.

Motorists Beware!

- ✓ Slow down! Watch for children walking on roads, medians and curbs.
- ✓ Enter and exit driveways carefully.
- ✓ Be especially alert for children darting out from between parked vehicles and from behind bushes and shrubs.
- ✓ Never drink and drive - tonight or any night. At a party designate a driver.

Pedestrian Safety

Parents:

- ✓ Accompany children and supervise trick-or-treat activities.
- ✓ Review all traffic rules with children before setting out.
- ✓ Remind children to "Stop! Look left-right-left again and listen" before crossing the street.

Trick or Treaters:

- ✓ Obey all traffic rules.
- ✓ Walk - never run - from house to house or across the road.
- ✓ Whenever possible, cross streets at intersections or in crosswalks.
- ✓ Walk on sidewalks whenever possible, or walk on the left side of the street facing traffic if no sidewalk is available.
- ✓ Carry a flashlight.

Source: NHTSA, 2000.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

- Arrive at the bus stop five minutes early.
- Stand at least 5 giant steps (10 feet) away from the edge of the road.
- Wait until the bus stops, the door opens, and the driver says it's okay before stepping onto the bus. When exiting the bus be careful that clothing with drawstrings and book bags with straps do not get caught in the handrail or door.
- If it is necessary to cross the street in front of the bus, walk on the

sidewalk or along the side of the road to a point at least five giant steps (10 feet) ahead of the bus before you cross. The bus driver and the student should be able to see each other. When you cross the street, stop at the edge of the bus and look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT before crossing.

- Never walk behind the school bus.
- If something is dropped beside or under the bus, tell the bus driver.

Source: NHTSA, 2000.

Tips for skateboarding or inline skating

- ✓ Stay on the sidewalk. If there is no sidewalk, walk on the left, facing traffic.
- ✓ Wherever possible, cross the street only at the corner. Don't jaywalk.
- ✓ Look left-right-left before crossing the street.
- ✓ Wear a helmet and protective pads when skateboarding or inline skating.



Source: NHTSA, 2000.

Bicycle Safety Begins with the Proper Fit



A bicycle helmet reduces the risk of serious head and brain injury by 85-88 percent. Make sure the bike helmet fits properly and wear it on every ride! When buying a helmet make sure it has been tested and meets Consumer Product Safety Commission standards. Make sure the bicycle helmet fits cor-

rectly. If a baseball cap fits loosely, the worst that can happen is the wind blows it off. If a helmet fits loosely it might not be there when it is needed most. Think of the consequences. If a ball cap blows off, only hair is messed up. If a helmet comes off, a LIFE could be messed up. Isn't it worth spending a few minutes to make sure the helmet fits?

A helmet fits correctly when:

1. It sits squarely on the head with the front of the helmet low on the brow to protect the forehead.
2. The padding exerts firm, uniform pressure all around the head so that the skin on the forehead moves as the helmet is rotated from left to right and from front to back.

The harness system keeps the helmet in place and is as important as a snug fit.

The harness is correctly adjusted when:

1. The helmet sits squarely on the head with the front low on the brow to protect the forehead.
2. The front and rear straps form a "Y" just below and forward of the ears.

Always make sure the chin strap is buckled and tight against the throat.

Source: National Bicycle Safety Network, 2000.

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY CONFERENCE A SUCCESS!

The International Child Passenger Safety Technical Conference in Arlington, TX was held June 10-14, 2000. A big thank you is extended to county Extension agents Dr. Alma Fonseca, Sandra Henson, Carolyn Smith and Rita Winton for assisting Myrna Hill in the Texas booth. They handed out material and answered questions about the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Additional thanks are in order to Terri Miller, Health and Kinesiology Department, College Traffic Safety Program-Texas A&M

University for assisting Myrna Hill with set up and take down of the Extension display at the conference.

Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Department of Public Safety and the Texas Department of Health, Safe Riders Program partnered with the Rural Passenger Safety Project, Texas Agricultural Extension Service to make the booth a success. Thank you to all for such generous help and support!

Selective **WAVE** Program

The most prevalent contributing factors to injuries and fatalities caused by motor vehicle crashes are failing to buckle up, speeding, and drinking and driving. In 1998, 3,576 people were killed in Texas in a reported 308,115 motor vehicle crashes, 338,661 people were injured, and 102,732 crashes involved property damage only.

Research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) found that safety belts reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50% and, 60% and 65%, respectively, in light trucks. Child safety seats reduce fatal injury by 71% for infants and 54% for toddlers in passenger cars and 58% and 59%, respectively, in light trucks.

The economic cost to American society of speed-related crashes is estimated by NHTSA to be almost \$27.7 billion in 1998. In 1998, speeding – exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for conditions – according to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) was a contributing factor in 36% of all fatal crashes and 1,306 lives were lost in speeding-related crashes in Texas.

DPS records show alcohol was involved in 28.9% of fatal crashes in Texas and in 8.4% of all crashes in 1998. The 1,058 fatalities in alcohol-related crashes in Texas during 1998 represented an average of one alcohol-related fatality every 8 hours 16 minutes. DPS reports 27,058 persons were injured in crashes where officers reported that alcohol was present.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) through the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) Wave Grants is providing a tool to local communities to get motorists to “Buckle Up,” “Slow Down,” and “Don’t Drink and Drive.” Traffic enforcement efforts are proven to save lives.

A 1995 study by NHTSA shows that states with primary enforcement safety belt laws achieved significantly higher belt use than states with secondary enforcement laws. In

1998, the average observed belt use rate reported by states with secondary enforcement laws was 62%, compared to 79% by states with primary enforcement laws. Texas has primary safety belt and child seat laws.

The TxDOT STEP Wave effort combines enforcement and public information and education in a seasonal manner, when injuries and fatalities are the highest, to address traffic safety problems. Activities are targeted for the remaining Labor Day and Thanksgiving Day holiday periods in 2000 and the Valentines Day, Memorial Day,

Independence Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving Day holiday periods in 2001 and 2002.

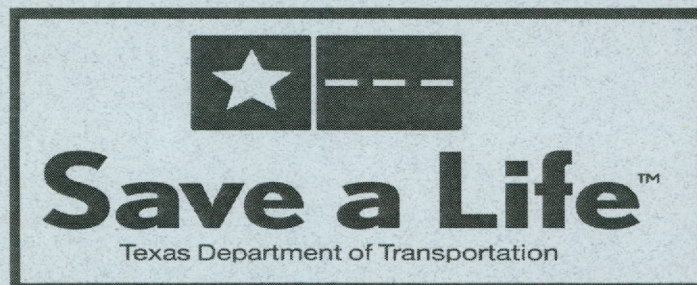
The program’s strategy is to (1) Conduct pre-observational safety belt use and speeding surveys to establish

compliance rates. (2) Conduct local media events immediately before the enforcement effort to maximize the visibility of enforcement to the public. These media events tie into State and National Media Campaigns such as the National Child Passenger Safety Week sponsored by TxDOT and NHTSA. (3) Intensify enforcement that places primary emphasis on increasing the number of citations during the peak holiday traffic. (4) Conduct post-observational surveys to measure the impact of media/enforcement efforts. (5) Conduct local media events to tell the public why the compliance is important and the results of the wave.

Previous Wave results indicate safety belt use increases by an average of 8.2% and speed compliance improves by an average of 8% as a result of the STEP Wave Grants efforts. This translates into fewer injuries and fatalities.

The STEP Wave Grant Program can be an opportunity to make a difference in the safety of your community. If you are interested in the Wave Program contact your local TxDOT District Office or call Sam Mitchell at (512) 416-3166 to find out more. Remember “Buckle Up” and “Save a Life™.”

Source: Sam Mitchell, Program Administrator, Texas Department of Transportation, 2000.





NATIONAL OBSERVANCE WEEKS

DRIVE SAFELY WORK WEEK

September 11-15, 2000

Traffic crashes pose a major risk to all employers, whether employees drive for work, commute to their job or just drive for pleasure. Motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of death and injury during working hours.

In addition to the personal and emotional toll of injuries and deaths generated by motor vehicle crashes, the bottom line of a business is affected. Direct and indirect crash costs to employers include medical care and workers' compensation, property damage, replacement transportation, lost productivity, replacement labor and third party losses.

Drive Safely Work Week (DSWW) is a great way for employers to educate employees about key traffic safety issues and show their concern about employee safety. DSWW is designed to help employers emphasize the importance of driving safely both on and off the job and to help prevent crashes. The campaign is sponsored by the Network for Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), a public-private partnership dedicated to reducing traffic deaths and injuries in the nation's workforce.

Five major traffic safety issues are addressed, focusing on a different theme for each day of the week:

- ✓ Buckle Up!-emphasizes all aspects of occupant protection
- ✓ Courtesy Counts-provides tips on steering clear of aggressive driving
- ✓ Who's Driving-highlights the many contributors to driver distraction
- ✓ Give 'Em Some Space-educating drivers about coexisting with trucks and other large vehicles
- ✓ Steer With a Clear Head-increases awareness of how alcohol, stress and drugs impair safe driving

A tool kit is available for those interested in launching a successful campaign. Please contact NETS @ 1-888-221-0045. (There is a charge for the toolkit).

Source: NHTSA, 2000.

NATIONAL WALK OUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL DAY

October 4, 2000

Pedestrian crashes are a serious safety problem that result in thousands of injuries and hundreds of deaths each year. Every day, millions of children walk to school or to a bus stop. Is the route they walk safe? Do all children understand key traffic safety rules? Do they understand that they share the road with motorists? Do they realize that they might see the vehicle but the driver may not see them?

A program to address these issues is *National Walk Our Children to School Day*, sponsored by the Partnership for a Walkable America, a public-private partnership of which the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is a member. This program gives children, parents, grandparents and community leaders a chance to walk to school together to promote safer streets, physical fitness and good pedestrian safety habits. Participants will join together to:

- ✓ raise awareness about the health benefits of walking
- ✓ create an understanding about what a "walkable" community is
- ✓ encourage families and community leaders to spend time together
- ✓ identify ways to improve walking in their community

For more information call 630-775-2382 or visit the Partnership for a Walkable America's web site at www.nsc.org/walkable.htm

Source: NHTSA, 2000.

NATIONAL SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WEEK

October 15-21, 2000

School buses provide about 28 million students a safe ride to and from school every school day. When school buses are involved in traffic crashes, it is usually passengers in the other vehicles who are killed or injured. On average, 30

see *School Bus Week* page 7

Extension Agent in Henderson County Teams Up with Safe Riders

Carrie Betts, Henderson County Extension Agent, and Texas Department of Health-Safe Riders teamed up for a successful child safety seat check up event May 20. Working with Frank Luera and Roberta Hogeda, 735 child safety seats were checked and 29 seats were given away where no seat was present or to replace an unsafe seat. Carrie planned the event and ordered the child safety seats, she even included a wonderful Spanish interpreter. Two members of Rural Passenger Safety and DPS Trooper Eddie Carmon participated as technicians.



Certified Instructor, Roberta Hogeda of Safe Riders, TDH, checks over the harness straps on a child during the check up in Athens.

Local Technicians Host Mini Clinic



Myrna Hill, Certified Technician with Rural Passenger Safety Education, checks a safety seat at the recent Mini Clinic.

On June 24th, Joe Montgomery, Texas Engineering Extension Service, Terri Miller, Texas A&M University, Myrna Hill, Bev Kellner and Marlene Albers, Rural Passenger Safety Education, all participated in a by-appointment-only child safety seat clinic. Holly Hill served as a volunteer, greeted each participant and assisted as a scribe as time permitted. When all the dust settled, 19 children left the event safer than when they arrived. Five children arrived without any restraint and were placed in high back boosters. One child safety seat was on recall, 13 seats were either unsafe or too old and 10 new seats were distributed.

The by appointment only clinic will resume sometime in September. Thank you to all who participated.

School Bus Week from page 6

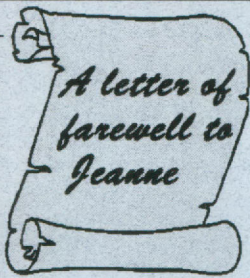
school age children die in school bus-related traffic crashes each year—nine as school bus occupants and 22 as pedestrians.

The safety of our nation's children traveling on school buses will always be a priority. *National School Bus Safety Week* is held annually to focus attention on the role of everyone about the need for school bus safety. The theme for this year's week is "Railroad Crossing—Quiet Zone," to emphasize the need for safety at railroad grade crossings.

National School Bus Safety Week is a public-private partnership with active public education programs designed to promote school bus safety. It includes a national poster contest, with the winning entry being adapted as the campaign poster and distributed nationally. The theme for this year's contest is "School Bus Safety Show & Tell," and the winning poster will be used to promote school bus safety in 2001.

For more information visit the web site at <http://www.schooltrans.com/safeweek.htm> or contact *National School Bus Safety Week*, 625 Slaters Lane, Suite 205, Alexandria, VA 22314

Source: NHTSA, 2000.



*A letter of
farewell to
Jeanne*

As many of our readers already know, Jeanne Swanson, Program Administrator, Occupant Protection, Texas Department of Transportation, will be leaving her position on July 20th.

Dear Jeanne,

The team members of Rural Passenger Safety Education, as well as other traffic safety advocates, will certainly miss your guidance, kindness, upbeat attitude and the way you empower people to be successful. You have made great contributions within the field of occupant protection by bringing agencies and people together for the common good of all of Texas and for that, we all thank you.

Under your guidance as our program administrator, our project has touched the lives of countless Texans in a positive manner. No one is indispensable, but you come terribly close. Thank you for nurturing the growth of our project and each of us on the team.

Child Passenger Safety

Opportunity

Technicians! If you are interested in being an instructor candidate at the next NHTSA Certified Child Passenger Safety Training sponsored by Rural Passenger Safety Education in November, please contact Myrna Hill at 979-845-1104.



New Resources

New Foam "Noodle" Product Available

Austin Foam Plastics in Pflugerville, Texas is distributing a denser foam noodle that gives better service when used to adjust the angle of rear-facing child safety seats. The product is a 2-pound per cubic foot density, **solid core**, white, polyethylene foam round. This "noodle" is denser than regular *pool noodles* and will hold up better and keep its shape longer than the *pool noodle*. Though the company's main business has always been the cushion packaging industry, they do have the ability to distribute these new foam rounds to all organizations/agencies that are in need.

The "noodles" will be available in bulk as well as small quantities. Bulk purchases will include quantity discounts as well as freight savings. Initial lead-time, until production gets rolling and volume is predictable, will be five to eight weeks. In the future, lead time should decrease to two or three weeks. For more information on this new product, please contact Scott Speck.

Source: Scott Speck, Austin Foam Plastics, Inc., 1300 County Road 170, Pflugerville, TX 78660, 800-985-FOAM, scottspeck@austinfoam.com



HELMET RECALL

In cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Cycle Express Inc. is voluntarily recalling about 9,000 size small bicycle helmets for girls ages 2-5. These helmets fail impact testing and labeling required under CPSC's Safety Standard for Bicycle Helmets. The helmets do not provide adequate protection and the wearer could suffer severe head injuries or death.

The helmets are mostly pink mixed with silver glitter and bordered by purple tape. Decals on the helmets read "Hearts & Flowers." The inside label reads "DISTRIBUTED BY: CYCLE EXPRESS." The helmets are packaged in a box that reads, "Hearts and Flowers Helmet Combo Value Pack" and "Item #10235." They were sold with a bike bag-purse combo and hair accessories by Toys R Us from October 1999 - April 2000 for about \$13. Consumers should stop using these bicycle helmets immediately, and return them to the store where purchased. For more information, call Cycle Express toll-free at (877) 714-6117.

Safe Communities Corner

with Ann Athey, RN, MSN



Back-To-School School Bus Safety

Is your community and school district actively involved in promoting school bus safety? August marks Back-To-School for an estimated 4 million Texas children. The Texas Department of Public Safety reports the daily number of students transported by school buses at the public's expense was 1.3 million students in 1997-98. The Safe Communities coalition is an excellent forum in which to address the issue of school bus safety. A comprehensive Back-To-School campaign includes a School Bus Safety education program which targets children, parents and educators. Effective campaigns also include a management program that reviews all school bus injuries, deaths and incidents. These programs track for patterns of injuries related to school buses which enable a community coalition to effectively select priorities and develop strategies.

Facts. Texas students are transported in approximately 33,000 school buses. These buses traveled a total of 372 million miles during the 1997-98 school year. Despite these incredible numbers there were **no pupil occupant fatalities** in Texas during the years 1991-1998, however, nationwide and in Texas, pedestrian fatalities accounted for the highest number of school bus fatalities each year. Nationwide there are approximately 26 loading/unloading fatalities per year, two-thirds of these involve the school bus and about one third involve motorists. In Texas loading/unloading incidents from 1991-1998 resulted in **a total of 7 student deaths and an average of 23 injuries each year.** Texas school bus related injuries rose steadily from 1991 from 701 crashes to 1,000

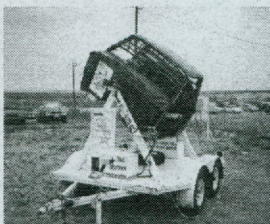
crashes in 1997. In 1998 a decrease in the number of injury-producing crashes mark the first decrease ever of 4.9%.

School buses remain one of the safest form of transportation for our children across the nation and in Texas. Fewer than 1% of Texas roadway crashes involve a school bus. The reasons that school buses are inherently safe is that they are one of the largest vehicles on the road, they are conspicuous, they travel the same routes (so drivers are familiar) during daylight, travel in less congested routes at lower speeds and are designed to meet strict federal motor vehicle safety standards.

Effective Strategies. Since children are at the greatest risk for being killed in school bus loading zones rather than the bus, safety efforts should be directed toward supervising children on and off school buses and teaching children to walk safely to the bus stop and how to exit the bus safely, routinely and in an emergency. Motorists should be informed on safe driving practices around school buses.

School bus and back to school safety are issues that can be addressed by a Safe Community coalition. Safe Community is a systematic approach to reducing traffic related injuries and their associated costs. For more information visit NHTSA's website at <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov>.

Source: Ann Athey, RN, MSN, NHTSA Safe Communities, 2000.



The Rollover Convincer

The Rollover Convincer continues to be in high demand; the hot summer is not slowing down enthusiastic safety belt advocates. The Rural Passenger Safety team would like to salute Mr. Troy Erickson, the first U.S. Park Ranger to use the Rollover Convincer and present the demonstration on South Padre Island.

Since April 1, 2000 the Rollover Convincer has been viewed by 5233 people. If you are interested in booking one of the Rollover Convincers, please contact Myrna Hill at 979-845-1104.

Driving in Hurricanes

There is nothing like them in the atmosphere. Even seen by sensors on spacecraft and satellites thousands of miles above the earth, the uniqueness of these powerful, tightly-coiled storms is clear. They may not be the largest storm systems in our atmosphere, or the most violent, but they combine those qualities as no other phenomenon does. In other parts of the globe, they're known as typhoons or cyclones. In our hemisphere, they're called "hurricanes."

Although other weather events may produce damaging winds, lightning, tornadoes, heavy rain and flash flooding, few produce all in such a lethal combination, and for such a prolonged length of time. Add in storm surge from the sea and the hurricane is truly "The Greatest Storm on Earth."

The hurricane and tropical storm season begins June 1st and continues through November 30th. Each year on average, ten tropical storms (of which six become hurricanes) develop over the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. Some experts predict the 2000 season to be an active one, with an above-normal number of named storms forming. Odds are that one or more of these storms could strike or affect the Gulf coast, Florida or the eastern seaboard.

Driving presents a unique hazard during a hurricane. Strong gusty winds, even winds below hurricane force, can cause a vehicle to overturn or a driver to lose control, especially if the vehicle is a high-profile vehicle, such as a mini-van, SUV, RV, bus or 18-wheeler.

Although restricted to the immediate coastline, storm surge can lift and float away cars, trucks and vans, simply from the depth and force of the invading water. Storm surges have been known to wash away entire buildings, apartment

complexes and homes, so imagine what such a storm surge would do to a lowly, unsecured vehicle.

Arguably the most destructive force a driver comes face-to-face with in a hurricane or tropical storm is flooding from the torrential rain - rain that can exceed 20 inches in some slow-moving storm systems.

Although flood waters near a flat coastline usually pond, water depths can reach 10 feet or more. Add in flood waters from nearby rivers, and the water depth becomes even higher. It may take weeks or even months for flood waters to recede and rivers to return to normal. In the interim, roads, streets and highways remain impassable, and homes and buildings flooded.

But the greatest danger from heavy rain is in hilly or mountainous terrain, where flash flooding is most likely to occur. Runoff from dissipating hurricanes or tropical storms depositing their load of water on inland communities can still wreak havoc. Flash flooding from such storms in the Texas Hill Country and Appalachian Mountains has caused some of the worst natural disasters in our nation's history.

What can you do to avoid such misery? Listen to broadcasts of approaching hurricanes or tropical storms that may affect your area. Know where your evacuation routes are beforehand in the event you are forced to evacuate. Make sure your vehicle is in good running order, and filled with gas. In other words, plan ahead and use common sense - be prepared!

Source: Larry Peabody, National Weather Service, Austin/San Antonio 830-606-3717, 2000.

Child Safety Seat RECALLS

Basic Comfort Galaxy 2000

NHTSA has announced a recall of certain Basic Comfort booster seats (Models 960 and 961) due to defective polystyrene backs and cushions. Owners are being notified and will be sent free replacement parts and instructions. For further information contact Basic Comfort, Inc. at 1-800-640-8469.

Source: NHTSA, 2000.

Britax Roundabout

Britax Child Safety, Inc. is conducting a voluntary recall on a small number of Roundabout restraints due to possible defective shells. These defective shells may not allow the seat to meet Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 213 for head excursion. The defective seats were manufactured between January 13 and March 14, 1999.

see Recalls page 11

Rural Passenger Safety Bids Farewell to Team Member

The Rural Passenger Safety Education team bids farewell to team member, Martha Kingston. Martha has been a strong advocate for child passenger safety and has modeled dedication and passion for this subject matter. Everyone on our team wishes her well and we know we will see her soon in the back seat of some car with her knee in a child safety seat!

Source: *Rural Passenger Safety Education, 2000.*

A Farewell Message from Martha...

I have worked with the Rural Passenger Safety Education Project, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, for nearly four years. After reviewing my professional and personal goals, I have decided to make a career move. I am no longer employed by the Extension Service but rather am now an Independent Consultant for Child Passenger Safety. I am looking forward to continuing to work with each of you in the child passenger safety arena.

I would like to thank the Extension Service, the Texas Department of Transportation, Texas Department of Health-Safe Riders, Texas Department of Public Safety and individuals I have worked with over the past years. I know each of these agencies has and will continue to make a difference in the lives of many children and families across the great state of Texas. The memories of NHTSA CPS courses, numerous child safety seat checkup events, and coordination of the educational resource library will last forever. Thank you for the opportunities to share in the mission of reducing injuries and fatalities to children riding in motor vehicles.

Everyone is welcome to continue to call on me as a child passenger safety resource. As a Nationally Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician and Instructor, I am willing to serve as senior checker for checkup events as well as instruct in the four day Child Passenger Safety certification course and field technical questions.

Source: *Martha Kingston, 2000.*

Recalls from page 10

Britax Roundabout (cont'd)

Britax is supplying a free shoulder pad kit to correct the problem. For assistance contact Britax Child Safety, Inc. at 1-800-683-2045

Source: *Britax Child Safety, Inc., 2000.*

Evenflo On My Way Position Right

NHTSA has announced a recall of Evenflo On My Way Position Right infant car seats manufactured between January 26 and February 10, 2000. The problem is in the alignment posts in the base. These bent posts may make it difficult to install the seat into the base. Bent posts can also interfere with proper latching of the carrier to the base, preventing the child from being properly restrained. To obtain a free repair kit, contact Evenflo at 1-800-316-4779.

Source: *NHTSA, 2000.*

TIMELY TIPS NEW *into the* Millennium

September 2000

- ⊕ 9/11-9/15 Drive Safely Work Week
- ⊕ Baby Safety Month

October 2000

- ⊕ 10/4/00 National Walk Our Children to School Day
- ⊕ 10/12 Child Safety Seat Check Up Event, Pearland, contact Dr. Alma Fonseca, Brazoria County Extension Agent at 979-849-5711, Ext. 1555
- ⊕ 10/15-10/21 National School Bus Safety Week
- ⊕ 10/26 Child Safety Seat Check Up Event, Glasscock & Martin Counties, contact Shirley Weeks, Glasscock County Extension Agent at 979-354-2381

November 2000

- ⊕ 11/6-11/10 NHTSA Child Passenger Safety Training, Brazoria County, contact Myrna Hill at 979-845-1104
- ⊕ 11/6-11/10 Texas Operation Lifesavers Week
- ⊕ 11/16 Child Safety Seat Check Up Event, Comanche County, contact Dena Montieith, Comanche County Extension Agent at 915-356-2539
- ⊕ 11/20-11/26 Buckle Up America/ Operation ABC Mobilization

The newsletter, *On The Road With...* is produced by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Rural Passenger Safety Education Project in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation.

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Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.



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