Celebrate Smart Driving Choices
Montana Teen Driver Safety Day—Tuesday, October 17, 2017

Montana Teen Driver Safety Day is the third Tuesday in October during National Teen Driver Safety Week. Proclaimed by the Montana State Legislature in 2009 at the urging of students from Belt High School, its mission is to bring Montana teens, community leaders, educators, and parents together to prevent young driver crashes, the leading cause of death for teens.

Last year, the OPI joined with the Goldhahn family and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to highlight the importance of seat belts and the #BuckleUpBlue4Lauryn campaign. Pat Goldhahn spoke at more than 25 schools and gave out 90,000 blue ribbons last year. He also graciously spoke at the Montana Traffic Education Conference in April.

The campaign is making a difference in people’s lives. Just this month, on September 7, three teens walked away from a rollover crash on a gravel road because they were buckled up. One of the three boys in the crash knew Lauryn Goldhahn, the 15-year-old who died from injuries she suffered in an August 29, 2016 crash.

The Choteau Acantha reported, “The #buckleupblueforlauryn ribbon used to remind students to buckle up was on the steering wheel of the vehicle involved in the Sept. 7 accident, Isakson said. “I have always worn my seat belt,” he said, “but the ribbon is a good reminder.” http://www.choteauacantha.com, Sept. 13, 2017

This story and others like it can inspire the smart driving decisions that keep teens safe on the road as drivers and passengers. We will partner again with MDT and the Goldhahns to help remind teens to drive alert, focused and buckled up. This Montana Teen Driver Safety Day, let’s celebrate the lifesaving choices teens make to practice safe driving, every time they drive.

Get a jump start on planning for Teen Driver Safety Day!
Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Host lunchtime videos and get safe driving pledges.
- Stay in Your Lane distracted driving awareness activities.
- Morning class and sports announcements to promote safe driving habits.
- Positive messages on reader boards at your school, sports stadiums, and local businesses.
- Conduct seat belt and cell phone surveys to raise awareness.
- Hold contest to design a safe driving poster or social media meme.
- Chalk up the sidewalk with Stay Alert, Arrive Alive messages.
- Send flyers home with teens to encourage all family members to adopt smart safe driving habits.
- Invite a local resource expert to speak at an assembly about distracted driving.
- TeenDriverSource.org has great resources, including a list of activities that took place in 2016 for National Teen Driver Safety Week. Listed for Montana is the #BuckleUpBlue4Lauryn campaign.

From Montana Students and Driving Behaviors (find on Resources page at OPI Driver Education website), 2017 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Courtesy of YRBS Coordinator Susan Court, MT Office of Public Instruction.
In Montana, 9,271 students at 137 high schools—76% of all eligible teens—completed driver education during the 2017 school year and 94% passed the test and received a Learner License to begin GDL-supervised driving practice.

New Learner License Rules for Teen Drivers

The Traffic Education Learner License (TELL) is now a Learner License and allows parents/guardians and other licensed adults authorized by the parent/legal guardian to supervise a teen driver during Step One of the graduated licensing law (GDL). Visit the OPI Driver Education webpage to download a new GDL Factsheet and Driving Log and Module 1 of the Teen Driver Curriculum.

Vision Zero Traffic Safety Grants — Apply by 11/1/2017

Grants up to $1,750 are available through FCCLA and applications are due November 1. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Ford Driving Skills and Montana Family Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) are promoting traffic safety by awarding grants to chapters who plan and carry out projects that help them and their peers make responsible driving decisions. For details, visit http://mtfccla.org/vision-zero/

The Office of Public Instruction launches New Website

The OPI began the new school year with a streamlined, redesigned and updated website that emphasizes the visitor and their information needs. With that in mind, the Traffic Education Office staff created pages and content for driver education teachers, administrators, and teens and their parents. Visit the new Driver Education web pages at http://opi.mt.gov/DriverEd or go to opi.mt.gov and search for Driver Education.

Contact Fran or Patti for information and assistance with traffic education forms and reports via the Traffic Education Data & Reporting System (TEDRS). To receive important Traffic Education reminders and updates, sign up for OPI Traffic Education E-News: http://opi.mt.gov/Subscriptions/