

Seat belt, child passenger safety enforcement crackdown targets 10 rural counties in Southeast Kansas

State and local law enforcement are utilizing a special federal grant to step up enforcement of Kansas seat belt and child passenger safety laws in the City of Udall, as part of a 10-county enhanced enforcement effort.

The enforcement campaign is designed to promote a higher level of seat belt usage and compliance with child passenger safety laws in rural areas of the state. Kansas Department of Transportation officials noted that seat belt and child passenger safety seat usage rates in the Southeastern part of the state are well below the state usage rate. Counties included in the campaign are Allen, Bourbon, Cherokee, Cowley, Crawford, Labette, Montgomery, Neosho, Wilson and Woodson.

Local law enforcement officials support the effort. "Simply put, we are enforcing the laws," said Jeremy Billman, Chief of Police of Udall.

"We know from KDOT observational surveys that when a driver sets the example of wearing a seatbelt, about 92 percent of the children observed are belted. In stark contrast, when a driver is *not* belted, only about 23 percent of the children are buckled up. Our challenge is to get the attention of our children, our teens, and especially our adults who influence Kansas youth...*before* a tragedy occurs."

The rural seat belt enforcement campaign is a lifesaving effort of KDOT's Traffic Safety Section in cooperation with state and local law enforcement agencies.

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