

NEWS RELEASE



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DATE/TIME OF INCIDENT: February 08 – 21, 2010

DATE/TIME OF RELEASE: 02/09/2010 @ 2:00 p.m.

NATURE OF STORY: Safety Belt Blitz Saturation Patrol

LOCATION: Lane County & State of Oregon

DETAILS: Deputies from the Lane County Sheriff's Office will be participating in the Three Flags Campaign Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) starting February 8 through 21. The campaign is statewide and will be participated in by all Sheriff's Offices receiving grant funds for safety belt enforcement from the Oregon State Sheriffs' Association. The Oregon State Police and all police agencies receiving safety belt funds from the International Association of Chiefs of Police will also be participating.

Statewide crash and injury rates have dropped 44% and 49% respectively since passage of Oregon's safety belt law in 1990. The law, combined with active enforcement, has resulted in a 2009 Oregon belt use rate of 96%. This compares to a nationwide belt use average of 84%. Campaign success is measured by observed belt use rates, enforcement contact volume, and public information reported by each agency.

During the 2009 grant year, \$848,670 of federal traffic safety overtime brought 45,426 total enforcement contacts and paid officers to assist at child seat checks and other local educational events. The Safety Belt Blitz Campaign has helped save lives. Safety belts, when properly worn, have proven to be 45-65% effective in preventing traffic deaths according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Motorists who are unbelted, improperly wearing seat belts or who do not have child passengers in approved safety seats or booster seats will be the primary focus of this campaign. During the 2009 campaign statewide, overtime enforcement contacts resulted in 14,372 safety belt contacts, 825 child safety seat contacts, 345 DUII arrests and 563 Felony arrests. The Lane County Sheriff's Office encourages motorists to buckle up on every trip, every time.

Prepared by: Fred Swank, Sergeant Lane County Sheriff's Office