

# The Current Role of Teen Seat Belt Use and Education in Kansas





Testimony by Norraine Wingfield/David Corp



Good Morning Mr. Chairman...members of the Transportation Committee. I am Norraine Wingfield of the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office which is the educational arm of KDOT and provides traffic safety education and resources for the state and coordinates the SAFE program. I appreciate the opportunity, to testify on House bill 2157. I would like to visited about the major gaps in occupant protection education and enforcement and provide you information on a successful data proven occupant protection program.

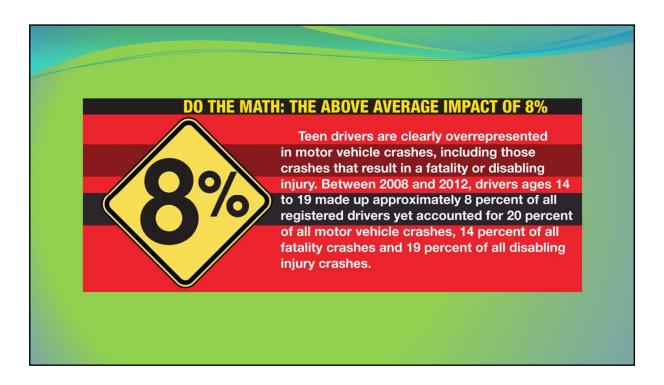
We'd like to begin by showing you a snippet video that uniquely shows one of the key problems we face in occupant protection in Kansas:





Children are much more likely to be buckled up if the driver is also belted. If the driver is belted, about 94% of the children are also belted. If the driver is not belted, only about 30% of the observed children were also belted.

KDOT has as the goal of its SHSP to cut-in-half the number of fatalities from motor vehicle crashes by 2029. To achieve this goal we need to look at providing education and enforcement to change the traffic safety culture of our youth and adults in Kansas. We know from our observational survey that (see slide) *Children are much more likely to be buckled up if the driver is also buckled up. If the driver is buckled about 94% of the children are also buckled. If the driver is not buckled, only about 30% of the observed children were also buckled. So if the teen driver is belted—his passengers are more likely to be belted.* 



We also know While teen drivers represent only eight percent of Kansas' licensed drivers, they are involved in 20 percent of all crashes and 14 percent of fatal crashes. These are down from 22 and 15 percent, respectively, in 2011 and may reflect the impact of the graduated driver law which first applied to teens entering the Kansas licensing system after January 1, 2010. GDL was presented to you and you implemented the legislation and we are saving lives.

We would like to continue our efforts to provide occupant protection education to our youth and communities and build on an existing program which has seen great success here in Kansas.



I would like to now introduce Dave Corp, Law enforcement Liaison for the Kansas Department of Transportation .

Let's get down to basics: See this car? The vehicle's "live-zone" is in tact. This is what's left of a crash from 2013 in Phillips County – a car driven by a 16 year old boy. The car is designed to protect the individual in a crash IF THEY HAVE THEIR SEAT BELT ON....But in this crash, the 16 year old teen, was ejected from the "live-zone" which defeated the purpose of the car's engineering, just because the teen CHOSE NOT to wear a seat belt....AND, keep this in mind for a later part of our discussion: We didn't have SAFE, the State's national award-winning teen seat belt usage program, in Phillips County.

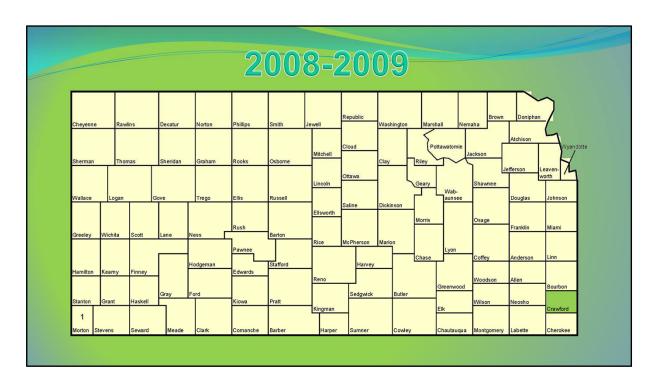


This is an example of a crash involving the other 45 percent who were belted...some crashes are simply so horrific they're not survivable...but we want to deal with the ones that are

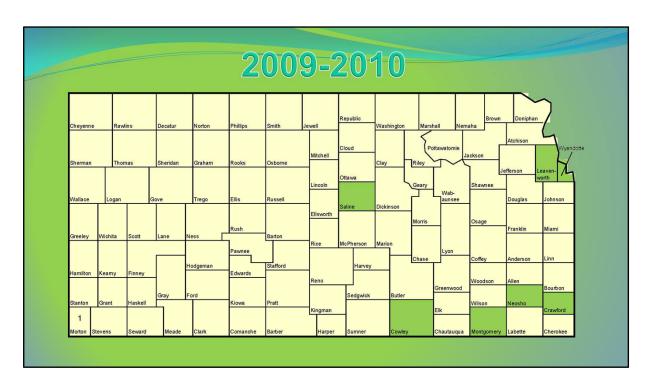


The Safe program began when 4 high school students from Ulysses Kansas lost their lives in a traffic crash, no one in the vehicle was wearing a seat belt. The program begins with Students being trained to perform observational seat belt/distracted driving surveys which they conduct in and around campus. This provides a baseline for how many of the students are wearing their seatbelts. The SAFE student ask their peers to voluntarily sign a pledge card to wear their seat belt. Over the next months of school, traffic safety education activities about seat belt use, distracted driving, impaired driving take place in and around the school and the community. Each month students sign pledge cards which are put into a drawing. Winners are selected each month and typically receive a \$25 gift card. The final component to the program is enforcement. There are 2 weeks of drastic enforcement in and around the schools. Citations are issued to anyone not wearing a seat belt. In the last months of school, the students perform a final survey to see if their seat belt rates have changed over the months of the program and final prizes are drawn from all the pledge cards. Education, Rewards and enforcement are the three components of this successful program. This program has been recognized by the National Highway safety Administration, The Governors Highway Safety Association and was recognized as one of the top programs in the nation in the AllState research project, Getting it to Click.

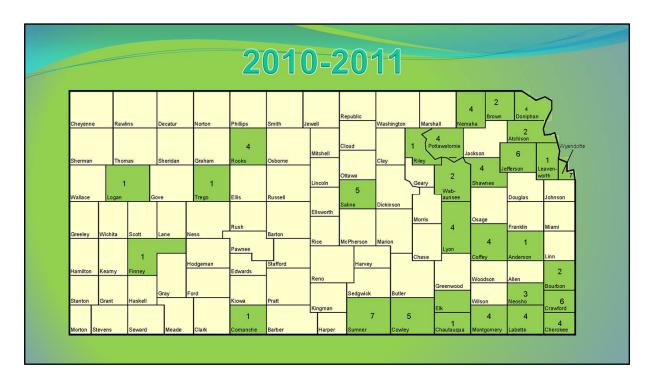
This legislation is essential to the continued success of the occupant protection education programs in Kansas.



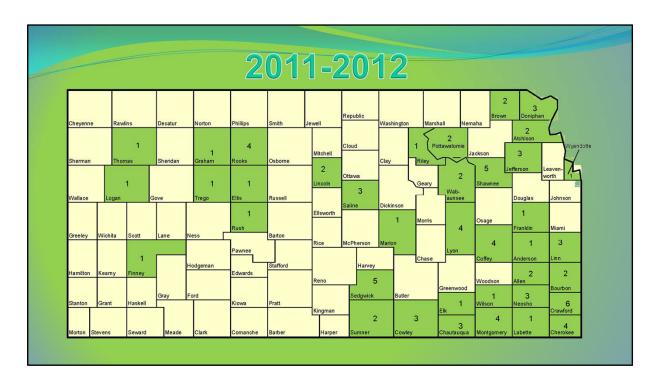
1 county 6 schools Baseline survey-68% Final survey 84%



7 counties

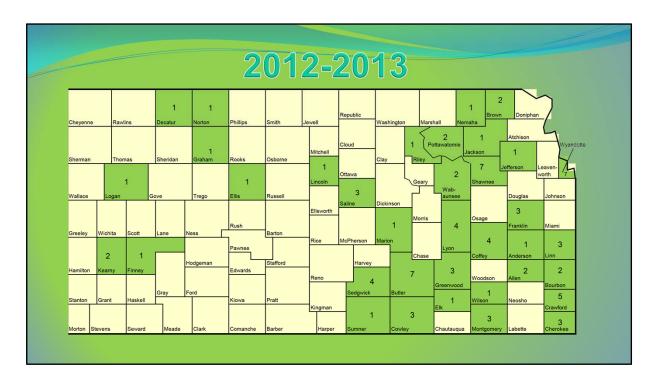


29 counties



#### •38 Counties

- •88 Schools in 38 counties participated in the SAFE program.
- •Approximately 660 Students were involved in leading peers.
- •31,913\* Students attended participating schools and heard the SAFE message.
- •The average baseline survey for all the schools was 72% and the average final survey was 82.0%, making the average increase across all of the participating schools 8.3%.

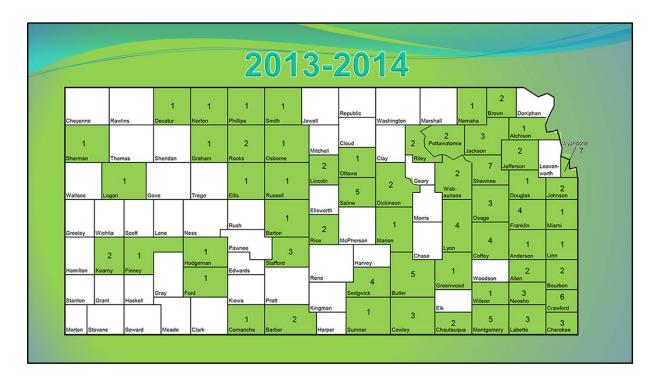


- 87 Schools in 36 counties participated in the SAFE program.
- $\cdot$  36,969\* Students attended participating schools and heard traffic safety messaging through SAFE.

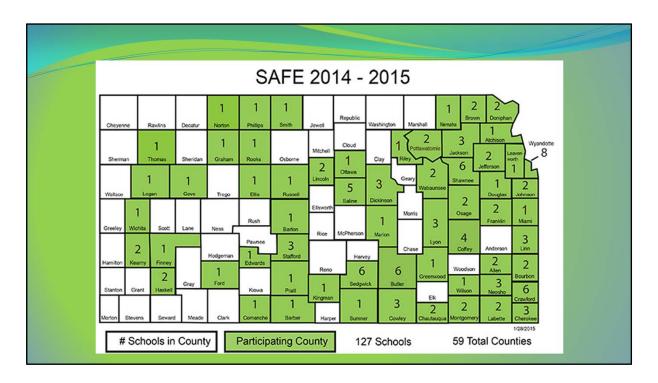
#### **Results**

**86**% of all the participating schools experienced positive change in the number of seat belts used.

The average baseline survey for all the schools was 79% and the average final survey was 85%, making the average increase across all of the participating schools 6%.

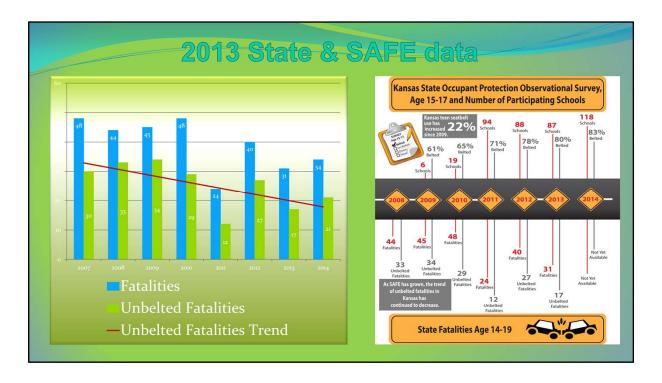


118 schools and 55 counties reaching over 80,000 students.



January 29<sup>th</sup> of this year 127 schools and 59 counties! Minimum 100k high school students reached w/ safety message every month Good news you all have at least one school with SAFE in your districts -the bad news is not all your schools have the SAFE program and many of your fellow legislators do not have SAFE at all.

We need to reach all high schools in Kansas and begin work on middle schools where our 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders are beginning to receive their driving permits.



As SAFE has grown, the trend of unbelted fatalities in Kansas has continued to decrease. Not one fatality came from a SAFE county this year.

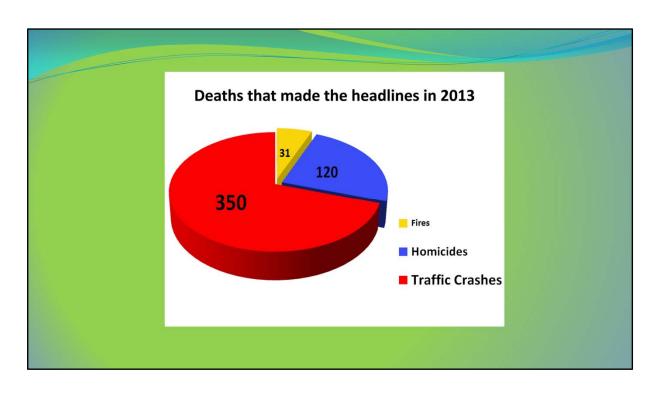
consecutive year, "seatbelt use among ages15-17 is increasing at a faster rate than any other youth age group." it is easy to conclude SAFE continues to influence the seatbelt usage rate of teens in Kansas. In other words, **SAFE** 

According to the Kansas Occupant Protection Observational Survey, for the second

works.



Our current major funders are KDOT, KDHE, AAA, Kansas Trauma Program, State Farm and many local funders including several diversion fund programs. We have added this year the Kansas Sheriff's Association. The SAFE program is dependent on applying and receiving grants and fundraising by the students. Funding fluctuates each year and we are here today to why this program should have a sustainable funding source.



80 % of Kansas counties experienced a fatal crash. The question is how can we reduce these numbers and have an impact on our communities.

### It's not just about teens...

- The 2008/2009 seatbelt survey result in Crawford County was 54%.
- The 2009/2010 seatbelt survey result was 77%. This is an increase of 23% and included the age group of 0-17 years old.
- The current rate is 85%. This is a 65 % increase since SAFE started.
- The age group of 10-14 year olds increased by 40%.
- 5-9 year olds increased by 56%.

For two years running the 15 to 17 teens are buckling up at a higher rate than the 10 to 14(that is unheard of) the lower the age group the higher the use rate.

What this does not show is that in 2012, Crawford County experienced 53 roll over crashes. Out of those only 6 received disabling injuries and no fatals. They have been involved in SAFE for 6 years.

SAFE Program Costs		
SATE Hogiam Costs	Current SAFE costs	Proposed
	118 High Schools	632 Middle/High Schools
Salaries and benefits	\$45,778	\$139,500
Direct Program costs		
banners, pledge cards, supplies, travel)	\$27,009	\$146,000
Prizes and Rewards estimate		
visa card per 100 students per school/\$300 for grand prizes)	\$106,197	\$508,000
Administrative		
( office space, postage, insurance, internet, phone, duplication)	\$13,505	\$98,390
Totals	\$192,489	\$891,890
Average cost per school		
total divided by number of schools)	\$1,631	\$1,411

### The Future for Occupant Protection in Kansas:

## Win Win Win

Law is simplified for enforcement
Fines are only paid by those who break the law
Legislators become educators and participate in a cultural change
Lives are saved

It's simply a WIN – WIN – Win for everyone.

It's fair - It's simple

People understand the law and the fair consequences change behavior

The Culture changes over time...

..and the biggee: Lives are saved

To conclude, we would like you to consider house bill 2157 for passage this session.



Compare the earlier crash picture with one that occurred in Crawford County, two different results. Both live zones are intact. One buckled up, one not, one ejected one not, one exposed to SAFE one not. We know that not all crashes are survivable, some are so horrendous that a 5 point harness would allow you to survive, but we can save everyone that we can. We need to expose our youth to SAFE and the importance of all children wearing a seat belt or riding in a car seat. We can only do that if funding is available. We also think that if the fine in increased and part of that increase goes to SAFE we cannot only save lives' -we can change the culture for the future

The young teen in the white car is not with us today and the young lady in the picture is one of those that survived and will be an asset to this State for many years to come.



Law enforcement always say they don't remember the names of the lives they saved but always remember the names of the lives lost. I would like to introduce you today to Bobbie Jo Smith the young lady who survived this crash.



Let me introduce another survivor, Morgan Krankenberg who is a current member of the SAFE team in St John High School and her sponsor with the program Trooper Jeff Schawe. (Shahve)