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Teen Driver Safety Program being Implemented in Seven Nebraska Schools

Lincoln - Teens in the Driver Seat is a new traffic safety education program in Nebraska designed to help teens become safe drivers and keep everyone safer on the roads. Starting in seven Nebraska schools, the program was brought to Nebraska through a partnership with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety, AAA Nebraska, Nebraska Safety Council and the Drive Smart Nebraska Coalition.

"Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Nebraska teens," said Dr. Joseph Acierno, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. "This program is an opportunity for teens and their sponsors to develop and implement traffic safety programs in their school and community which can instill safe driving habits that they can use for a lifetime."

Nationally recognized for its innovative approach, Teens in the Driver Seat uses peer-to-peer influence to bring together young drivers, parents, school administrators, communities and other partners to reduce teen crashes on Nebraska roadways. The program addresses both awareness and behavior, using peer pressure as a positive force to promote safe driving habits.

According to the Nebraska CODES (Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System), teens are dying in motor vehicle crashes at three times the rate of the average adult. From 2007-2011, 122 teens, age 14 to 19, died in motor vehicle crashes in Nebraska. During that same period 13,930 injuries occurred, many of which were debilitating, costly and largely preventable.

Teens in the Driver Seat addresses the top five risks for teen drivers: nighttime driving, speeding, distractions, low seat belt use and alcohol. It is being implemented in Norfolk High School, Fullerton Public Schools, Scottsbluff High School, Malcolm Public Schools, Centura High School, Chase County Schools-Imperial and Howells-Dodge Consolidated. In Texas, schools that implemented Teens in the Driver Seat in their counties averaged a 14% crash reduction in teen drivers compared to counties that did not implement the program.

For more information about the TDS program or to start one in a specific community, go to www.t-driver.com. or contact Jeanne Bietz at 402-471-0361.

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