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Public Understanding
of Automatic Crash Protection Systems

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in cooperation with

North Carolina
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This demonstration project examined the effects of public awareness strategies to increase the correct use of automatic restraint systems (automatic seat belt and air bag systems). The project was conducted in North Carolina by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) in cooperation with the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP).

A program to publicize the correct use of automatic restraint systems was implemented statewide and a concentrated program was conducted in one county. The project consisted of a mass media program of public service messages and news releases coupled with a network of local advocates and organizations conducting educational programs. Effects of the program were measured in terms of changes in observed correct automatic system use and amount of exposure generated.

The findings of this study indicate that there are benefits in conducting public awareness programs that address the correct use of automatic restraint systems:

- During the program, manual belt use in air-bag-equipped vehicles increased from 66.0 percent to 74.8 percent and continued to increase in the after-program survey to 75.2 percent.
- Lap belt use in vehicles with motorized shoulder belts, the automatic restraint category with highest misuse, increased from 33.8 percent to a high of 37.7 percent during the program. However, these gains were not sustained once the program was completed.
- Overall belt use steadily increased statewide from 60.5 percent to 62.7 percent during the program and to 63.9 percent after the completion of the program.
- The largest gains in automatic and general belt use were realized at the concentrated program site.
- The project received extensive media exposure, primarily in the form of hard news coverage.
- The project developed a coalition of over 400 highway safety advocates including health department personnel, law enforcement officers, emergency medical providers, fire fighters, insurance agents, automobile dealers, and corporate safety officers who conducted regional activities. In addition, two trade organizations (insurance agencies and auto dealerships) adopted the program.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents a demonstration project to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies to increase the public understanding and correct use of automatic crash protection systems. The project was conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) in cooperation with the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP).

BACKGROUND ON AUTOMATIC RESTRAINTS

In 1984 Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) 208 was amended to require automatic crash protection in passenger cars on a phased-in schedule beginning September 1, 1986, with full implementation after September 1, 1989, unless two-thirds of the U.S. population was covered by mandatory belt use laws. The four-year phase-in required 10 percent of all 1987 model year cars sold in the U.S. to have automatic protection; 25 percent of 1988 model year cars; 40 percent of 1989 model year cars; and 100 percent of all 1990 model year cars. In 1991 the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) strengthened the requirements for front seat automatic protection by extending coverage to vans, light trucks, utility vehicles and small buses (LTVs). Using a similar phase-in plan, NHTSA now requires 20 percent of LTVs manufactured after September 1, 1994 to have such systems, progressing to all LTVs manufactured after September 1, 1997 (all 1998 model vehicles).

Vehicles with automatic crash protection provide one of the following types of automatic systems:

- Two-point motorized systems, featuring a shoulder belt attached at one end to a motor-driven guide that moves the belt into place around the occupant when the ignition is turned on. (Lower body protection is provided by a manual lap belt or, in some cases, a knee bolster.)
- Two-point non-motorized systems, which feature a shoulder belt attached at one end to the door so that it moves into place when the door is closed. (Lower body protection is provided by a manual lap belt.)
- Three-point non-motorized systems that include a combination shoulder-and-lap belt attached at the top and bottom of the trailing edge of the door so that it moves into place when the door is closed.
- Air bag systems with three-point manual belts. (For this system to provide full protection, it must be accompanied by the use of the lap-and-shoulder-belt system which is currently manually secured in air-bag-equipped vehicles.)

Automatic restraint systems are part of a series of attempts by federal and state agencies to increase belt use among U.S. motorists. Seat belts have been federally required in passenger vehicles since 1966 when lap belts were required as standard equipment under FMVSS 208. In 1968, lap and shoulder belt systems for front seat outboard occupants were made mandatory. However, up until the early 1980's, U.S. belt use rates were approximately 10 to 15 percent (Bowman and Rounds, 1989), indicating that the vast majority of motorists were electing not to use their available belt systems.

To increase these low belt use rates and/or to avoid automatic restraint requirements, widespread efforts were initiated to get mandatory belt use laws (MULs) passed by the state legislatures. In late 1984, New York passed the first mandatory belt use law. By 1992, 42 states and the District of Columbia had enacted safety belt use laws. (Four states enacted MULs, the laws were then repealed by voter referendum and three laws were later reinstated.) Belt use increased steadily during the late 80s. By 1991, approximately 59 percent of front seat occupants were buckling up nationally, and this figure reached 62 percent by the end of 1992, according to a population-weighted average of state use rates (NHTSA, 1993). Although these are important advancements, clearly there still is a large group of the motoring public who have not been persuaded to buckle up. Automatic restraint systems may be a method for achieving belt use among this group.

The driving public knew little about the automatic systems that were being introduced in passenger vehicles in 1987. Public education was needed to proactively address potential problems. One immediate concern was with the system that automatically buckled only the shoulder belt. For these systems the front seat occupants still need to manually buckle the lap belt. Early observational data collected in North Carolina indicated that only 29 percent of drivers restrained with automatic shoulders belts had secured manual lap belts (Reinfurt et al, 1991). Another potential misunderstanding was that drivers might consider the air bag to be a replacement for the lap-and-shoulder-belt system rather than the supplemental system that it is. Motorists needed to be educated that air bag systems provide *additional* protection in frontal and frontal oblique collisions *only*. There also were new complications for the use of child safety seats both in seating positions fitted with air bags and with many of the automatic belt systems that needed to be addressed.

Strategies were needed to educate the public about these new systems. Traditional belt use messages needed to be modified to include new technologies, and research was needed to determine the impact of these systems on belt use.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of this project was to increase the correct use of automatic safety belts and manual belts in air-bag-equipped vehicles through a yearlong, statewide, broad-based program that combined a localized educational component with a public information/mass media campaign. The objectives of the program were to convince motorists to; 1) use manual lap belts in combination with automatic shoulder belts; 2) use the lap-and-shoulder belts in air-bag-equipped vehicles; 3) wear belts correctly, (i.e., low and snug on the hips); and 4) leave automatic belts attached. The program attempted to correct misinformation that drivers have about automatic protection, and help them understand the importance of automatic systems and belt laws in preventing deaths and injuries on our highways. Some of the promotions were directed toward specific target groups such as new car purchasers and teenage drivers.

The project recruited state-level and local public and private agencies to participate in this effort and used the state's six media markets (as shown in Figure 1.1) to create simultaneous regional campaigns across North Carolina.

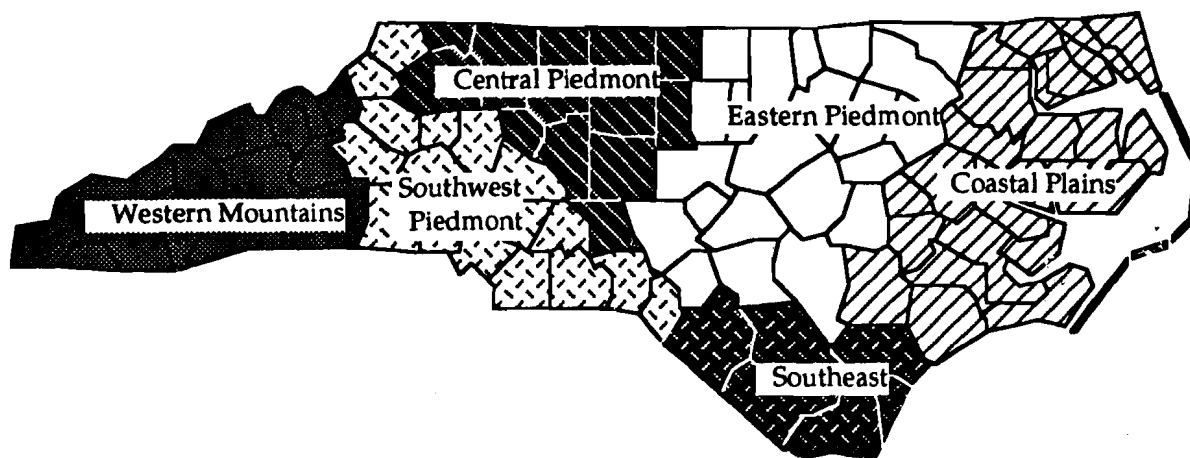


Figure 1.1 The six North Carolina program regions

Each program began with a training workshop attended by a core group of local leaders and a kickoff media event. One jurisdiction (New Hanover County in the southeast region) was selected to conduct a more concentrated effort and received a community grant to enhance local resources.

The publicity for the programs was generated in three forms: hard news, public awareness activities, and educational promotions. Hard news coverage was

generated through press releases and media events about the program activities, along with the demonstration of the correct usage of the different types of automatic restraints and program results. Public awareness activities focused on obtaining play for TV and radio PSA's, print ads, and billboard or other outdoor advertising. Educational and promotional activities included the production of brochures, posters, bumper stickers, hang tags, fliers, and decals for use in local programs.

The program evaluation included a process evaluation of the promotional activity in each region and an outcome evaluation of the use and correct use of automatic restraint systems over the project period. Statewide seat belt and automatic restraint use data were collected prior to and at intervals throughout the program. This information was used to promote media coverage of program results as well as to evaluate the effect of the program. By conducting the program at two levels--a statewide program and a concentrated demonstration site--the project was able to pilot test and evaluate different strategies, as well as compare the effect of the concentrated program to the overall program. The statewide seat belt and automatic restraint use data enabled the project to look at the differences by restraint type among regions of the state, and for urban and rural differences. The data on automatic restraint systems were divided into type of system, thus allowing examination for use changes for each specific system.

II. STATEWIDE PROGRAM

PLANNING

Identification of Regional Programs

The statewide public information program was divided into six regional programs that corresponded to the six media markets in the state. These regions were identified from west to east as Western Mountains, Southwest Piedmont, Central Piedmont, Eastern Piedmont, Southeast and Coastal Plains. This strategy was designed: 1) to encourage regional programs and coalitions that could target specific populations and situations characteristic of those regions; and 2) to encourage more media coverage by localizing the findings and giving the local programs an opportunity to piggyback publicity about their programs with the statewide program.

Each region had one to three local coordinators who were the main contacts for the project. Statewide data on overall and automatic belt use were collected and divided into regional results. These were given to the local programs as feedback that could be compared to the other regions of the state.

Six regional workshops began the yearlong program by gathering concerned individuals and organizations in each region in order to acquaint them with the program and recruit their involvement. The workshop attendants became the coalition that drove the regional public awareness campaign and activities. The attendance roster for the workshops served as the base mailing list for the various project efforts.

Identification of Target Groups and Recruitment of Program Participants

The first task was to identify the program target groups and the agencies, organizations and individuals in the state in the best positions to reach these target groups. The main groups were purchasers of new cars and current owners of cars equipped with automatic restraints (primarily cars manufactured after 1986). These were the two groups for whom the information had immediate need. Since automobile dealerships are in contact with most purchasers of new cars, and insurance agencies are in contact with every owner of a new or used vehicle, the North Carolina Automobile Dealers Association and the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina were recruited to lead core programs.

The NC Insurance Commissioner, a well respected elected official who supported seat belts, was brought into the project. His participation in the kickoff workshops and news conferences enhanced the events and contributed to the excellent media coverage received.

The general public also was a target group in that everyone eventually will retire their current vehicles and own cars with automatic systems. Also, people who own

vehicles without automatic systems ride with people who have vehicles with such systems. Yet another objective for the general public was to encourage future car purchasers to choose vehicles with both air bags and lap-and-shoulder-belt systems.

Lastly, the program targeted the motoring populations most at risk of having a crash and in the greatest need for proper protection. Within this group were beginning drivers, young males, and drivers who have had driving violations or been at fault in crashes.

Key groups identified for reaching the entire motoring public included the North Carolina Sheriff's Association; the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police; the State Highway Patrol; the Office of Emergency Medical Services; the North Carolina Passenger Safety Association; the Department of Public Instruction; county health departments; the Injury Control Section of the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources; the NC Department of Transportation's Division of Motor Vehicles; and the NC Head Injury Foundation. These organizations assisted the demonstration program by providing mailing lists of their members and, where appropriate, guiding the development of materials for their membership.

Regional coordinators were recruited based on recommendations from these contacts. These recommendations proved valuable to the project because they identified committed, dedicated persons representing different disciplines and highway safety perspectives.

The southeast region was led by the director of the Traffic Injury Prevention Program of the New Hanover County Memorial Hospital, a health educator with the New Hanover County Health Department and a health educator from the Robeson County Health Department; the coastal plains region was led by the director of the Traffic Injury Prevention Program of the University Medical Center of Eastern North Carolina in Greenville; the central piedmont's lead was shared by a traffic safety officer with the Greensboro Police Department and a health educator from the Yadkin County Health Department; the southwest piedmont effort was led by the director of the Traffic Injury Prevention Program of the Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte; and the western mountains was led by a health educator from the Haywood County Health Department and the coordinator of emergency medical services of McDowell County. The eastern piedmont region, which included the state capitol and the headquarters of the state agencies involved in the project, was the focus of the statewide efforts. HSRC, also located in that region, coordinated this area's activities.

Program Theme

The message for this project was complex, so coming up with a simple theme was challenging. It was important that the message not exclude the people who have vehicles with only manual belts, since they represented the majority of drivers. Although cars equipped with air bags were becoming more and more

commonplace, they still represented a small portion of the vehicle mix. Therefore, the message needed to encourage motorists to embrace air bag technology while not creating the impression that anyone who doesn't have air bags is without protection. In order to exclude no one, the theme "SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS Use all you've got" was chosen. The theme changed to SEAT BELTS Use all you've got." when used as a tag line for publicity about automatic belts . This theme was incorporated into a program logo, shown in Figure 2.1, and was used on all materials prepared for the program.



Figure 2.1 Program Theme and Logo.

Three core messages were developed to communicate the objectives of the program:

- *Will the 400,000 people who will be in crashes in North Carolina this year PLEASE BUCKLE UP?* This general message was intended to increase motorists' perceived risk of being in a crash and thus increase the likelihood that motorists will choose to buckle up.
- *Give automatic shoulder belts a hand. Buckle that lap belt.* Since by far the most prevalent misuse of automatic restraints in NC is the failure to use manual lap belts with motorized shoulder belts, this message was directed specifically at motorists with this type of vehicle.
- *Cars with air bags have seat belts too. There's a good reason why.* This concept presented the reasons why air bags should not stand alone as protection in crashes. Air bags are supplemental restraint systems.

These messages were used in television and radio public service announcements and were incorporated into a brochure that served as the main promotional piece for the project. Twenty thousand brochures were distributed at the workshops and

an additional 50,000 were supplied to program participants throughout the program year. The brochure is included in Appendix A.

Workshop and Program Kickoff Planning

The project officially began with six workshops and kickoff news conferences. North Carolina has six separate media markets, so a workshop/news conference was planned for each region. Listed below are the workshop sites and dates. Each workshop was held at a hotel with meeting and dining facilities and with space for a news conference and outdoor exhibit areas.

Raleigh- Durham 6/18/91
Wilmington 6/20/91
Asheville 6/25/91

Greensboro 6/27/91
Charlotte 7/11/91
Greenville 7/16/91

Project staff designed the workshops to accomplish four broad goals. First, to inform those attending about automatic restraint systems and the associated pitfalls. Second, to educate these people thoroughly enough that they could go back to their communities and be the local experts on automatic restraints. Third, to encourage those attending the workshops to participate and take lead roles in the program's future activities -- a kickoff of local and regional activities. Fourth, to generate media coverage of the news conferences to inform the general public about the misuse of automatic restraint systems and about the statewide demonstration program.

A brochure publicizing the workshops (shown in Appendix A) was developed and mailed to approximately 7,000 potential attendants. The following is a breakdown of the mailing list:

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 2,300 | recipients of the HSRC newsletter (This included all health departments, health educators, the research community, highway safety advocates, injury prevention specialists, and members of the North Carolina Passenger Safety Association.); |
| 600 | law enforcement agencies including police and sheriff's departments and the NC State Highway Patrol (Brochures were sent with a cover letter from HSRC, GHSP and the NCPSA encouraging participation.); |
| 500 | NC Head Injury Foundation, an organization whose membership includes family members and victims of automobile crashes; |
| 650 | licensed emergency medical services providers (These brochures were distributed with an accompanying memo from the director of the state Office of Emergency Medical Services encouraging participation.); |
| 1,600 | independent insurance agents (These were distributed through their trade organization, NC Association of Independent Insurance Agents, |

which made this program a project for their young insurance agents group);

300 direct insurance writers, agents who work for an insurance company, (These were distributed through the Insurance News Service.);

800 automobile dealerships (The NC Automobile Dealers Association distributed these with an endorsement from the organization.);

30 TV public affairs directors (A companion letter encouraged the stations to consider covering the automatic restraint issue through PSAs and through their local talk show programming.); and

150 attendants at the NC Injury Prevention Conference, held in Chapel Hill, NC in October, 1990.

An additional thousand brochures were divided among the lead organizations in each region to distribute to potential participants in their communities. A presentation was made at a state injury prevention conference in October, 1990 (listed above) to gain support for the project. As a result of that presentation, the Department of Environment, Health and Human Resources sent a letter to all health departments encouraging participation in the effort.

PROGRAM KICKOFF

Workshops and News Conferences

The first workshop/news conference, held in the Raleigh-Durham-Research Triangle area, served both as the statewide program announcement and as the region's kickoff event. Through this gathering, state, regional and local media outlets first learned of the program and the misuse of automatic restraint systems.

The workshop began with with a morning session in which participants received an overview of crash protection systems, the status of belt use in North Carolina, and specific information about automatic restraint systems. Program facilitators made special mention of child safety seats and the concerns about using child restraints with automatic seat belts and air bags.

After a short break, the second session of the morning involved HSRC staff members explaining the upcoming statewide public information and education program and asking for suggestions and participation. Examples were given of different types of community efforts and how law enforcement officers, health and medical professionals, insurance agents and auto dealers could carry the "Use All You've Got" message to local target audiences. Workshop participants also viewed draft versions of three public service announcements scheduled to air within a few

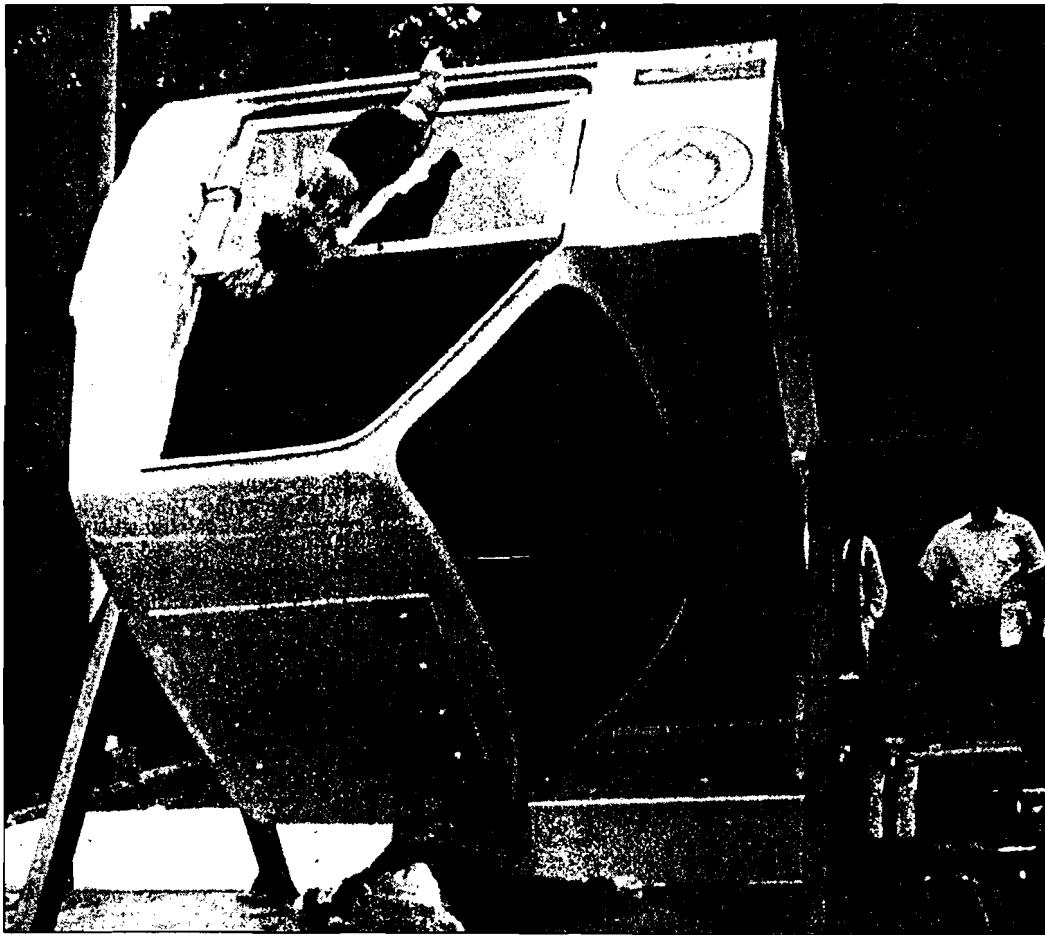
months. Program facilitators asked for comments and suggestions about the PSAs and then used these remarks during the production of the final versions. The creation of the three PSAs was one of the first actions of the statewide campaign.

Each participant received a program packet that included brochures and other informative materials on seat belts and air bags. HSRC produced a brochure and fact sheets to cover subject areas on which there were no existing materials. Twenty thousand copies of the brochure were distributed during the workshops. Those attending, in turn, took the brochures and distributed them in their communities. The packet contained a sheet of reproducible "Use All You've Got" logos for materials local programs would produce. HSRC also made available for participants *Community Safety Belt Programs*, *A Guidebook for Law Enforcement Agencies*, and the videotape programs, *Crash Dynamics: How Seat Belts Work and Growing Up Buckled Up*. The book and tape were produced by HSRC and the NC GHSP. The guidebook gives step-by-step instructions on how to undertake and conduct a community-based belt program. The video program, *Crash Dynamics*, also was shown as part of the morning's first session.

After lunch, which was provided as part of the workshop, the scheduled news conference announced the start of the yearlong, statewide program. Speakers included the NC Insurance Commissioner and representatives of HSRC and GHSP. Workshop participants and attending media also were able to view and test the different types of automatic seat belts on display in the new cars provided by local dealerships. In addition, those attending saw an air bag deployment and a simulation of a roll-over crash. The deployment left a lasting impression with its loud bang and cloud of smoke. The simulator showed graphically what happens to belted and unbelted occupants in a rollover crash. An adult dummy and a child-size doll were used in the demonstration, and both, when unbelted in the demonstrations, were thrown from the vehicle during the rollover sequence and landed on the pavement. A NC Associated Press photographer took a photo of the simulator in action. This photo appeared in many of the state's newspapers the following day and is shown in Figure 2.2.

The second workshop took place two days later in Wilmington, the concentrated program site. Workshops/news conferences in Asheville, Greensboro, Charlotte, and Greenville followed during the next few weeks. All of these kickoff events were similar to the Raleigh-Durham kickoff.

Some 375 safety advocates attended the six workshops. Law enforcement officers, EMS technicians, public health professionals and state officials were the main groups represented, along with a number of insurance agents. Fewer automobile dealers attended workshops, although local dealerships did supply the display vehicles and later, during the yearlong program, placed buckle up hang tags on their new cars and trucks.



The Associated Press

THROWN FROM CAR: A seat belt simulator demonstrates how a mother, at bottom, and a child can be thrown from a tumbling vehicle.

Proper use of safety devices urged for N.C. motorists

DURHAM (AP) — North Carolina motorists should use every part of their auto safety systems to keep down health costs and insurance rates, proponents of a new statewide program said Tuesday.

Called "Seat Belts and Air Bags: Use All You've Got," the yearlong education program intends to show the benefits of correctly using new auto restraint systems.

"Technology has changed ... but there's a lack of knowledge out there as to how important the shoulder belt and lap belt is com-

bined with an air bag," said Paul Jones of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

Almost 60 percent of all North Carolinians now wear seat belts, Jones said. And seat belt use has reduced the number of traffic-related deaths and injuries since 1985, when a mandatory seat-belt law was enacted.

While most motorists use some sort of safety restraint, studies show that 70 percent fail to correctly use manual lap belts with automatic shoulder belts, said Donald Reinfurt of the Highway Safety Research Center at the

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

He said 25 percent of drivers of cars with air bags do not use their lap and shoulder belts.

Jones said safe driving is a consumer issue and also one of public health and economics.

Unsafe drivers also affect employers, because employers lose personnel and productivity when motorists have to take time to recover from injuries.

State Insurance Commissioner Jim Long said the seat belt law has helped lower insurance costs.

Figure 2.2 Example of Media Coverage of Kickoff News Conference

At each news conference, the agencies that would coordinate local and regional efforts were introduced. These lead agencies stayed in close contact with HSRC, relayed reports of program activities and distributed seat belt promotion materials.

Fulfilling a preset goal, the six workshops/news conferences attracted a substantial amount of media coverage. In fact, the workshop series generated more media attention than HSRC staff had anticipated. Personnel from 24 separate news outlets in North Carolina covered the program kickoff series. Each news conference drew the attention of at least one local/regional television station. All totalled, 11 TV stations, eight radio stations, four newspapers and the North Carolina Associated Press broadcasted or printed first-hand reports about the workshops and the ensuing demonstration program.

Project staff appeared on community-affairs-type radio and television shows. Viewers and listeners in the Wilmington, Asheville, Greensboro and Charlotte areas received safety belt information through live morning and noon TV shows, and morning and afternoon radio talk shows. Wire stories, written by HSRC staff and sent out from UNC News Services and the NC Associated Press, appeared in most of the newspapers across the state. At least 75 percent of all the daily newspapers in North Carolina ran stories and/or photos about the workshops and statewide seat belt program.

PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Public Service Advertising

TV PSAs. As part of this project's broad public information component, HSRC developed a set of television public service announcements. These 15- and 30-second spots were distributed to the public affairs directors at each North Carolina television station and to several local cable television companies and cable advertising firms. Take One Productions, in Raleigh, NC, filmed and produced the public service announcements.

Initial concepts for the PSAs were opinion-tested by the workshop participants. A draft version of each PSA was produced shortly before the workshop series began. During the workshops, the participants were asked to view the PSAs, to give their honest, open opinions, and to make suggestions. The final versions of the PSAs were then the products of those criticisms and suggestions. Below are brief description of the PSAs.

Automatic Shoulder Belts -- a 15-second spot that cautions motorists who have automatic shoulder belts to buckle their laps belts as well. The main message of this PSA is "Give automatic shoulder belts a hand. Buckle that lap belt." The most common form of automatic restraint misuse in North Carolina is not buckling lap belts when the vehicle is equipped with motorized shoulder belts. This spot speaks directly to these drivers.

Air Bags -- a 15-second PSA that reminds motorists who have cars equipped with air bags to keep on using their safety belts. This spot's opening line says, "Cars with air bags have set belts too. There's a good reason why." The PSA further explains that air bags will not inflate in rear-end collisions, side impacts and rollover crashes.

400,000 People -- this spot was distributed in 15- and 30-second versions. One version shows numerous crashed cars, the other focuses on a junk yard scene. This PSA asks the rhetorical question, "Will the 400,000 people who will be in crashes in North Carolina this year PLEASE BUCKLE UP?" This general message was intended to promote the use of all types of seat belt systems.

Regional coordinators in each of the six NC media markets and HSRC staff reported seeing the PSAs on different television stations for several months.

Radio PSAs. All program participants were sent scripts for radio PSAs. Most of the spots contained in these scripts were designed for use during the different holiday seasons. Others could be used as general belt-use-promotion PSAs anytime of the year.

The PSAs contained facts and themes that could be personalized to create local spots. Program participants were encouraged to ask their local radio stations to produce the scripted PSAs and use popular disc jockeys as the narrators. Such a request would help bring in the radio stations as program supporters. The scripts for the live announcer radio PSAs are contained in Appendix B.

Generation of Hard News

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center automatics program generated hard news coverage mainly through two means: 1) the workshop/program kickoff series; and 2) periodic news releases sent out through the UNC News Services. The amount of coverage generated by the workshops and kickoff news conferences is discussed earlier in the report. This section will examine how that coverage and later hard news attention was achieved.

Workshop Series News. Workshop/news conference site selection was a first consideration in trying to attract the media. As explained previously, HSRC conducted a separate workshop and news conference in each of the state's six media markets. This improved the chances that news of the program would reach all regions of the state. Project staff also gave special consideration when choosing the specific workshop sites within each media market. Sites needed to be close to media outlets, but central enough to attract program participants. Program staff chose the cities of Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, Greenville and Wilmington because each provides at least one major television station, numerous radio stations, a regional newspaper, and is central to its region.

HSRC mailed and faxed media advisories to alert news organizations in each media market of its upcoming workshop. The week prior to a workshop/news conference date, HSRC and UNC News Services sent media advisories to all the newspapers, radio stations and TV stations in that particular market. The advisories provided day, time and location information and gave a rough agenda of the planned events, including an invitation to lunch. The media advisories also gave news organizations general background information on automatic restraint systems and their misuse.

One to two days before each workshop, HSRC staff followed up the advisories with phone calls and more faxes. These communiqués served as reminders and re-emphasized that certain news conference events (air bag deployment and rollover simulator) would provide good photo and video opportunities. In all, HSRC staff and UNC News Services staff made nearly 100 contacts, encouraging the media to attend the workshops and to run stories about automatic restraints and the statewide program.

In addition to the media advisories and follow-up contacts, HSRC and UNC News Services distributed separate news releases on the dates of the Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington kickoffs. As mentioned before, the Raleigh-Durham conference was held first and served as both a regional kickoff and the state program kickoff. This release announced the start of the statewide program and gave the media detailed information about the problems with automatic seat belts. Every news organization in the state received this release either electronically or through the mail.

The news release for the Wilmington conference differed in that it went to media in southeast North Carolina only. This release announced that Wilmington was chosen to be the concentrated program site. Both the Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington releases included HSRC belt use statistics and quotes from staff members about the dangers of automatic belt misuse.

Program News Releases. Once the workshop series ended and the yearlong public information program began, HSRC generated hard news coverage through periodic news releases. Again, working with UNC News Services, HSRC wrote and sent out five releases between November 1991 and December 1992. Each release focused on a closely defined issue related to North Carolina automatic and overall seat belt use. Each report received good media attention, spawning stories in newspapers, and on radio and television news programs.

The first release, dated November 4, 1991, actually contained six slightly different releases. Each media market received a different release based on the belt use rates for that region. Each release highlighted that particular market's automatic and overall belt use rates and compared them with the other state regions and North Carolina as a whole.

A visit to North Carolina by the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles provided the focus for the second and third releases. Two of the cartoon turtles, Donatello and Michaelangelo, visited four NC cities to kick off Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week (February 9 through 15, 1992), and to show their support for child seat and seat belt use. Donatello and Michaelangelo made airport stops in Asheville, Greensboro, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington. HSRC coordinated the promotional visit and alerted the media of the Turtles' planned stops. Following the successful pattern of the workshops, HSRC and UNC News Services faxed and mailed media advisories to newspapers and stations in the four cities. Again, these faxes were followed by phone calls and more faxes the day before the Turtles' arrival. HSRC also prepared a news release explaining the reason for the visit and the importance of using child restraints. Media representatives covering Donatello and Michaelangelo's four stops received copies of the release. UNC also mailed the release to media organizations outside of the four cities. Media response in the four cities was outstanding. The visits received television and front-page newspaper coverage. Figure 2.3 shows an example of this coverage.

HSRC also released news and facts about using child safety seats with automatic seat belt systems. This third program news release stressed that automatic seat belt systems, as installed by auto manufacturers, do not work properly with child seats. HSRC cautioned parents to read the manuals for both their automobile and the child safety seat and to follow all instructions carefully. Parents also were urged to examine their cars manufacturer's recommendations for using a child seat in front passenger positions equipped with an air bag.

An update of the state's automatic belt use rates and news of federal grant money hinging on North Carolina reaching an overall use rate of 70 percent were the main items of the program's fourth release. The lead sentence, "More North Carolina motorists must start using their seat belts or the state risks losing future federal funding for highway safety programs," grabbed the attention of news organizations statewide. Some 14 different newspapers, radio stations and TV news crews contacted the Center directly. The May 8, 1992 release brought the greatest media coverage of seat belts and the statewide program since the workshop series.

The fifth and final release of the automatics project announced the good news that, as belt use rates in North Carolina have climbed, the rate of people being killed or seriously injured in crashes has dropped. The release quoted HSRC staff, saying increased seat belt use was a leading contributing factor in the decline of crash deaths and serious injuries. Serious and fatal injuries rates of drivers covered by the state's seat belt law have decreased steadily since the law went into effect. These rates are roughly two-thirds of what they were before the law.

This final release also contained encouraging news about belt use in cars with air bags. When the program began in 1991, HSRC staff feared driver belt use in cars equipped with air bags would decline as the program progressed despite public information efforts. Researchers anticipated that as more people began driving air



John Page / News & Record

MEET MICHAELANGELO: Michaelangelo shakes hands with preschool children from the GTCC Children's Center, who came to see him and Donatello at the Piedmont Triad International Airport Friday afternoon.

Ninja Turtles say 'CowaBUCKLE Dude'

Piedmont children learn how to travel safely.

By TATIANA M. WITH
Staff Writer

Parents beware: The automatic safety belts and air bags in a new car are not automatically safe when used with a child safety seat.

"Traditionally, restraint systems are designed for adults. And in planning, not enough consideration has been given for safety seats," said William L. Hall, spokesman for the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.

Hall's comments Friday came when Michaelangelo and Donatello, two of the four Teenage Mutant

Ninja Turtles, urged preschoolers across the state to say "CowaBUCKLE Dude!" The slogan is a spin-off of the green creatures' famous saying "CowaBunga Dude."

About 45 children, many donning green turtle sweats and carrying turtle toys, swarmed their favorite pizza-munching, crime-fighting heroes at Piedmont Triad International Airport. That visit marked the beginning of Child Safety Awareness Week Feb. 9-15.

The turtles also visited Wilmington, Raleigh-Durham and Asheville.

The automatic shoulder belts cannot secure child safety seats at all, Hall said. And most lap belts

can't be properly pulled and locked to secure the child's seat because they tighten only during crashes or in a sudden stop.

Passenger-side air bags can also endanger newborns and infants riding rear-facing restraints in the front seat. The bags pop out of the dash quickly and with such force, Hall said, that they'll push the restraint and the child into the back of the seat.

Hall said he doesn't mean to discourage parents from using child safety seats. When used correctly, child safety seats are more than 70 percent effective in preventing deaths.

If the car has automatic lap and shoulder belts, the lap belt should

be changed to a manual belt that will lock and hold the seat in place. For cars with automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts, manufacturers recommend that parents purchase special heavy-duty clips that shorten the lap belt enough to keep the seat in place.

Hall said children are safest in the back seat, but he cautioned that the new lap-shoulder belts there also need to be adjusted with locking clips to secure a child seat. He said the middle back seat has a manual belt that works well without adjustment.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?
Call the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center at 1-800-672-4527.

Figure 2.3 Example of Media Coverage of Ninja Turtle News Conferences

bag equipped cars and as more lower-priced models began offering air bags, belt use in these vehicles could drop. To the contrary, the news release reported that driver belt use in vehicles with air bags was increasing. (Appendix C contains copies of all news releases generated by the project.)

Media Support and Reaction. The amount of media attention and support given to the automatic restraint project came as a mild surprise. Every program event and news release generated media coverage. Every workshop/news conference appeared on at least one television news program. Regional newspapers covered all but one of the workshops.

Perhaps the most memorable newspaper coverage came during the Charlotte workshop and news conference. *The Charlotte Observer*, a newspaper with a circulation of approximately three million, sent its top city columnist, Allen Norwood to the event. Mr. Norwood came early and stayed through the day's entire schedule of events. His column appeared the next morning. It told of the program and about automatic belts and air bags, but mainly it spoke of the EMS and other medical professionals who were there. As the column read, ". . . all the sessions across the state have been heavily attended by emergency medical workers. These aren't do-gooder safety nuts. These men and women, many of them volunteers, are the ones who mop up the carnage after auto wrecks. 'Come ride with us for a day and a half,' said one EMS worker. 'That will convince you about seat belts.'" (The full article is contained in Appendix C.)

State wire services picked up four of the five program news releases. This means every newspaper, TV station and radio station in the state received periodic reports of the program and North Carolina's seat belt use.

Each release generated calls from the media. HSRC staff were seen on television, heard on radio and quoted in newspapers throughout the program. Project staff became authorities on the use of automatic restraint systems. National media organizations such as *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Detroit Free Press* and the *CBS Evening News* have called HSRC for information on automatic systems.

Coalition Newsletter

In order to communicate effectively and efficiently with everyone who attended a workshop, HSRC staff developed the *North Carolina Automatic Times* newsletter, shown in Figure 2.4. Three issues of the *NC Automatic Times* were mailed to program participants during the yearlong project. Approximately 450 persons and organizations received copies of each newsletter.

Each issue of the *Automatic Times* contained articles about successful and innovative efforts underway in the six different regions of the state. HSRC staff collected and printed these stories to pass along good program ideas and to recognize the hard work going on across the state. Other articles described upcoming HSRC

NORTH CAROLINA AUTOMATIC TIMES

State News of Automatic Seat Belts and Air Bags

Summer 1992

Surveys Record More NC Motorists Using Automatic Seat Belts Correctly

The number of North Carolina motorists using automatic seat belt systems correctly appears to be increasing. Researchers say this could be an indication that the ongoing statewide project to educate motorists about automatic belts and air bags is reaching its audience.

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center's latest observational surveys show that the use of manual lap belts in cars with automatic shoulder belts is up or at least holding steady in most areas of the state when compared with the previous survey. (See map on page 2.) The use rate of seat belts in cars with air bags also has risen in most regions. Statewide, approximately 70 percent of drivers in cars equipped with air bags are using their manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

The adjacent table shows how the different regions of the state have progressed in automatic seat belt use.

Despite the good news that automatic belt use is improving, work remains. The latest surveys also indicate that nearly two-thirds of NC drivers with motorized automatic shoulder belts still fail to buckle their manual lap belts.

These people are not getting all the crash protection

their cars have to offer when they forget to use their lap belts. They also stand a greater risk of suffering serious injuries in crashes.

HSRC researchers have observed more than 9,000 NC drivers in cars with automatic restraints over the last four years. Researchers say more surveys are needed to determine if increasing correct automatic belt use is a significant trend.

Lap Belt Use in Cars with Automatic Belts

Region	Fall 1991	Spring 1992
Western Mountains	40 percent	40 percent
Southwest Piedmont	35 percent	42 percent
Central Piedmont	27 percent	37 percent
Eastern Piedmont	42 percent	38 percent
Southeast	21 percent	30 percent
Coastal Plains	30 percent	27 percent

Belt Use in Cars with Air Bags

Region	Fall 1991	Spring 1992
Western Mountains	60 percent	55 percent
Southwest Piedmont	70 percent	71 percent
Central Piedmont	68 percent	79 percent
Eastern Piedmont	69 percent	78 percent
Southeast	62 percent	64 percent
Coastal Plains	63 percent	66 percent

Figure 2.4 Project Newsletter

activities and materials designed to assist local programs.

All three issues reported the latest regional and statewide automatic seat belt use figures. These reports tracked the improvement each region experienced in educating people about the proper use of automatic seat belts and air bags.

A primary goal of the *Automatic Times* was to make those people who attended the workshops feel like they were an important part of a statewide program. HSRC staff provided news of activities and different enforcement approaches from all across the state. Activities featured in *Automatic Times* articles ranged from small departmental and factory-based buckle up efforts to the major events taking place in the concentrated site of Wilmington.

HSRC gathered the different reports and news items simply by calling regional coordinators and others on the workshop attendance log. Participants also were asked to send in activity reports each time they received program memos from HSRC.

Program staff also used the *Automatic Times* to inform readers how they could order bulk supplies of educational materials. Based on the numbers of orders for the various items, the *Automatic Times* was well read. Several people expressed regret when they learned the newsletter would not continue after the automatics project ended.

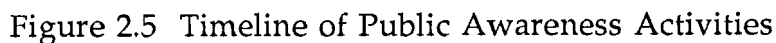
CORE PROGRAMS

The public awareness program was divided into two types of activities: 1) promotions conducted at the statewide level with local programs encouraged to participate; and 2) programs developed for specific groups with materials designed to meet their individual program objectives. Figure 2.5 presents an overview of activities that occurred from July 1991 through October 1992. The concentrated site had its own public awareness plan that is discussed under a separate section of this report.

All materials produced by the project were made available to all participants. Even promotional materials developed for a specific group, such as hang tags for auto dealers, were offered to all workshop participants with the suggestion to encourage their local dealers to use them. The project stayed in communication with the workshop participants. Many of the local activities were shared with the program and distributed through articles in the project newsletter *Automatic Times*. Examples of local activities reported include:

- Workshop conducted in Haywood County to educate regional law enforcement agencies about the benefits of belts

July 1991 - October 1992



- Seat belt education and enforcement program conducted by the Boone Police Department
- Review of safety policies and initiation of training on seat belt safety by the McDowell County EMS coordinator for all county employees
- Rural northeastern regional promotion by the Albemarle Commission that included a series of newspaper feature articles and presentations using program video and brochures
- Greenville multimedia program that highlighted local belted crash survivors
- Adoption by the Yadkin County Injury Prevention Task Force of the statewide automatic seat belt campaign as its 1992 project
- Work of the Durham County Health Department with four high schools to raise seat belt awareness and use among teenagers
- Construction of a rollover demonstrator, like the one used in the kickoff workshops, by the Greensboro Police Department to assist in seat belt community presentations
- Program developed by the Cumberland County Department of Emergency Services that used ambulances and rescue vehicles as part of presentations on prevention of highway injuries that emphasized seat belt benefits
- Chatham County Health Department's high school seat belt incentive program
- Program by the State Capitol Insurance Company of Raleigh to increase belt use among employees that resulted in a NHTSA 70%+ award
- Seat belt incentive and education program conducted for plant employees by the wellness committee of the Fruit of the Loom plant in Montgomery County.

The following sections highlight the major statewide efforts conducted during the program period.

Updates on Regional and Statewide Belt Use

HSRC collected seat belt and automatic restraint data across the state by program region. Three waves of this data were collected during the project period. Results were provided to regional participants through the *Automatic Times* newsletter and as copies of news releases in October, 1991 and in May and October, 1992. Each news release included a media note that listed area programs. Local leaders were

encouraged to talk to their media so that they could include local programs in their stories.

TV and Radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

A set of four 30-second and two 15-second TV PSAs was previewed at the kickoff workshops in order to benefit from the reactions of the participants. The PSAs were revised based on these comments and sent to the public affairs director at each NC television station.

Local programs were sent scripts for radio PSAs promoting belt use to coincide with Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. The scripts contained facts and themes that were personalized to create local PSAs. Local programs were encouraged to get stations to assist in producing these messages and to recruit popular disc jockeys to join the cause. The TV and radio PSAs are described in detail in the previous section under Public Information Activities.

Child Passenger Safety Week and Training Workshops

Each year the week in which Valentine's Day falls is celebrated as National Child Passenger Safety Week. The program decided to use that week as an opportunity to get out the message that there are several special considerations for using child safety seats with automatic belts and air bags. Two important cautions needed to be covered:

- Rear-facing safety seats, required for infants under 20 pounds, should not be placed in a seating position that has an air bag.
- Most automatic belts are not designed to hold a safety seat securely in place. Parents should check their owner's manual to find out if a safety seat can be used with the car's automatic belt system. If the safety seat cannot be used with the system, then the safety seat should be used in the rear seat, which is the safest seating position for a small child and is equipped with manual belts.

Two one-day workshops on child passenger safety were held in Greenville and Winston Salem in January 1992 to cover general correct use of child safety seats as well as the proper use of safety seats with automatic systems. The workshops were designed to prepare groups and individuals to go back to their communities and work with the media in using Child Passenger Safety Week to get more children buckled up correctly. HSRC and GHSP prepared a news release for Child Passenger Safety Week about using safety seats with automatic restraints, and again local groups were encouraged to urge the media to incorporate their local activities in the story.

Contacts with the licensors of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles resulted in two Turtles, Michaelangelo and Donatello, coming to North Carolina the Friday before Child Passenger Safety Week (February 7) to make a swing through the state. They

appeared at news conferences at the airports in four cities: Wilmington, Raleigh, Greensboro, and Asheville. The local coordinators for the automatics project made the arrangements and identified children to receive "Saved by the Safety Seat" awards at each news conference. Media coverage for these events was excellent as several newspapers printed full-color photographs of the events.

The next week, the Turtles appeared with Dr. C. Everette Koop, retired Surgeon General and chairman of the National Safe Kids Campaign, in Washington D.C. at the National Press Club to kick off Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week nationally. It was through the efforts of the project coordinator in Wilmington that the initial contact with the Turtles was made.

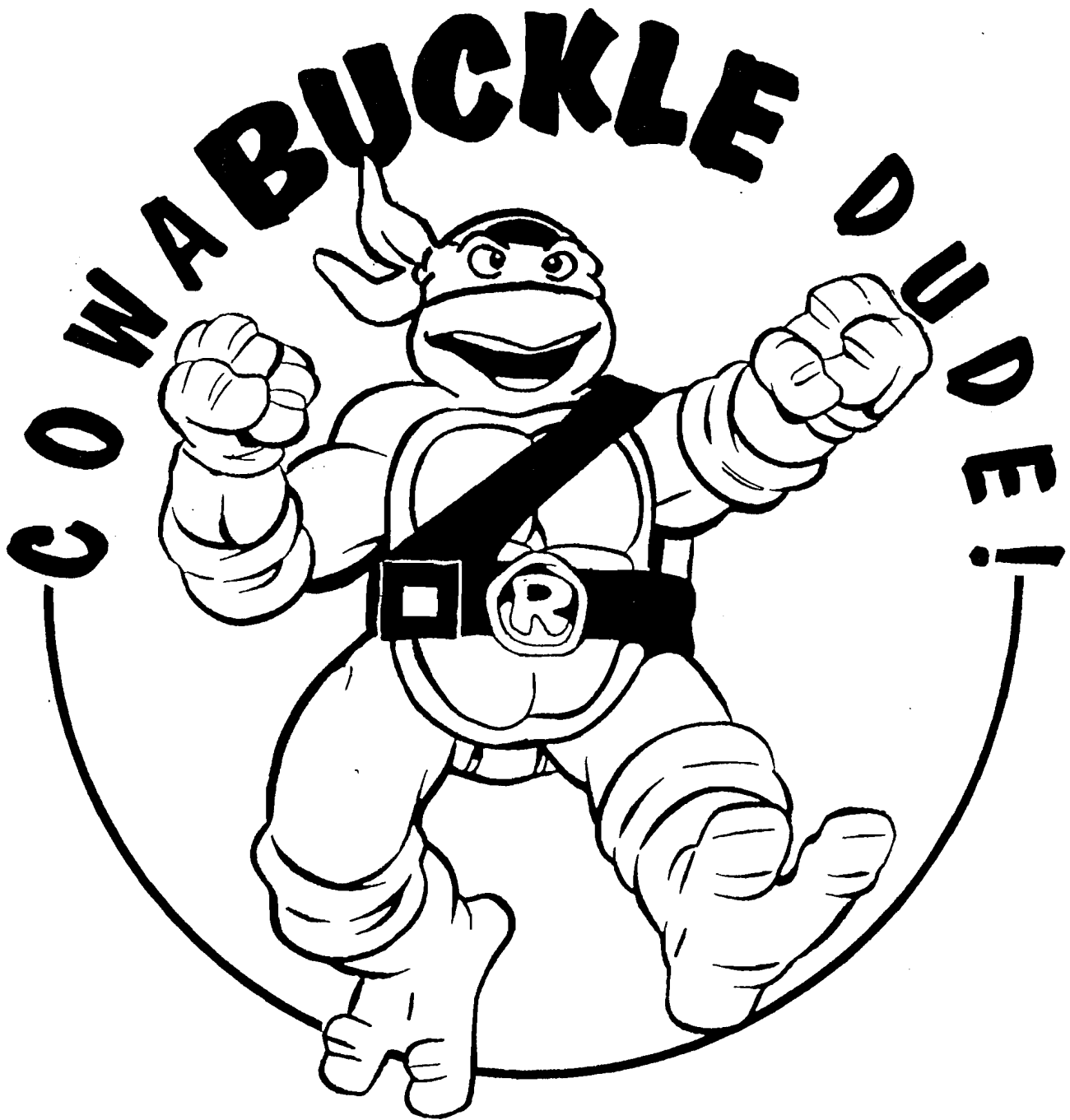
A coloring sheet, featuring a Ninja Turtle wearing a seat belt was prepared (see Figure 2.6). The project received permission to create the artwork and change the Turtles' familiar saying "cowa bunga dude" to "cowaBUCKLE dude" in order to use it on the coloring sheet. These coloring sheets were distributed to children at the news conferences and mailed along with the news release to all workshop participants. These activities were described in two national newsletters (*Safe Ride News* and *Buckle Up Registry*) and requests from nearly 50 agencies across the United States were received for reproducible copies of the coloring sheet.

Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Personnel and Fire Fighters

Bumper stickers were produced for law enforcement and emergency medical personnel to use on their vehicles. The bumper stickers read "We're behind seat belts. You need to be too." followed by either North Carolina Law Enforcement Agencies with the Operation Buckle Down logo or North Carolina Emergency Medical Personnel followed by the star-of-life symbol. The law enforcement bumper sticker was distributed through visits to police departments by the Operation Buckle Down coordinators. (North Carolina has two retired law enforcement officers that serve as coordinators for the NHTSA-sponsored program Operation Buckle Down, in which police departments are urged to conduct seat belt enforcement programs.) The EMS bumper stickers were distributed through the state EMS office. By request from the Department of Insurance, bumper stickers were printed for the North Carolina Firefighters Association and distributed by the Department of Insurance. Examples of the bumper stickers are included in Appendix A.

Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina

The Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina, an organization with over 1,000 member insurance agents located across the state, participated in the kickoff workshops. The Young Agents Committee of the association decided to make promoting seat belts and air bags their service project for 1992. They set up a booth on automatic restraints at the organization's convention in October, 1991 and met during the following November to decide strategies for their program. The young agents worked with the local boards of independent agents across the state to conduct programs for driver education classes, and civic groups, and to distribute information to policyholders.



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES

Figure 2.6 Ninja Turtle Coloring Sheet

The young agents decided to conduct a year-long statewide program to help increase belt use in North Carolina to 70%. The automatics project developed a packet of materials specially tailored for this group that included brochures and items available for distribution in their communities. Materials included a bumper sticker (2,500 printed), a decal (10,000), two posters (2,500 of each), fact sheets and suggested activities such as incentive programs. In April 1991, these packets were mailed to the 1,000 member agencies.



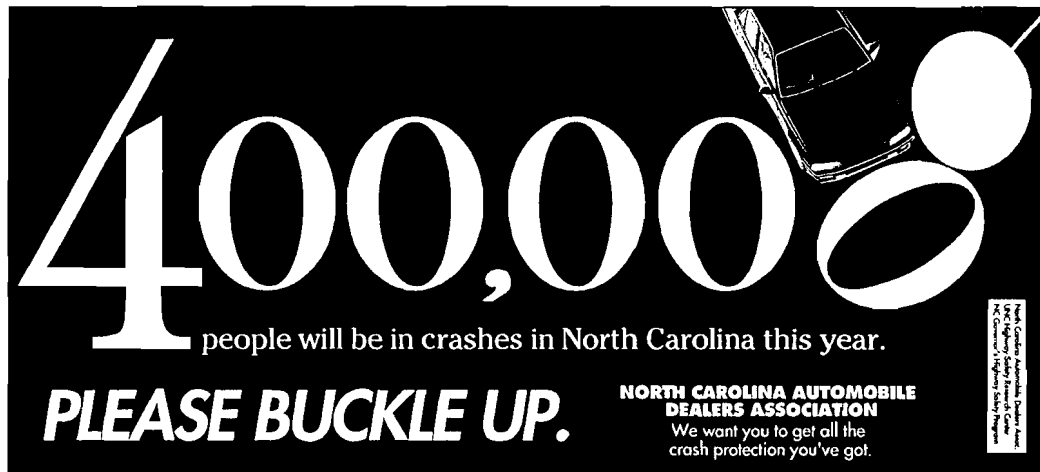
Figure 2.7 Insurance Agent Decal

Their program began in May 1991 with a news release and the airing of a television commercial about automatic restraints developed by the agents using some of HSRC's video footage. The agents purchased air time during the week of May 11 on CNN Cable News Network. The cable system reaches 519,595 homes in North Carolina with a potential viewing audience of more than 1.5 million. They also sent out information on the NHTSA 70%+ program to all their members and planned a competition among their districts for the fall. Also in May, they participated in the seat belt caravan conducted by GHSP to promote the *Summertime Blues* campaign, an enforcement and public awareness program of Operation Buckledown. An independent agent was part of the news conference/ceremony conducted in each town along a five-legged caravan trek to Greensboro, NC, where a statewide media event was staged. The executive director of the independent agent group was one of the speakers in Greensboro. The agents purchased magnetic signs that carried the program theme *SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS Use all you've got*. These signs were used on the cars of agents who participated in the caravans as they drove from town to town. Materials developed for the independent agents program are shown in Appendix D.

Automobile Dealers Program

The NC Automobile Dealers Association (NCADA) agreed to lead one of the core programs for the project. Member dealerships provided cars with automatic systems for demonstration at each of the six regional kickoffs. Through meetings with officers of the NCADA, it was decided that a series of three hang tags would be developed for auto dealers to place on the rear view mirrors of cars in their showrooms and lots. Figure 2.8 illustrates the three hang tags.

These hang tags were pilot-tested with the Wilmington auto dealers as part of the concentrated program effort in New Hanover County. One hang tag addressed the need to use belts in cars with air bags; one was designed for cars with automatic shoulder belts; and the third was a general seat belt message for use in both new and used cars. These hang tags, with localized messages for the Wilmington area, were



400,000 people will be in crashes in North Carolina this year.

PLEASE BUCKLE UP.

NORTH CAROLINA AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION
We want you to get all the crash protection you've got.

North Carolina Automobile Dealers Association
1000 Highway 100, Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27601
Tel: 919/876-1111
Fax: 919/876-1112

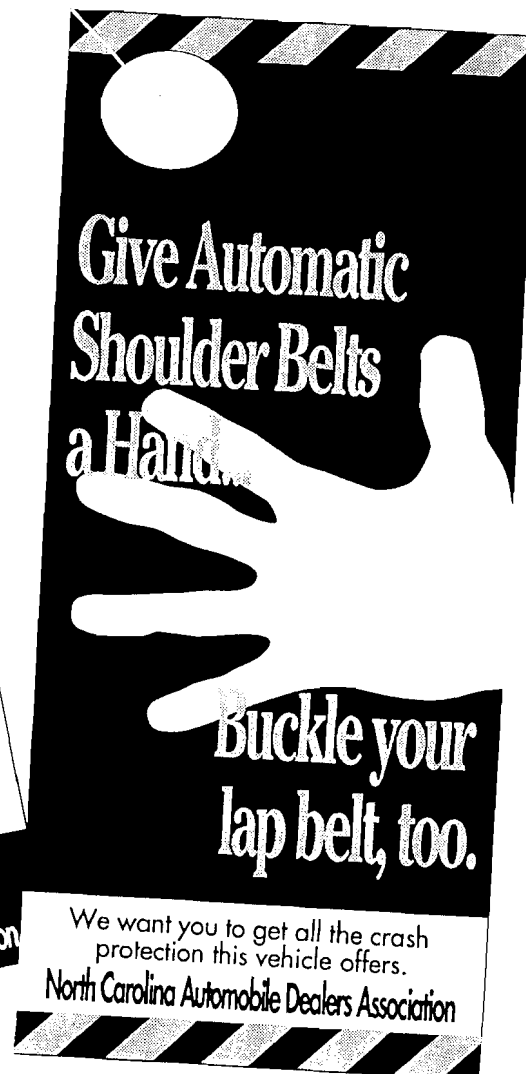


**Don't make
your air bag
work alone...**

**You need your
seat belt too.**

We want you to get all the crash
protection this vehicle offers.

North Carolina Automobile Dealers Association



**Give Automatic
Shoulder Belts
a Hand...**

**Buckle your
lap belt, too.**

We want you to get all the crash
protection this vehicle offers.

North Carolina Automobile Dealers Association

Figure 2.8 Hang Tags for Auto Dealerships

introduced at the kick off of the community campaign. They were in use at most dealerships in the area by May 1992.

In June, the North Carolina Automobile Dealers Association announced the start of the program on a statewide basis through the organization's news magazine and encouraged dealerships to write HSRC to obtain quantities of the hang tags. At the same time, these tags were promoted through the *Automatic Times* newsletter, and readers were encouraged to urge their dealerships to participate. A total of 15,000 general tags, 15,000 air bag tags and 10,000 automatic shoulder belt tags were produced and distributed for the statewide effort.

High School Program

Populations most at risk of having a crash and thus at greatest need for protection were defined as a major target group for this project. High school students were singled out as one such target group. Traffic crashes have been cited as the cause of about half of all accidental deaths and about half of all spinal cord injuries among 15-24 year-olds (Robertson, 1981). This age group is at greater risk of being in crashes because of a combination of factors including driving experience, risk-taking driving behaviors, low rates of safety belt use and widespread use of alcohol (NHTSA, 1991; Williams, 1985; Fell, 1984).

To better understand what messages might motivate teenagers to buckle up, the project decided to conduct focus group sessions with students at three high schools in low-belt-use areas. The principals were asked to select eight students in the eleventh and twelfth grades who would be considered risk-takers. Risk takers were defined as students not likely to use seat belts or to conform to rules. Two college student interns majoring in journalism and sociology assisted in the conduct of focus groups of high school students and the subsequent development of messages and strategies for reaching young adults. The focus group participants were presented several candidate seat belt message concepts and asked to comment on each. They also were asked to come up with ideas they thought would be effective.

The information gained through the focus group sessions at three high schools was used to develop strategies for reaching young adults. The groups suggested that to get and keep teenagers' attention, the messages need to be powerful and competitive in quality with the other messages being marketed to youth. Most believed seat belts were a good idea but felt they are uncomfortable to use and that even belt users were likely not to use them in certain situations, such as when they were in party mode. They suggested that the messages deal graphically with the consequences of not buckling up. It appeared that youth value their looks and clothes and can relate to the loss of either better than to the possibility of death.

Three posters were developed. Each used an article of clothing to symbolize youth. Each contains the theme *SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS Use all you've got* and a designer-logo-type graphic of a hand buckling a belt with the words *Get a Grip, Buckle Up*. The posters are described in the following:

- **Headline:** *Not Wearing a Seat Belt Can Be Murder On Your Clothes.*

The text: Jessica looked for weeks for the perfect dress. That night, because she didn't want to get it wrinkled, Jessica didn't buckle her seat belt. But it wasn't the seat belt that ruined her dress. It was the windshield. And the paramedics who cut it off her to save her life.

The visual: A beautiful, blood-stained dress on a satin hanger slit as if by a paramedic.

Rationale: Belt use data collected by HSRC at various NC high schools has shown that young females are more likely to buckle up than young males under most circumstances. In the focus groups discussions, young females indicated that the times that they were less likely to buckle up were when they were dressed up and didn't want to wrinkle their clothes.

- **Headline:** *A Few Seconds To Buckle Up and He Could Have Finished The Season.*

The text: Tom earned his letter jacket the hard way and he wore it everywhere he went. The jacket made his seat belt feel uncomfortable, so he quit buckling up. The paramedics noticed the jacket as they cut it off him after the wreck. Now Tom won't finish the season. He's too busy learning to walk again.

The visual: A bloodied and torn letter jacket lying on the seat of a severely crashed car.

Rationale: This concept was intended to appeal to young males who have worked hard to accomplish something. A common comment heard in the focus groups was that belts were uncomfortable.

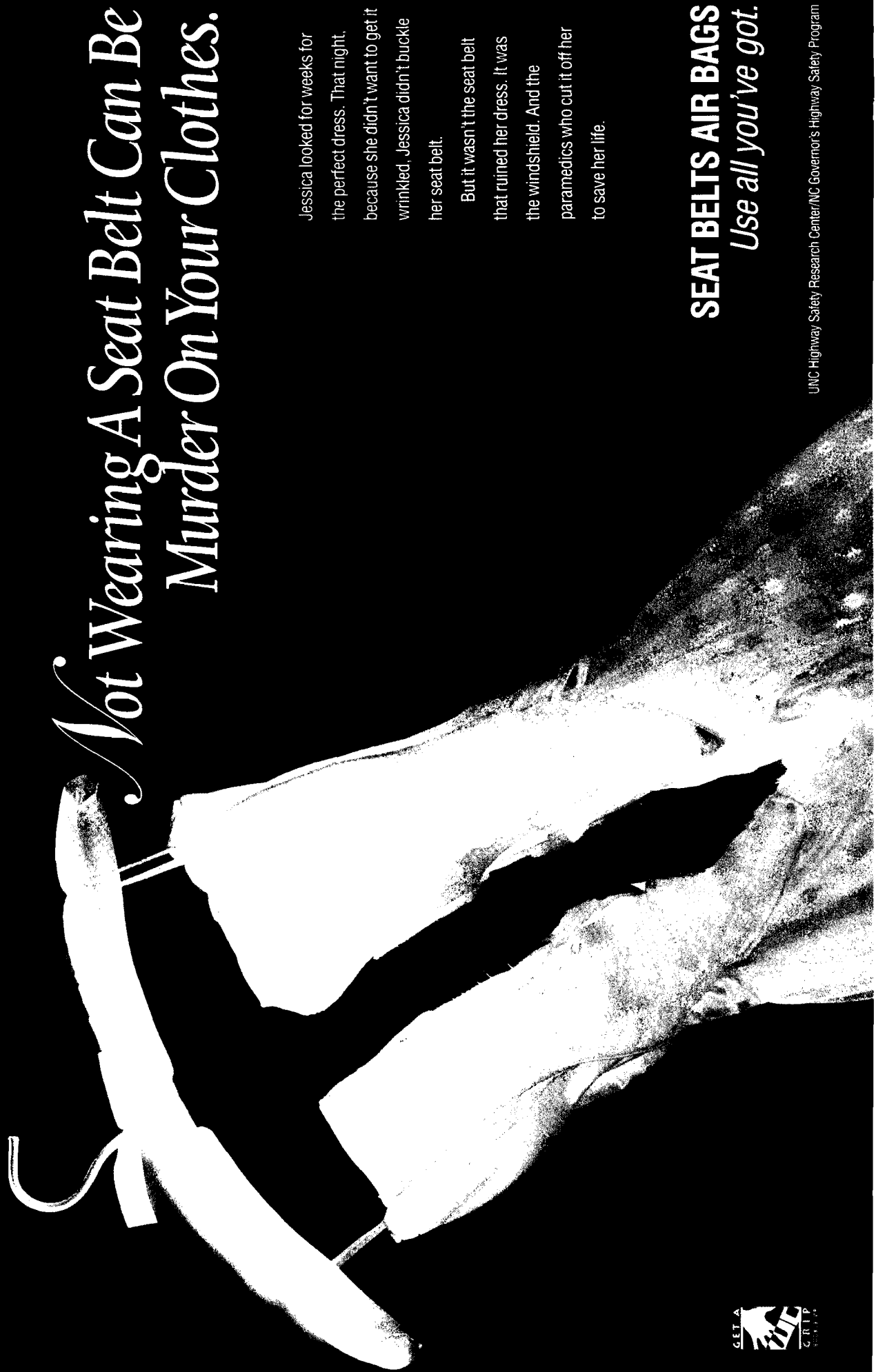
- **Headline:** *Road Kill.*

The text: Michael saved for months to buy his leather jacket. And he took good care of it. Nobody looked as cool in leather as he did. Way too cool for seat belts. When the State Trooper found Michael he was still wearing his leather jacket. It wasn't in very good shape anymore. Glass and pavement had taken their toll on the jacket. And on Michael.

The visual: A ripped and scarred leather jacket splayed across a road.

Rationale: The primary target group for this concept was all young males. A common comment heard in the focus groups was that it is better to be thrown from the car.

The final poster concepts, shown in Figures 2.9 - 2.11, again were reviewed by teenagers and received favorable comments. Twenty thousand copies of each 30"x18" poster were printed in full color. The posters were promoted in the last issue of *Automatic Times*, and local coalition members were encouraged to order copies for their area high schools. The posters also were distributed through the regional coordinators and members of the North Carolina Passenger Safety Association. A quantity of the posters have been used in conjunction with high school seat belt promotions that are being conducted under a separate GHSP project.



Not Wearing A Seat Belt Can Be Murder On Your Clothes.

Jessica looked for weeks for
the perfect dress. That night,
because she didn't want to get it
wrinkled, Jessica didn't buckle
her seat belt.

But it wasn't the seat belt
that ruined her dress. It was
the windshield. And the
paramedics who cut it off her
to save her life.

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS
Use all you've got.

UNC Highway Safety Research Center/NC Governor's Highway Safety Program



Figure 2.9 Seat Belt Poster for Teenagers (Version 1)

A Few Seconds To Buckle Up And He Could Have Finished The Season.

Tom earned his letter jacket the hard way and he wore it everywhere he went. The jacket made his seat belt feel uncomfortable, so he quit buckling up.

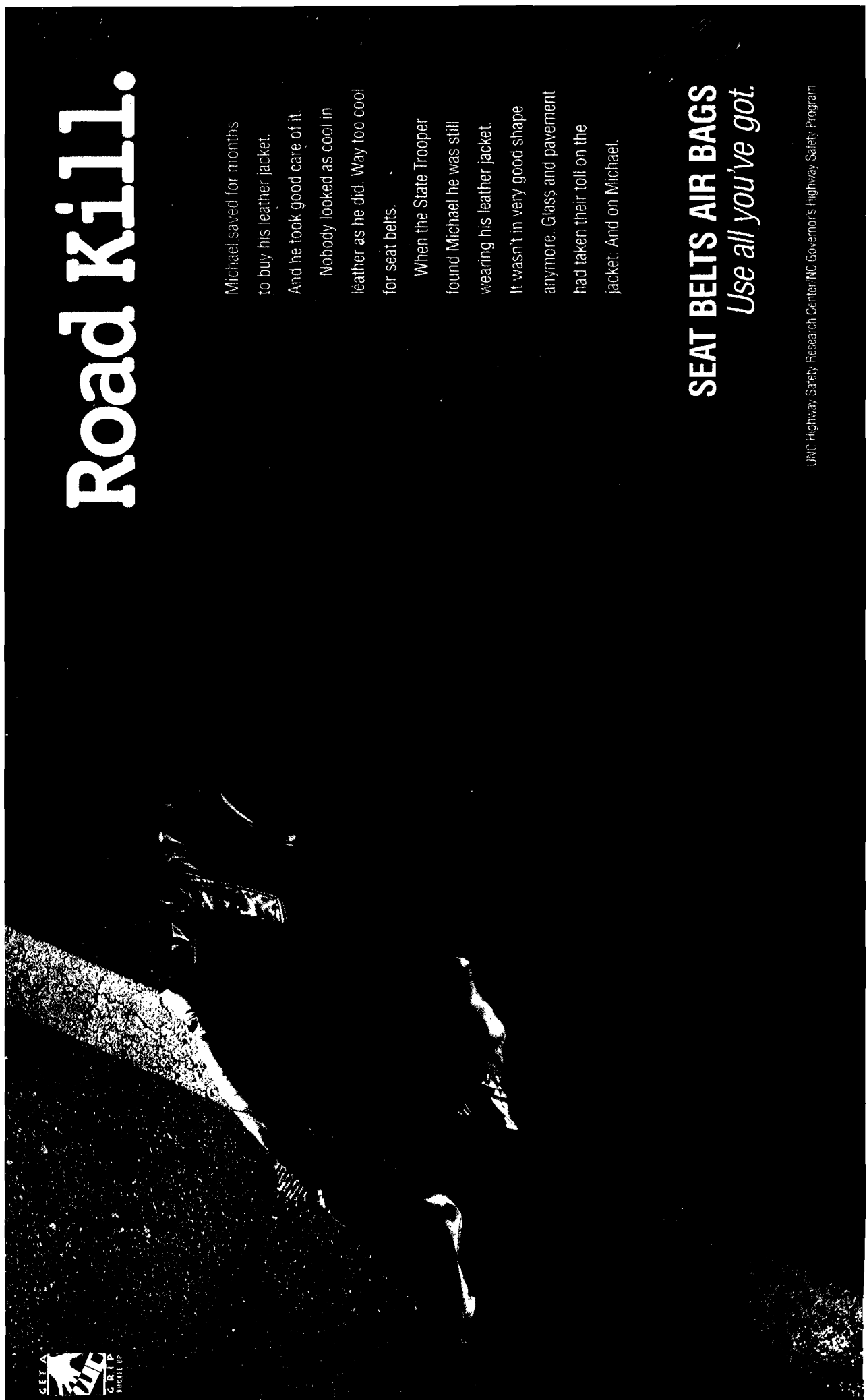
The paramedics noticed the jacket as they cut it off him after the wreck. Now Tom won't finish the season. He's too busy learning to walk again.

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS
Use all you've got.

© 1994 Highway Patrol, State Research Center, NC Governor's Highway Safety Program



Figure 2.10 Seat Belt Poster for Teenagers (Version 2)



Road Kill.

Michael saved for months
to buy his leather jacket.
And he took good care of it.
Nobody looked as cool in
leather as he did. Way too cool
for seat belts.
When the State Trooper
found Michael he was still
wearing his leather jacket.
It wasn't in very good shape
anymore. Glass and pavement
had taken their toll on the
jacket. And on Michael.

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS
Use all you've got.

UNC Highway Safety Research Center NC Governor's Highway Safety Program

Figure 2.11 Seat Belt Poster for Teenagers (Version 3)

III. CONCENTRATED SITE PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

It is quite labor intensive to implement a statewide campaign promoting the correct use of automatic restraints. It is difficult to evaluate the effect of such a campaign. By virtue of having a statewide seat belt survey in place, staff were able to adapt the North Carolina procedure to yield belt use percentages for drivers of vehicles with automatic restraint systems.

One reason for using a concentrated site pertained to logistics -- in other words, the promotion of automatics within a community was less complicated than statewide. Perhaps more importantly, the community approach offered a better chance for evaluating the various kinds of promotional activities.

PLANNING

Site Selection

From past community projects conducted by HSRC, a list of candidate North Carolina cities not previously utilized was available for consideration. Two leading candidates were Wilmington and Greenville, both located in the eastern part of the state. Both sites had reasonable size (about 60,000 - 80,000 population) and their own self-contained media markets. In addition, both sites had hospital-based Traffic Injury Prevention Programs (TIPPs) in place, along with other networking agencies and organizations.

The next step in the selection process was to contact potential local coordinating agencies to ascertain their interest. If positive, data would then be collected to approximate the local belt use rate. The idea was to find a location with a reasonable belt use rate which had room to increase.

We started with Wilmington because of their high level of interest in the project and past success in working with the media in this area. Initial observations yielded a driver shoulder belt use rate of around 55-60 percent, close to the statewide average but with potential to grow. Coupled with its population (80,000 city and 120,000 county), good media contacts, enthusiastic local agencies, and good networking potential, Wilmington was a relatively easy choice as the concentrated site.

Recruitment of Program Participants

It was decided that the promotional activities would cover a multi-county region, but with most of the focus on Wilmington and New Hanover County. To allow for broad-based networking, we recruited two agencies to share leadership, and the program became a joint effort of the TIPP program at the New Hanover Regional Medical Center and the New Hanover County Health Department. Coordinators were the manager of the TIPP program and an active health educator in charge of promotions for the health department. A health educator from the

Robeson County Health Department also was a key contributor for this area of the media market. A \$25,000 community grant from overall project funds was made available to assist with printing, promotional items, and supplemental data collection.

Various community groups were part of networking efforts. These included the auto dealers association; independent insurance agents; law enforcement personnel; teachers, advisors, club members, and school system administrators; and various other hospital and health department contacts.

Selection of Theme

The concentrated site used two separate themes for different stages of the program. When activities were officially initiated at the regional kickoff meeting in June of 1991, the concentrated site theme was identical to the statewide theme of "SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS Use All You've Got." Numerous promotions centered around this theme and are described later in this section.

In the spring of 1992, data collection showed that the increase in the driver shoulder belt use rate for the concentrated site had increased only a few percentage points over baseline. It was decided that an intensive campaign would be instituted over the summer months to try to elevate the belt use to 70 percent by Labor Day. The campaign used the theme: **10,000 people will be in crashes in New Hanover County this year. Seat Belts Air Bags Use All You've Got.** Besides the TIPP program and the health department, members of the local promoting coalition included law enforcement (local police departments, the sheriff's department, and the State Highway Patrol in New Hanover County), two radio stations (B100 and WGNI), a representative from the schools, the independent insurance agents, and the auto dealers' association.

The key concept was to generate 10,000 small prizes for handouts to buckled up drivers and passengers at law enforcement checkpoints. The small prizes included discount coupons, key chains, magnets, T-shirts, sunglasses, frisbees, squeeze water bottles, cloth tote bags, snack sealers, whistles, and others. Also printed for the checkpoints was a brochure explaining the concept (shown in Appendix E) and postcards that buckled up motorists could mail back for monthly and grand prize drawings. Figure 3.1 shows the artwork for this concept displayed on the postcard for entry in monthly drawings. Other materials included hang tags for auto dealers and posters for independent insurance agents.

This activity had an official kickoff on May 11, 1992. During the rest of the summer, the police and sheriff's department SAFE Squad actively conducted seat belt checkpoints, while radio and television stations helped to promote the concept. Monthly drawings, in which prizes such as free car washes and waxes and oil changes were given away, were good media promotions. Another media event was a concluding press conference shortly after Labor Day to summarize the results of the campaign and to award a \$500 grand prize donated by a local auto dealer.



10,000 people will be in crashes in New Hanover Co. this year.

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS
Use all you've got.

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

PRIZE DRAWING
1616 Shipyard Blvd.
Suite 10,000
Wilmington, N.C. 28412

I was wearing my seat belt.
Enter my name in your drawing
for prizes.

Name _____

Local Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Numbers _____ Day _____ Evening _____

**Monthly Drawings
for Prizes
in May, June,
July and August**

\$500 CASH
Grand Prize
courtesy of
Bob King Auto Mall
in September

Cards must be in by September 11, 1992
for the grand prize drawing.

New Hanover County Seat Belt Coalition

Figure 3.1 Seat Belt Prize Drawing Postcard

PROGRAM KICKOFFS

The initial program for the concentrated site and regional media market was kicked off on June 20, 1991 and followed the format of a workshop and news conference described in Section II. "SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS Use All You've Got" was the designated theme.

The kickoff and news conference for the "10,000 people in crashes" summer activity was held on May 11, 1992 at the New Hanover Regional Medical Center helipad, in front of the entrance to the emergency room. All law enforcement agencies in the county, along with representatives from the health department, the medical center, auto dealers' association, key radio stations, school system, county government, and independent insurance group participated. The news conference was immediately followed by law enforcement agencies giving prizes to belted motorists at seat belt checkpoints around the county.

Besides these "10,000 people in crashes" events, local coordinators hand delivered hang tags promoting automatic restraints to all area auto dealerships. The artwork for five billboards was prepared, and billboard space was donated by Naegele Outdoor Advertising for use over the summer. One of the billboards was in place for the kickoff (Figure 3.2). A banner similiar to the billboard was produced and then made available to participating agencies throughout the summer.

Media coverage of both kickoffs was excellent. A full explanation is provided in the following section of text.

PUBLIC AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Generation of Hard News

Techniques used to generate hard news coverage in the statewide program also were employed in the concentrated site campaign. HSRC and Wilmington project staff used media advisories, follow-up contacts and news releases to alert area media of upcoming events. Appendix E contains samples of these materials.

News conferences kicked off both the overall program in June, 1990 and the intensified summer campaign in May 1991. All media organizations in New Hanover County received copies of the releases via fax or courier before each news conference. The summer campaign release explained the incentive program, listed the sponsoring agencies and businesses and provided current county seat- belt-wearing rates.

The incentive campaign's next attempt at hard news coverage came three months later with a second news release. This release focused on pickup truck and utility vehicle drivers. The lead sentence read as follows, "Drivers of pickup trucks, full-sized vans and utility vehicles are hindering the efforts of a New Hanover County safety program."



Figure 3.2 Program Billboard

The release went on to say that since the incentive program started, area drivers of cars and mini vans were buckling more often. Pickup driver use rates, however, had increased only a little. These lower belt use rates were hindering the program in reaching its overall goals. The release also included quotes from health department and law enforcement officials saying how they planned to convince more pickup and utility vehicle drivers to buckle up.

An advisory telling of the incentive program's last news conference represented the project's final hard news communication. At this news conference, increases in the county's seat belt wearing rates were reported, the program's grand prize winner was introduced, and the incentive program came to a close. As usual, the advisory relayed the location and time information and indicated who would speak. It also hinted at the improvement in the county's belt use, told the media there would be a grand prize ceremony, and provided a final listing of the sponsoring agencies and businesses.

Media Support and Reaction. The incentive program's efforts at gaining hard news coverage were, for the most part, successful. The electronic media -- TV and radio -- covered all events. Television and radio stations attended both news conferences and ran stories relating to the pickup drivers news release. This coverage was in addition to the seat belt public service advertising and special programming that appeared on both mediums.

Newspaper interest in the program seemed to wane after the kickoff news conference for the summer campaign. The county's largest newspaper, based in Wilmington, and some of the smaller papers, based in other towns, attended the kickoff news conference and covered it well. A story and photos of the seat belt check points appeared in the Wilmington and other papers the next day. From that point, the campaign generated no significant newspaper coverage.

No real explanation for this difference in coverage was identified. All media outlets received the same advisories and news releases at the same time. The program coordinators were determined to show no favoritism toward any medium or any single media outlet. It is possible that the topic of seat belts became viewed as *old news* by the Wilmington print media. The incentive program also coincided with the 1992 national and state political campaigns. Perhaps political news required a larger-than-normal portion of the papers' news space and seat belt news could not be included.

Public Service Advertising.

Both of the two main phases of the concentrated site activity were able to generate considerable public service advertising (PSAs). Although official counts are not available, it was felt that local television channels frequently aired the three PSAs developed by the project (described in Chapter II). Vince and Larry PSAs provided by NHTSA were also used, along with promotions associated with the *Summertime Blues* campaign. One of the local television developed a series of seat belt PSAs using community leaders.

Radio PSAs also were used extensively. The TIPP Program, the Health Department, the Wilmington Police Department and the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department were able to arrange for their own seat belt promotional messages. A country radio station, WWQQ, developed a series of PSAs targeted to pickup truck drivers. The same station later had a special "seat belt day" to aid with the promotion of the "10,000 people in crashes" campaign.

Radio stations B100 and WGNI were prime participants in the "10,000 people in crashes" campaign and aired a variety of PSAs. WGNI worked with two sets of generic seat belt PSAs--one developed by HSRC and the other by NHTSA and provided by the TIPP Program.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Several groups were active in promoting automatics throughout the project. These groups and a sampling of their functions are described below.

TIPP Program and New Hanover County Health Department

The TIPP program and the health department were the two sponsoring agencies that shared the community grant. Together they planned and conducted both the initial kickoff workshop and news conference and the kickoff of the intensified campaign. Seat belt promotional activities conducted by these agencies included:

- program exposure on "Health Visions," a hospital-based local television show
- production of radio and television PSAs
- selection and purchase of incentive prizes imprinted with program slogan and logo
- original contact for Ninja Turtle activity
- Child Passenger Safety Week display at local mall
- 70%+ award promotions
- local Saved-by-the-Belt/Air Bag awards
- incentive activities with high schools
- planning and arranging for initial billboards with project slogan and logo
- initial contacts with auto dealers' association
- arranged initial seat belt checkpoints with Wilmington police
- local health fairs at malls and other displays
- promotion of NHTSA Summertime Blues campaign
- obtained prizes from auto dealers for monthly and grand prize drawings
- planned and obtained "10,000 People in Crashes" banner

Law Enforcement

All area police agencies participated in the intensified summer campaign. This included the police departments of Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, and Wrightsville Beach; the police of the Wilmington campus of the University of North Carolina; the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department; and the NC State Highway Patrol. The Wilmington police and the sheriff's department took the lead roles in the enforcement agencies' participation in the project. The most visible and constant activity was the seat belt checks, in which small prizes were given to motorists who were belted. Other law enforcement agency activities included the production of radio and television PSA's, participant at all program news conferences and seat belt presentations at local school classrooms.

Wilmington Area New Car Dealers Association

This association, which represents all new car dealerships in the Wilmington area, agreed to take an active part in the program. Local dealerships provided cars for demonstration of automatic belt systems at the initial kickoff and participated in the summer campaign kickoff. The dealerships were provided brochures, hats, and T-shirts during the initial phase. As part of the summer campaign, dealerships were provided hang tags for use in their showroom and sales lot vehicles. Some dealerships provided prizes for monthly drawings and one dealership provided the \$500 grand prize.

Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina

The area chapter of the independent agents group that sponsored a statewide campaign took an active role in the Wilmington campaign. Posters were displayed in local offices and promotion materials distributed in customer policy mailings. Agents made presentations to civic clubs and driver education classes and participated in all program news conferences. Several area agents joined the seat belt caravan that was conducted as part of the *Summertime Blues* promotion.

IV. RESULTS

STATEWIDE PROGRAM

Research Method

To obtain data on the use of restraints in cars equipped with automatic restraints (lap/shoulder belts and/or air bags), supplemental data were collected in the spring and fall of 1991 and 1992 as part of an ongoing statewide belt use survey for North Carolina. Observers were sent to signal- or stop-controlled intersections scattered across the state, both in rural and urban locations. The requirement for signal- or stop-controlled intersections was made to enable the data collectors to correctly ascertain lap-belt use -- an essential ingredient of this particular survey.

Starting with model year 1986, passenger cars have been required to have center, high-mounted rear brake lights. And starting with the 1987 model vehicles, as noted earlier, some of the new cars were also required to have passive restraints -- either automatic seat belts or air bags. Thus, the observers focused on cars with center, high-mounted brake lights. Only VW Rabbits were excepted, because a portion of their vehicles have been equipped with automatic belts since model year 1975. Since only 10 percent of the 1987 model year cars were required to have automatic restraints, 25 percent of the 1988 models and 40 percent of the 1989 models, the data collectors were trained to recognize the various makes and models likely to be equipped with automatic restraints by visiting automobile dealer showrooms and studying the available literature. However, the data were not restricted only to automatic seat belt or air bag vehicles, as information was needed for new model vehicles equipped only with manual belts, which would serve as baseline data.

Observers collected data at 36 locations scattered across the State with each program area having six sites. Within each program area or media market, the sites were selected to represent both urban and rural areas and also major and minor roads.

The data collectors worked in pairs at these various controlled intersections. One observer recorded age (under 25, 25-54, 55 and older), sex, and race (white, nonwhite) of the driver; belt type (e.g., motorized automatic shoulder belt vs. manual 3-point system); and usage of the shoulder belt and of the lap belt. In addition, this observer recorded misuse of the shoulder belt, i.e., the belt unhooked from the mounting position, excessive slack, or the belt placed under the arm of the driver.

The second observer, positioned toward the rear of the vehicle, first determined that there was a center, high-mounted brake light present or else that the vehicle was a VW Rabbit (and, hence, an eligible vehicle), recorded the license plate number for cars with North Carolina license plates and provided a description of the car, namely, the make and model as well as body style (e.g., two-door vs. four-door vs.

station wagon). The description of the vehicle was necessary to confirm the subsequent match with the North Carolina vehicle registration data, since, when there is a vehicle transfer, the license plate stays with the owner. Thus, there is a period of time after this transfer when the old plate is on the new vehicle but the registration file information has not yet been updated. To guarantee that the observed license plate corresponds to the vehicle data on the registration file, this additional description of the car was required.

To determine the type of restraint system installed in the vehicle, it was necessary to obtain the vehicle identification number (VIN) from the North Carolina registration file. Thus, each of the observed license plate numbers was checked against the vehicle registration file. If the description of the observed vehicle agreed with that in the registration file, then the VIN from the file was recorded for that vehicle. Otherwise, it was necessary to exclude that vehicle from the study.

Using VINDICATOR, the VIN-decoding software package developed by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), the sample VINs were decoded to obtain restraint type. The resulting levels of restraint type provided by this program are manual 3-point belts, air bags, or automatic seat belts. Data on belt use for a total of 11,125 cars were collected during these four sampling periods.

As with the DOT 19-city study, there was particular interest in the types of automatic seat belts -- the motorized 2-point belts with manual lap belts, the non-motorized shoulder belt only, and the non-motorized 3-point (i.e., automatic shoulder/automatic lap combination) belt. In order to provide this level of detail on the specific restraint system type for each vehicle, the make/model and model year information from the VINDICATOR program was used, along with detailed documentation on specific types of automatic belt system that is provided annually by NHTSA, IIHS, and also Geico Automobile Insurance Company.

Automatic Restraint Survey Results

The distribution of the study sample of 11,125 passenger cars is shown in Table 4.1 by restraint-type system. As there were only 26 cars with non-motorized shoulder belts and 201 cars with non-motorized shoulder belts plus manual lap belts in the overall sample of 11,125 passenger cars, for ease of presentation they are shown only in Table 4.1. Also note that often the lap belt usage rates are slightly higher than those for shoulder belts. This is the case for 3-point systems where the lap belt is in place but the shoulder belt is behind the back.

The majority (59.8 percent) of the sampled vehicles had automatic seat belts, 28.2 percent had air bags with manual 3-point belts and the remaining 12.0 percent had manual 3-point belts. The column identified as "Shoulder Belted %" represents drivers whose shoulder belts were in use. The final column labeled "Lap Belt Usage %" indicates that the lap belt was being used.

Table 4.1 Percentage of shoulder belted and percentage of full system usage by restraint type.

Restraint Type	Total	Shoulder Belted %	Lap Belt Usage %
Automatic Belt	6653	79.3	61.5
Motorized:			
Auto S/Manual L	1918	92.8	35.1
Non-Motorized			
Auto S	227*	81.1	31.3**
Auto S/Auto L	4508	73.4	74.3
Air Bag	3136	72.2	73.2
Manual 3-Point Belt	1336	66.0	66.5
Overall	11,125	75.7	65.4

*227 = 26 (Auto S) + 201 (Auto S/Manual L)

**26 without lap belts

The main points shown by Table 4.1, which are consistent with an earlier survey described by Reinfurt, St. Cyr and Hunter (1991), are that lap belts are still infrequently buckled (35.1 percent) in cars with motorized shoulder belts and that 3-point manual belts are being used at least as often in air bag cars (73.2 percent) as in recent model cars without automatic restraints (66.5 percent).

Table 4.2 presents the results of the statewide surveys by time periods, excluding the non-motorized systems with only the shoulder belt mounted to the door because of small sample sizes. Note the generally upward trend across time (except for the fall 1992 data) in both areas mentioned with regard to Table 4.1. Manual lap belt usage in cars with motorized shoulder belts rose from 33.8 percent in early 1991 to a high of 37.7 percent a year later. Likewise 3-point manual belt usage in air bag cars went from 66.0 percent in the spring of 1991 to a high of 74.8 percent a year later. This is particularly encouraging in that the latter survey would contain a greater number of less expensive cars with air bags. It was anticipated from other studies that manual belt usage might be expected to be somewhat lower in less expensive vehicles.

As the data collectors recorded information on age, gender and race of driver, it was of interest to examine overall differences as well as possible shifts in lap belt usage rates over time. Table 4.3 provides data on driver age. As can be seen,

Table 4.2 Percent lap belt usage by restraint type and time period.

Restraint Type	Pre-Program Spring 1991		Program Fall 1991		Program Spring 1992		Post-Program Fall 1992	
	Lap Belt Usage		Lap Belt Usage		Lap Belt Usage		Lap Belt Usage	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Automatic Belt	1537	64.1	1615	62.4	1698	62.8	1576	61.1
Motorized Auto S/Manual L	405	33.8	499	35.7	539	37.7	475	32.6
Non-Motorized Auto S/Auto L	1132	75.0	1116	74.4	1159	74.4	1101	73.4
Air Bag	350	66.0	636	70.0	1001	74.8	1149	75.2
Manual	466	63.3	298	67.1	297	70.7	275	66.5
Overall	2353	64.3	2549	65.0	2996	67.9	3000	67.2

Table 4.3 Lap belt use by restraint type and age of driver.

Restraint Type	Driver Age	Lap Belt Use %				
		Pre-Program		Program		Post-Program
		Overall	Spring 1991	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1992
Automatic Belt						
Motorized	<25	27	28	27	29	25
Auto S/Manual L	25-54	37	35	39	38	34
	>54	39	37	34	47	37
Non-Motorized	<25	60	62	62	59	59
Auto S/Auto L	25-54	75	77	73	76	74
	>54	79	77	81	77	80
Air Bag	<25	53	36	48	51	61
	25-54	75	72	72	76	78
	>54	76	65	73	78	79
Overall	<25	48	46	48	44	51
	25-54	67	65	65	68	68
	>54	73	68	72	74	75

regardless of restraint type or time period, the younger drivers fared worst in "Using All You've Got" -- that is, their wearing rates were consistently lower than either of the other two groups -- often by 10 to 15 percentage points or more. On the other hand, the younger drivers have shown a steady increase in the use of belts in air-bag-equipped vehicles, going from 36 to 61 percent belt use over the two-year period.

Of particular interest is the trend for somewhat improved usage rates of manual belts in air bag cars across time for all three age groups. Although not as consistent, there is some suggestion of an increase in drivers using their manual lap belt in cars with motorized shoulder belts during the demonstration project period (i.e. Fall 1991 and Spring 1992).

Lap belt usage rates by driver gender are shown in Table 4.4. Overall usage of belts in automatic restraint cars is consistently higher for female drivers than for male drivers by several percentage points. However, this difference is not nearly as sizable as that seen in North Carolina's statewide survey of all vehicles covered by the belt law. There belt usage is generally higher for females by at least 10 percentage points.

Again, a trend of increasing use of belts in air bag cars is seen for both male and female drivers. Likewise there is a similar positive trend for lap belt use in cars with motorized shoulder belts. However, here surprisingly the rates are slightly higher for the male drivers except for the final post-program survey.

Table 4.4 Lap belt use by restraint type and driver gender.

Restraint Type	Driver Gender	Overall	Lap Belt Use %			
			Pre- Program	Program	Post- Program	
			Spring 1991	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1992
Automatic Belt Motorized Auto S/Manual L	Male	35	35	38	39	27
	Female	35	33	35	37	36
Non-Motorized Auto S/Auto L	Male	72	74	72	70	71
	Female	76	76	76	77	75
Air Bag	Male	71	60	68	74	74
	Female	75	72	72	76	78
Overall	Male	65	61	63	66	66
	Female	67	64	65	67	68

Belt usage by driver race has been an interesting area in North Carolina since before the seat belt law went into effect in October 1985. Just prior to that time, belt usage for white drivers was 25 percent statewide vs 15 percent for nonwhite drivers. During the 15-month warning ticket phase, the gap narrowed to only a few percentage points difference. Since the \$25 citation phase went into effect in January 1987, wearing rates for nonwhite drivers have consistently been several percentage points higher than for their white counterparts.

In these surveys of newer model cars with automatic belts, lap belt usage overall is consistently and considerably higher for the white drivers (see Table 4.5). This is especially true for use of the manual lap belt in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts. For the non-motorized auto S/ auto L vehicles, the rates across race are quite similar while manual belt usage in cars with air bags is generally somewhat higher for nonwhite drivers. The reader should be aware that there were fewer (224) nonwhite drivers in air bag cars than white drivers (2912).

Table 4. 5 Lap belt use by restraint type and driver race.

Restraint Type	Driver Race	Overall	Full System Use %			
			Pre- Program	Program	Post-Program	
			Spring 1991	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1992
Automatic Belt						
Motorized	White	38	36	36	41	35
Auto S/Manual L	Nonwhite	22	20	31	16	20
Non-Motorized	White	75	75	75	74	75
Auto S/Auto L	Nonwhite	72	76	73	76	64
Air Bag	White	73	64	70	75	76
	Nonwhite	77	85	75	77	75
Overall	White	67	64	65	68	69
	Nonwhite	58	57	58	57	55

As has been noted earlier, this statewide demonstration program has been organized around the six media markets covering North Carolina. Thus it was of interest to examine the following questions:

Are there differences in lap belt usage rates among the regions? Overall?
Within restraint types?

Are there upward (or downward) trends in usage over time? Overall?
Within types?

With respect to the first area, there are slight but consistent differences overall among regions (see Table 4.6). Lap belt usage rates are consistently higher in the more urban regions, namely, Southwest Piedmont (Charlotte), Central Piedmont (Greensboro, Winston Salem) and Eastern Piedmont (Raleigh, Durham). Similar results have been seen across the years with respect to the statewide survey of belt use in all vehicles covered by the law. There the usage rates have consistently been higher in the Piedmont area than either the Coastal or the Mountain areas.

With respect to trends in usage in time across media markets, the only obvious case is the increasing usage trend of manual 3-point belts in air bag-equipped cars. Otherwise overall usage rates and lap belt usage in the automatic restraint cars are reasonably constant over the two year time period.

Statewide Restraint Survey

North Carolina has been monitoring belt usage by front seat occupants of vehicles covered by the law (i.e., cars, pickups, utility vehicles) since just prior to implementation of the law in October 1985. This has involved observing motorists at 72 sites distributed across North Carolina according to a probability sampling plan.

Overall belt usage rose from 25 percent in the baseline period to around 43-45 percent during the warning ticket phase (October 1985-December 1986) reaching a high of 78 percent in January 1987, the beginning of the \$25 citation phase. Since that time, belt use has remained fairly level at around 60 percent.

Over the period, belt use has consistently been lowest in the mountain region (highest in the Piedmont), in rural areas, for pickups and vans, during non-commuting hours, for males, and, since the citation phase, consistently slightly lower for white drivers and front seat passengers.

During this demonstration program, statewide surveys were carried out in the spring 1991 (26,084 vehicles), fall 1991 (29,396 vehicles), spring 1992 (30,855) and fall 1992 (30,281 vehicles). Statewide belt usage rates as well as by region, vehicle type and gender and race of driver are given in Table 4.7. Note the modest increase in overall usage rates over the period from 60.5 percent to 63.9 percent.

Table 4.6 Percent full system usage by restraint type, and time period within program area

Restraint Type	Lap Belt Usage %											
	Western Mountains				Southwest Piedmont				Central Piedmont			
	Spring '91	Fall '91	Spring '92	Fall '92	Spring '91	Fall '91	Spring '92	Fall '92	Spring '91	Fall '91	Spring '92	Fall '92
Automatic Belt												
Motorized												
Auto S/Manual L	40	40	37	32	35	42	37	43	27	37	45	32
Non-Motorized												
Auto S/Auto L	73	69	67	71	78	74	76	74	80	81	81	82
Air Bag	60	55	74	73	70	71	74	70	68	79	82	82
Overall	62	59	62	64	65	66	65	65	68	74	75	72

Restraint Type												
	Eastern Piedmont				Southeast				Coastal Plains			
	Spring '91	Fall '91	Spring '92	Fall '92	Spring '91	Fall '91	Spring '92	Fall '92	Spring '91	Fall '91	Spring '92	Fall '92
Automatic Belt												
Motorized												
Auto S/Manual L	42	38	43	32	21	30	27	31	31	27	37	24
Non-Motorized												
Auto S/Auto L	79	78	81	76	64	68	68	67	76	74	75	73
Air Bag	69	78	79	82	62	64	71	76	63	66	69	71
Overall	65	67	71	69	55	57	62	64	63	60	65	62

Table 4.7 Driver belt usage rates in North Carolina

	Driver Belt Usage Percent			
	Pre- Program	Program		Post-Program
	Spring 1991	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1992
Overall	60.5	62.3	62.7	63.9
Region				
Mountains	48.5	53.0	50.1	50.6
Piedmont	63.3	64.9	66.0	67.5
Coast	59.3	56.4	60.1	61.6
Vehicle Type				
Car	62.7	64.9	65.8	66.8
Van	37.2	35.4	37.8	35.8
Pickup	40.0	40.3	39.5	41.1
Driver Gender				
Male	51.7	52.5	52.3	53.4
Female	65.5	68.1	69.1	70.2
Driver Race				
White	56.8	58.6	58.6	59.5
Nonwhite	61.4	59.2	63.1	65.1

Also of interest are the overall belt usage rates by program area for the four time periods. Table 4.8 shows the consistently higher usage rates in the more urban program areas, namely Southwest Piedmont (Charlotte), Central Piedmont (Winston-Salem, Greensboro) and Eastern Piedmont (Raleigh, Durham). Here, if there is a trend, it is for slightly increasing usage rates over time for the three more urban areas.

Table 4.8 Driver belt usage rates by program area

Region	Driver Belt Usage Percent			
	Pre- Program	Program		Post-Program
	Spring 1991	Fall 1991	Spring 1992	Fall 1992
Western Mountains (Asheville)	47	51	49	48
Southwest Piedmont (Charlotte)	61	63	63	66
Central Piedmont (Winston-Salem, Greensboro)	63	67	69	69
Eastern Piedmont (Raleigh, Durham)	66	67	68	71
Southeast (Wilmington)	50	40	51	50
Coastal Plains (Greenville, Jacksonville)	58	55	56	58

CONCENTRATED PROGRAM

Research Method

To obtain belt use data for the concentrated site, HSRC used a method employed in other recent community projects. Driver shoulder belt use data were collected throughout the project at 12 intersections selected to represent New Hanover County. The data were obtained for all passenger motor vehicles equipped with shoulder belts. The data were coded separately for passenger cars and minivans (hereafter referred to as "passenger vehicles") and for pickup trucks, vans, and utility vehicles (hereafter referred to as "pickups"). Race and sex of the driver were collected in addition to belt use because these variables have been linked with differences in belt use in prior studies.

Because the concentrated site (New Hanover County) was located about 2 1/2 hours from HSRC, we elected to have the TIPP Program hire data collectors who were trained by HSRC. Local groups collected all but the first set of baseline observations, which were done by HSRC staff. The second set of baseline observations were done by a Wilmington area emergency medical service provider, whose volunteers were trained by HSRC staff. This EMS group also obtained the third set of data, collected one week after the initial kickoff. After this time, the EMS group was unable to fulfill its obligation. Two more local groups were then trained, but neither was able to follow through with actual data collection. The final group was trained in January 1992 and collected the remaining 12 sets of observations about every three weeks, starting in February 1992.

HSRC developed schedules to randomize the selected intersection locations by peak versus off-peak period. About half the data were collected at peak traffic periods. Approximately 5,000-6,000 observations were obtained during each data collection period. About two-thirds were passenger vehicles. Data collectors worked in pairs and spent 30 minutes at each intersection. It took about 1 1/2 days to cover all 12 intersections, including travel time and the peak/off-peak scheduling.

Overall Restraint Survey

Results

Belt Use by Vehicle Type. The data are examined using descriptive analysis. Figure 4.1 shows overall driver shoulder belt use changes before the program started; during Phase 1, which began with the initial kickoff and press conference; and during Phase 2, which began with the kickoff for the "10,000 people in crashes" incentive campaign. Plotted are belt use percents for pickups, passenger vehicles, and all vehicles (passenger vehicles and pickups combined). An overall increase across time is seen by vehicle type. The last data point was obtained about one week after the final press conference.

The overall belt use in the before phase for all vehicles was 57.5 percent. The peak value was 66.7 percent and was obtained during the last observation period. The passenger vehicle and pickup belt use changes move in concert. Peak values

were 71.2 percent for passenger vehicles and 54.3 percent for pickups, both occurring during the last observation period.

For all vehicles, the belt use increased three percentage points immediately after the Phase 2 kickoff, with continuing increase thereafter. However, this growth appears to have started prior to the Phase 2 kickoff.

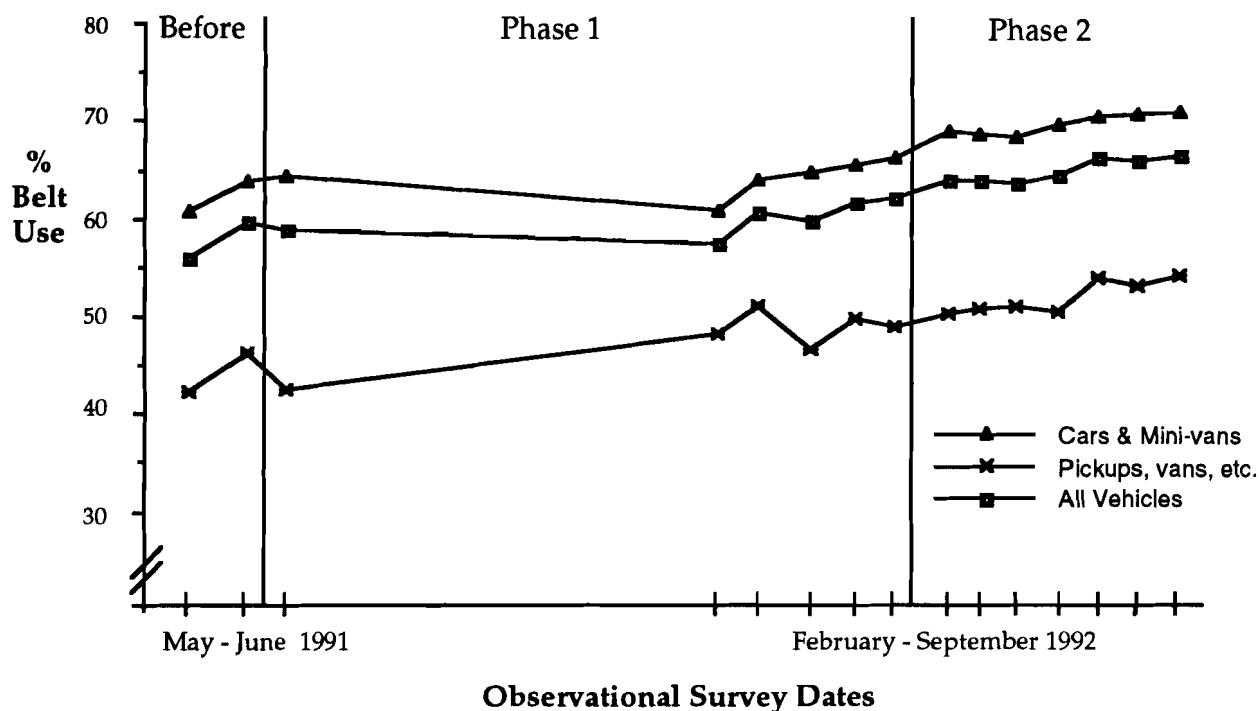


Figure 4.1 Belt use for all vehicles

The effect of local seat belt citations on these belt use changes is not perfectly clear, but it appears an effect could be present. Average seat belt citations per month for the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department and Wilmington City Police are shown below by phase:

	Before June 1990- May 1991	Phase 1 June 1991- April 1992	Phase 2 May 1992- Sept. 1992
Sheriff's Dept.	7.3	18.5	15.0
Wilmington Police	3.4	6.2	68.8

For the year before the initial kickoff, neither group was very active. Both showed an increase in Phase 1. The Sheriff's Department activity dropped slightly in Phase

2, while the Wilmington police had an enormous increase. The increase resulted from an overtime enforcement grant made available by the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program. Although the police citations per month had a large increase, local program coordinators indicate that little publicity about the enforcement has been generated.

Belt Use by Sex of Driver. The belt use increase in the concentrated site was a function of parallel increases for both male and female drivers (Figure 4.2). As is generally the case, the female use rate was consistently higher than the male use rate. The difference per observation period was around 15-20 percentage points.

The peak use rate was 60.3 percent for males and 75.2 percent for females. The same pattern was present by vehicle type (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). The difference in belt use by vehicle type was fairly dramatic. Examining Figures 4.3 and 4.4 simultaneously, the female use rate was about 5 to 10 percentage points higher in passenger vehicles than pickup trucks per observation period. The male use rate was about 15 percentage points higher in passenger vehicles. The peak female use rates were 75.5 percent in passenger vehicles and 72.3 percent in pickups. The peak male use rates were 66.2 percent in passenger vehicles and 51.5 percent in pickups.

Belt use increases are consistently seen after the start of Phase 2, except for female drivers of pickups, where small samples produced considerable fluctuation in the rates. As before, the increase appears to have started near the end of Phase 1.

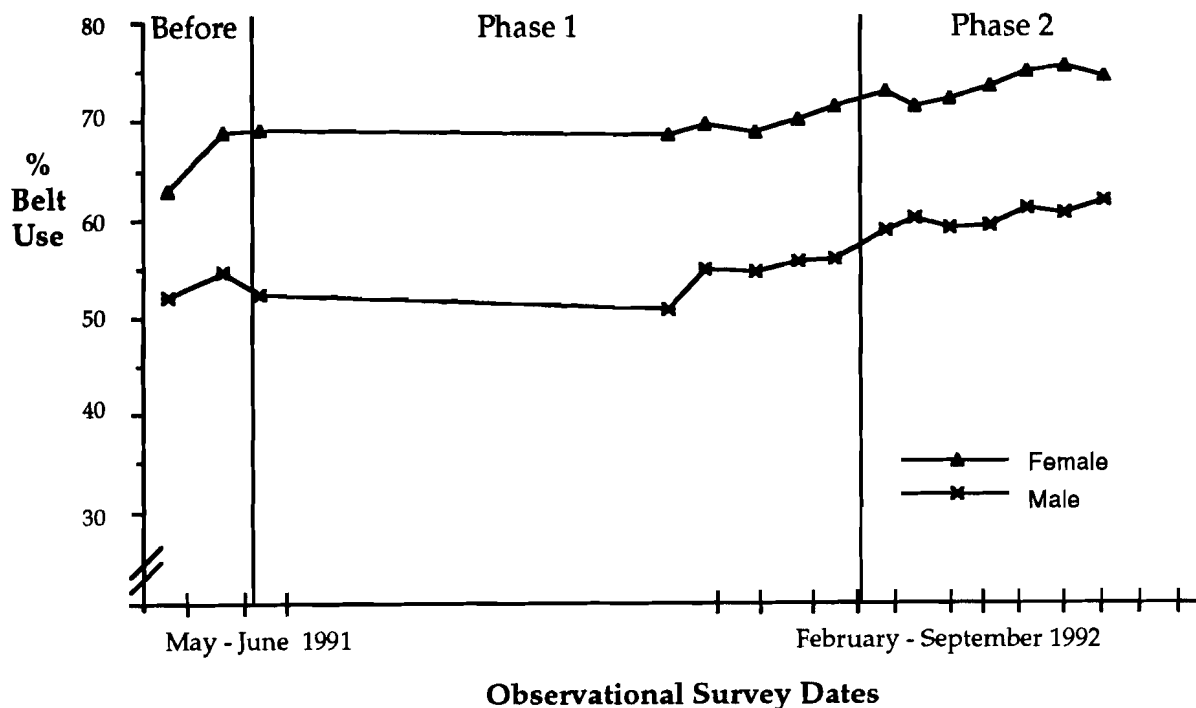


Figure 4.2 Belt use for all vehicles by sex of driver

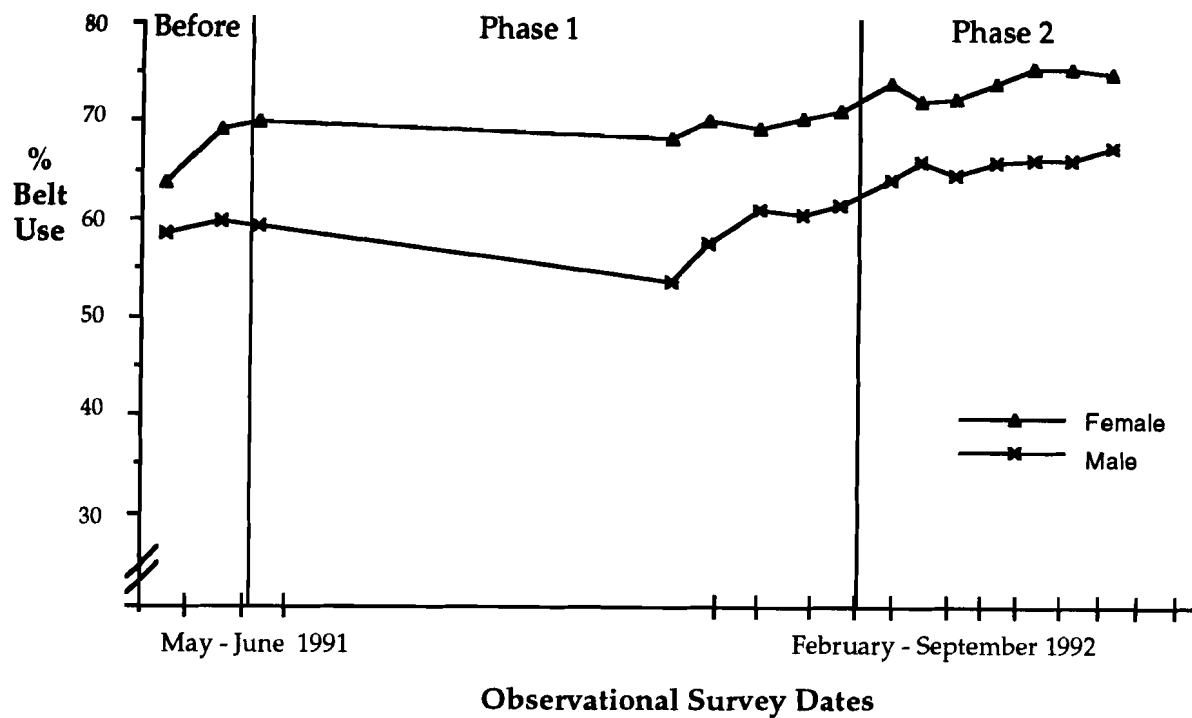


Figure 4.3 Belt use for passenger cars and mini-vans by sex of driver

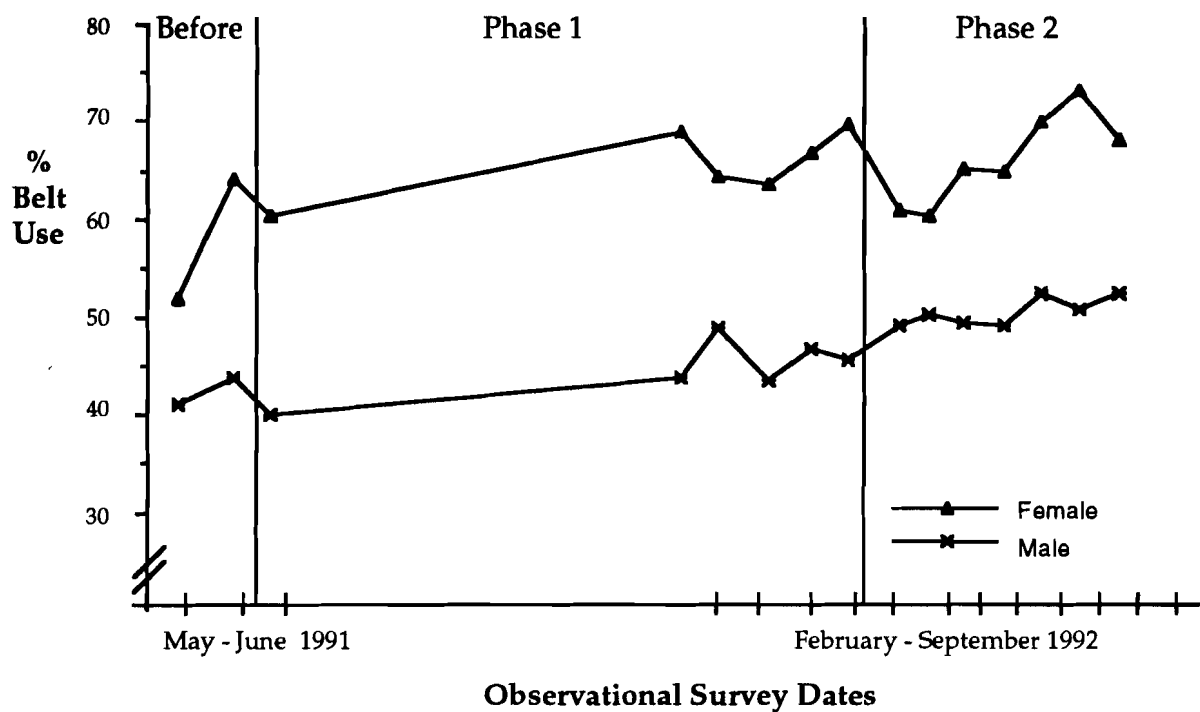


Figure 4.4 Belt use for pickup trucks, vans and utility vehicles by sex of driver

Belt Use by Race of Driver. Belt use rates were consistently higher for white drivers as compared to non-white drivers (Figure 4.5). However, a fairly wide disparity in the before phase and near the beginning of Phase 1 tended to narrow at various points in the program. The overall pattern of increase follows the previous plots. The peak use rates were 67.6 percent for white drivers and 65.2 percent for non-white drivers. Both occurred near the end of the program.

Figure 4.6 plots the belt use rate for passenger vehicles by driver race, and the pattern is very similar to Figure 4.5. Peak use rates were 72.8 percent for white drivers and 67.3 percent for non-white drivers.

Smaller samples lead to the fluctuations shown for pickups in Figure 4.7. Peak use rates for these vehicles were 54.5 percent for white drivers and 56.3 percent for non-white drivers. Interestingly, the non-white driver peak occurred just after the beginning of Phase 2.

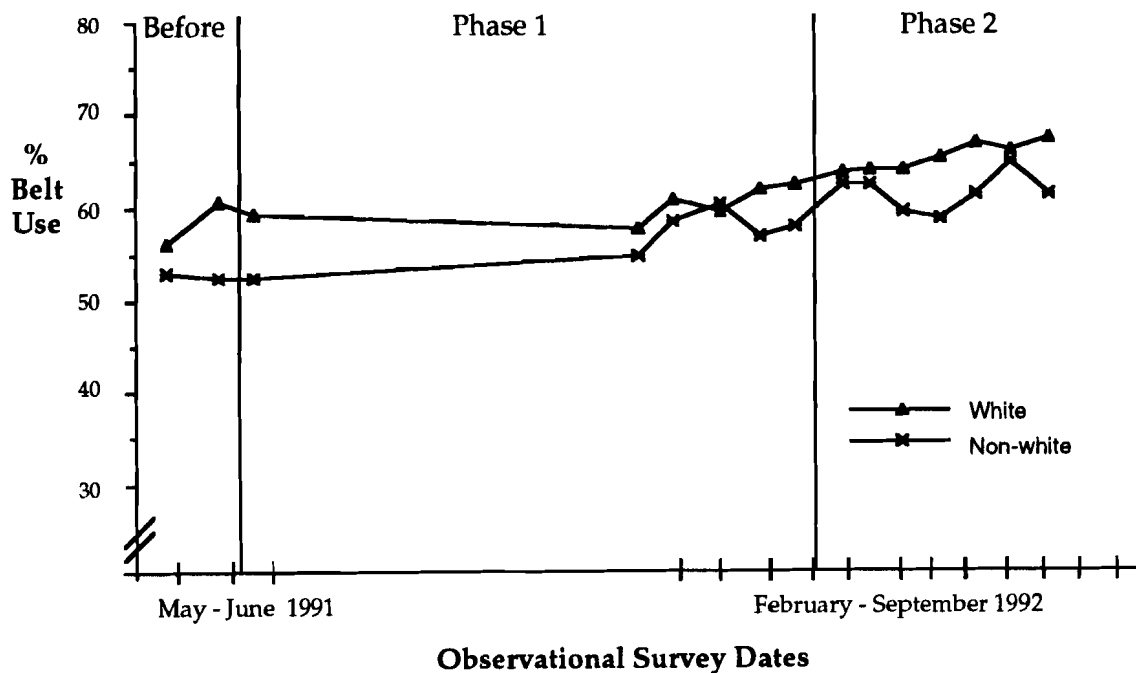


Figure 4.5 Belt use for all vehicles by race of driver

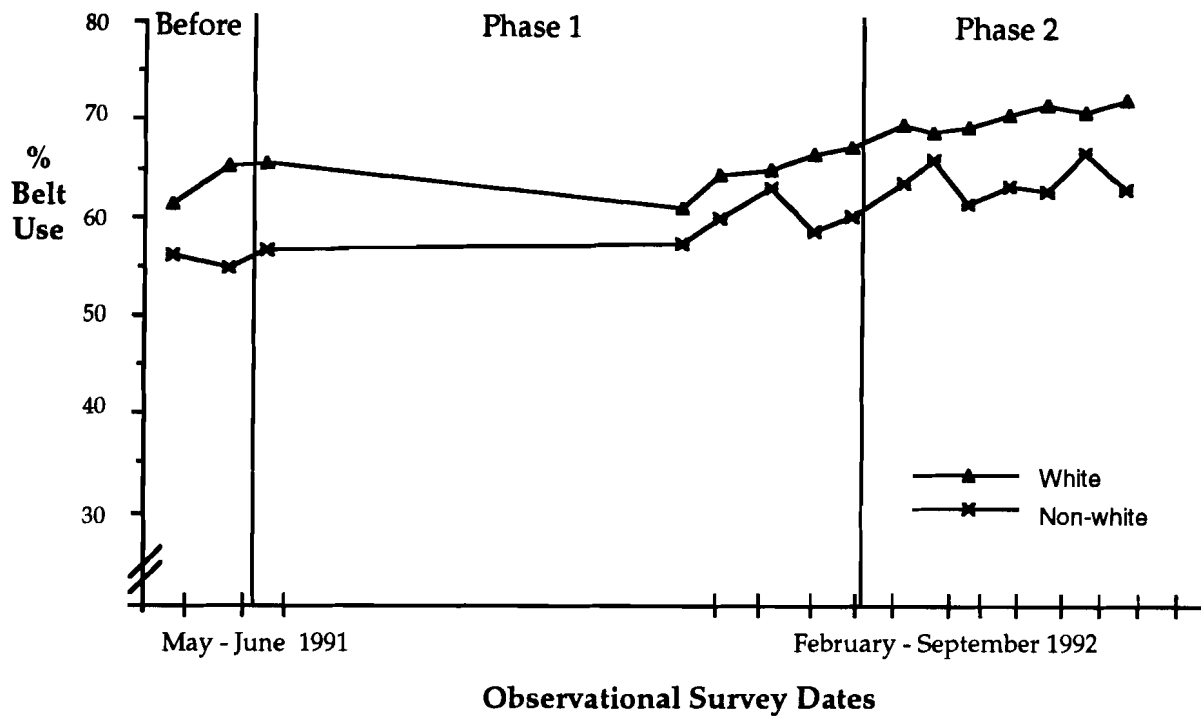


Figure 4.6 Belt use for passenger cars and mini-vans by race of driver

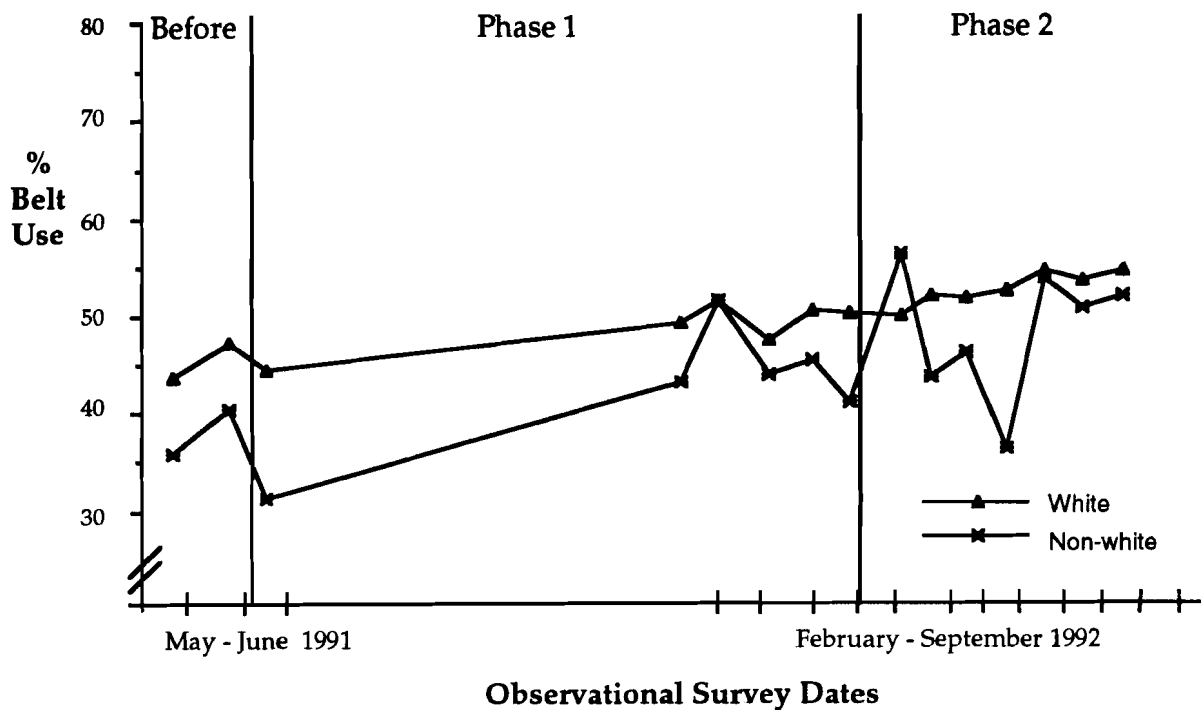


Figure 4.7 Belt use for pickup trucks, vans, and utility vehicles by race of driver

Belt Use by Race and Sex of Driver. The final plots pertain to driver race and sex, and the pattern of belt use increase is similar to the earlier plots. The groups tend to cluster by driver sex, where white female drivers have the highest belt use, followed somewhat closely by non-white females. For all vehicles, the peak values for white and non-white females were 75.8 and 74.9 percent, respectively, and occurred near the end of Phase 2 (Figure 4.8).

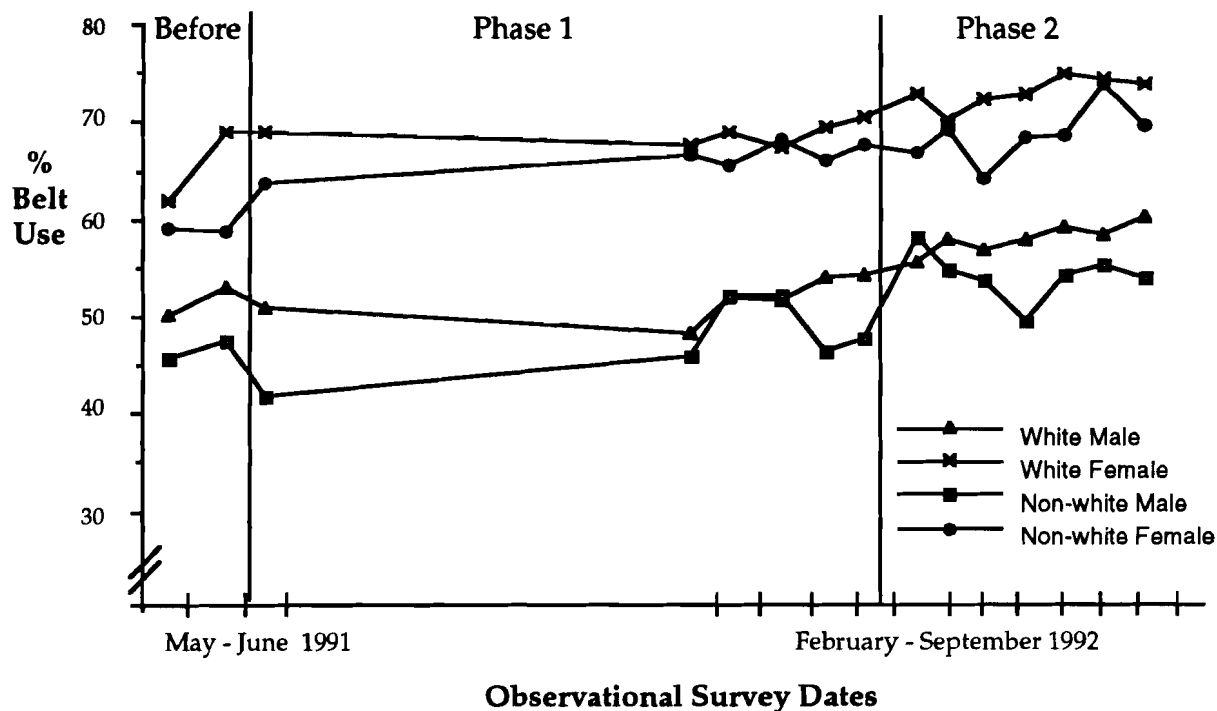


Figure 4.8 Belt use for all vehicles by race and sex of driver

The male plots are similar but at a distinctly lower belt use level. For all vehicles, peak belt use values were 61.2 percent for white males and 59.1 percent for non-white males (Figure 4.8). The non-white male peak use rate occurred just after the beginning of Phase 2. The same pattern is shown in the plots for passenger vehicles (Figure 4.9) and pickups (Figure 4.10). Peak belt use values were:

	<u>Passenger Vehicles</u>	<u>Pickups</u>
White females	76.4%	72.7%
Non-white females	75.1%	78.6%
White males	68.7%	51.6%
Non-white males	60.2%	57.6%

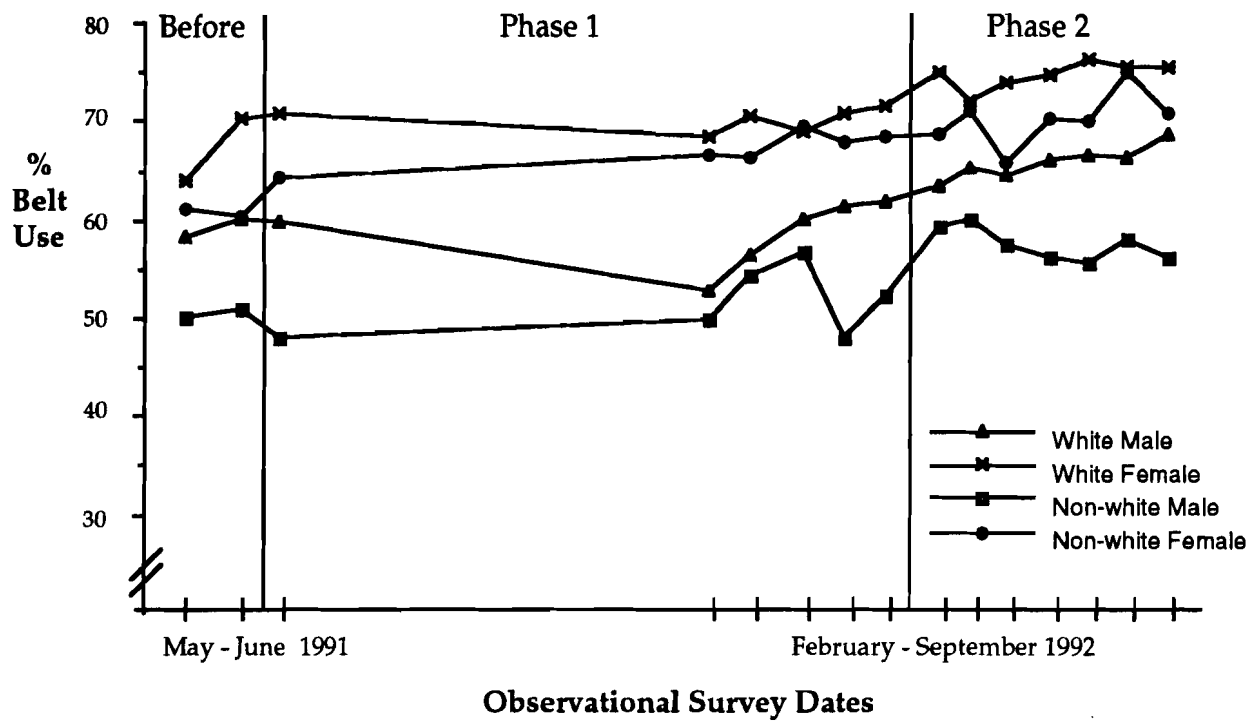


Figure 4.9 Belt use for passenger cars and mini-vans by race and sex of driver

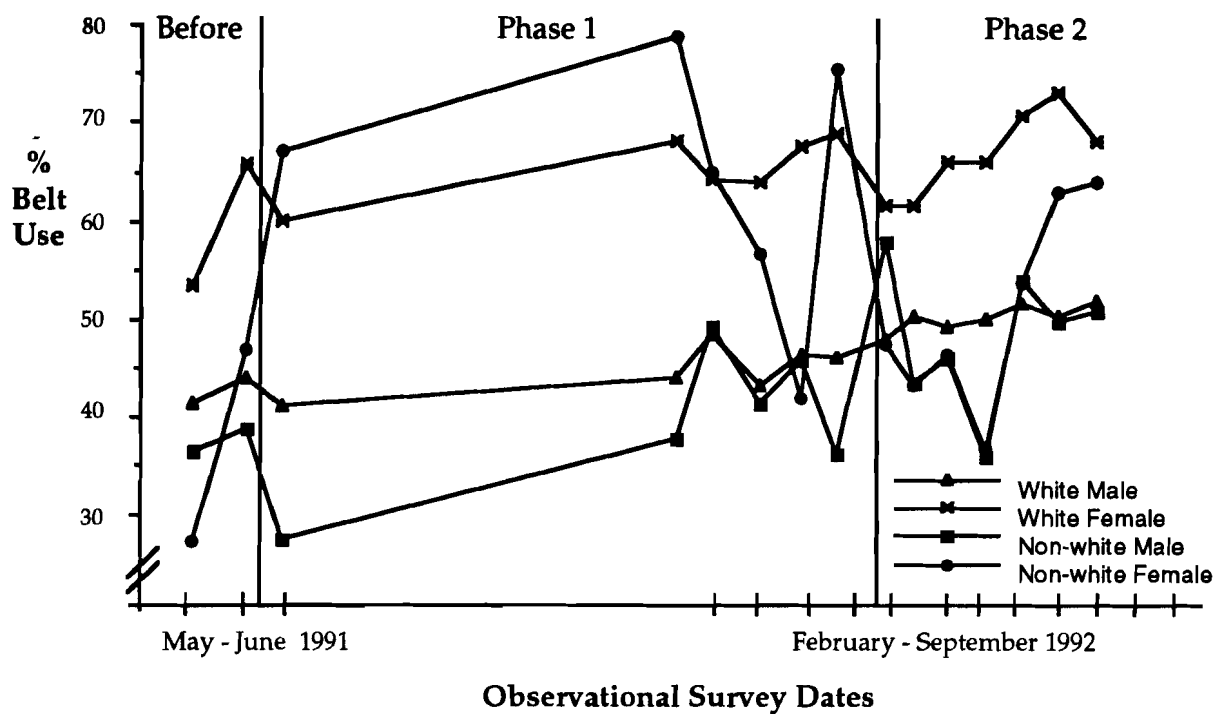


Figure 4.10. Belt use for pickup trucks, vans and utility vehicles. by race and sex of driver

Summary. There is a clear pattern of increasing belt use across the project phases, where peak values tend to occur near the end of data collection. For all vehicles, the lowest belt use rate of 56.1 percent was the first before period measure, and the largest rate of 66.8 percent was the last taken. The belt use increase starts near the end of Phase 1 and accelerates slightly in Phase 2, when the incentive campaign was in place. Increases in belt use occur for all types of vehicles and also by driver sex and race. Female driver belt use rates are consistently and distinctly higher than those for male drivers.

Automatic Restraint Survey

Method

To obtain automatics data for the concentrated site, HSRC hired and trained a two-person team. The situation was similar to the regular belt use data, and HSRC staff collected both before or baseline sets of observations in May and June of 1991. Several local data collection teams were then trained to collect automatics data, but none could fulfill their obligation. The final pair was trained in February 1992. Thus, the data collected during the program phases started in March 1992 and ended in October 1992. Ten sets of observations were obtained at about three-week intervals over this time frame.

Six intersections were selected for the automatics data, and, similar to the regular data, were spread over the county to represent both urban and rural conditions. The method was identical to that used for the statewide automatics survey, except that misuse data were not collected. The data were decoded using VINDICATOR into the categories of manual belts (for comparison purposes), air bags, and automatic belts. Further checking permitted identification of several kinds of automatic belts. A total of 2,778 passenger cars were observed, 567 in the before period and 2,206 during the program phases.

Results

Belt Use by Restraint Type. Table 4.9 shows both shoulder and lap belt use by restraint type. As before, the column identified as "Shoulder Belted %" represents drivers whose shoulder belts were in use. The final column labeled "Lap Belted %" indicates that the entire system (i.e., both lap and shoulder belt) was being used. The overall use rates were higher than the regular shoulder belt use rates reported in the previous section, but this is a function of the sample being restricted to 1986 and later model year passenger cars. Use of belts in cars equipped with air bags exceeded 85 percent. Shoulder belt use in cars equipped with motorized belts (Auto S/Manual L) exceeded 93 percent, but the manual lap belt use was only 56.2 percent for these systems. Belt use for the non-motorized automatic systems (Auto S/Auto L) exceeded 80 percent. There were only five cases of vehicles with automatic shoulder belts (Auto S) only. For ease in presentation of results, these vehicles will be deleted from subsequent tables.

Table 4.9. Percentage of shoulder belted and lap belted by restraint type

Restraint Type	Total	Shoulder Belted %	Lap Belted %
Automatic Belt	1238	87.4	69.2
Motorized:			
Auto S/Manual L	619	93.2	56.2
Non-Motorized:			
Auto S	5	100.0	40.0
Auto S/Auto L	614	81.6	82.4
Air Bag	531	85.7	86.3
Manual 3-Point Belt	1009	73.4	74.9
Overall	2778	82.0	74.5

Table 4.10 shows lap belt use by restraint type before and during the program phases. Because of small samples, the Phase 1 and Phase 2 data are combined. Manual lap belt use in the motorized shoulder belt systems increased from 46.3 percent in the before period to 58.0 percent during the program. Increases were also present for all other systems.

Table 4.10. Percent lap belt usage by restraint type and time period

Restraint Type	Baseline		During Program	
	Total	Lap Belted %	Total	Lap Belted %
Motorized:				
Auto S/Manual L	95	46.3	524	58.0
Non-Motorized:				
Auto S/Auto L	126	77.8	488	83.6
Air Bag	76	78.9	455	87.5
Manual 3-Point Belt	270	70.7	739	76.5
Overall	567	69.3	2206	75.9

Belt Use by Age of Driver. Age data were collected in three categories, representing young, middle-aged, and older drivers. Table 4.11 shows that lap belt use tended to increase with age of driver for the four restraint types shown. In addition, lap belt use increased from before to during the program for almost all age groups. Sizable increases are shown for young drivers of cars with motorized shoulder belts and air bags, coupled with a sizable decrease in cars with manual 3-point belts. Some of the fluctuation in the table is related to small samples.

Table 4.11. Lap belt use by restraint type and age of driver.

Restraint Type	Driver Age	Lap Belt %		
		Overall	Baseline	During Program
Motorized: Auto S/Manual L	< 25	44.4	31.8	64.3
	25-54	56.3	41.8	57.8
	> 54	73.9	77.8	60.0
Non-Motorized: Auto S/Auto L	< 25	77.3	72.7	81.8
	25-54	83.0	75.7	84.2
	> 54	78.6	82.9	66.7
Air Bag	< 25	69.2	60.0	100.0
	25-54	86.7	81.8	87.2
	> 54	86.7	81.8	100.0
Manual 3-Point	< 25	60.5	71.4	48.7
	25-54	75.7	69.4	77.5
	> 54	81.9	76.2	90.0
Overall	< 25	59.9	60.0	59.7
	25-54	75.0	68.0	76.3
	> 54	80.7	79.7	82.8

Belt use by Sex of Driver. Table 4.12 shows that lap belt use by female drivers consistently exceeded that by males. The lone exception is for air bag cars in the baseline period. Manual lap belt use by female drivers using motorized shoulder belt systems was 20 percentage points higher than for males in the before period, but the gap was much narrower during the program. Lap belt use by female drivers in air bag cars also increased substantially during the program, from 74.4 to 89.4 percent. For all systems combined, the increase from before to during the program was about equal for male and female drivers.

Table 4.12. Lap belt use by restraint type and sex of driver

Restraint Type	Driver Sex	Lap Belt %		
		Overall	Baseline	During Program
Motorized:				
Auto S/Manual L	Male	51.2	34.2	55.0
	Female	58.7	54.4	59.4
Non-Motorized:				
Auto S/Auto L	Male	77.6	76.7	78.0
	Female	85.1	78.8	86.3
Air Bag	Male	84.7	83.8	84.9
	Female	87.4	74.4	89.4
Manual 3-Point	Male	68.3	63.5	70.3
	Female	78.9	76.1	79.8
Overall	Male	70.5	65.2	72.2
	Female	77.0	72.6	78.0

Belt Use by Race of Driver. For all restraint types combined, lap belt use by white drivers was higher than for non-white drivers during both baseline and program phases (Table 4.13). There are only a few exceptions to this pattern. Sizeable lap belt increases for non-white drivers during the program can be seen for motorized shoulder belt, air bag and the manual 3-point systems. The reader should note that overall there were fewer (301) non-white drivers than white drivers (2,472). White drivers also had a sizeable lap belt increase in cars with motorized shoulder belts.

Table 4.13. Lap belt use by restraint type and race of driver

Restraint Type	Driver Race	Lap Belt %		
		Overall	Baseline	During Program
Motorized:				
Auto S/Manual L	White	58.0	47.8	60.0
	Non-White	40.3	0.0	42.4
Non-Motorized:				
Auto S/Auto L	White	82.9	77.5	84.3
	Non-White	78.1	80.0	77.6
Air Bag	White	86.1	79.7	87.2
	Non-White	88.6	50.0	90.9
Manual 3-Point	White	77.1	75.0	77.9
	Non-White	61.4	44.7	67.6
Overall	White	75.9	71.3	77.1
	Non-White	63.8	51.7	66.7

Belt Use by Age and Sex of Driver. Table 4.14 contains data by age and sex of driver and tends to reiterate the patterns seen earlier -- namely, higher lap belt use for older drivers and female drivers. Manual lap belt use by both young males and females increased substantially during the program in cars with motorized shoulder belt systems and air bag cars. However, lap belt use declined in cars with manual 3-point systems for these same drivers. The reader should be aware that cells in the table are based on small samples.

Table 4.14. Lap belt use by restraint type and age and sex of driver.

Restraint Type	Driver Age & Sex	Lap Belt %		
		Overall	Baseline	During Program
Motorized: Auto S/Manual L	Young Male	26.7	20.0	40.0
	Young Female	57.1	41.7	77.8
	Mid Male	51.6	27.3	55.0
	Mid Female	58.5	51.5	59.1
	Old Male	80.0	83.3	75.0
	Old Female	69.2	75.0	0.0
Non-Motorized: Auto S/Auto L	Young Male	80.0	100.0	66.7
	Young Female	76.5	66.7	87.5
	Mid Male	77.5	69.7	79.2
	Mid Female	85.9	80.5	86.6
	Old Male	78.1	84.0	57.1
	Old Female	79.2	81.3	75.0
Air Bag	Young Male	66.7	50.0	100.0
	Young Female	70.0	62.5	100.0
	Mid Male	85.3	93.3	84.7
	Mid Female	87.7	75.9	89.0
	Old Male	81.8	80.0	100.0
	Old Female	100.0	100.0	100.0
Manual 3-Point	Young Male	65.5	72.2	54.5
	Young Female	57.7	70.8	46.4
	Mid Male	68.0	63.5	69.4
	Mid Female	79.9	73.2	81.6
	Old Male	71.7	56.5	87.0
	Old Female	100.0	100.0	100.0
Overall	Young Male	55.8	56.3	55.0
	Young Female	62.0	62.3	61.7
	Mid Male	70.6	62.5	72.2
	Mid Female	77.5	71.6	78.4
	Old Male	76.4	74.3	80.6
	Old Female	87.3	87.8	86.4

Belt Use by Race and Sex of Driver. Table 4.15 pertains to lap belt use by race and sex of driver. For motorized shoulder belt systems, all groups but white female drivers had substantial increases in lap belt use during the program. The increases in air bag cars were attributable to both white and non-white female drivers. The non-white increases noted earlier for manual 3-point system were attributable to both male and female drivers. For all systems combined, all groups showed increases during the program, with the largest gains belonging to non-white female drivers.

Table 4.15. Lap belt use by restraint type and race and sex of driver.

Restraint Type	Driver Age & Sex	Lap Belt %		
		Overall	Baseline	During Program
Motorized:				
Auto S/Manual L	White Male	53.0	35.1	57.6
	White Female	60.4	56.4	61.1
	Non-White Male	38.5	0.0	40.0
	Non-White Female	41.7	0.0	44.1
Non-Motorized:				
Auto S/Auto L	White Male	78.4	77.8	78.7
	White Female	85.5	77.2	87.2
	Non-White Male	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Non-White Female	81.6	88.9	80.0
Air Bag	White Male	84.3	83.3	84.4
	White Female	87.5	76.3	89.3
	Non-White Male	92.3	100.0	91.7
	Non-White Female	86.4	0.0	90.5
Manual 3-Point	White Male	71.1	68.1	72.4
	White Female	80.6	79.7	80.9
	Non-White Male	51.8	42.9	57.1
	Non-White Female	67.9	47.1	73.1
Overall	White Male	72.3	67.4	73.8
	White Female	78.1	74.3	78.9
	Non-White Male	55.5	48.3	58.0
	Non-White Female	68.6	55.2	71.0

Summary. Automatic belt use in this sample of newer cars was higher than for the regular shoulder belt data reported previously. Gains in belt use were seen for all restraint types during the program. Belt use increased along with the age of the driver. Belt use for female drivers was consistently higher than for males with the sole exception being air bag cars in the baseline period. Male drivers substantially increased manual lap belt use in cars with motorized shoulder belts during the program. Belt use tended to be higher for white drivers, but non-white drivers had gains for cars with motorized shoulder belts, air bags, and manual 3-point systems.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this project indicate that there are benefits in conducting public awareness programs that address the correct use of automatic restraint systems. The benefits may be realized both in increased correct use of these systems, as well as enhanced exposure for general seat belt messages which may lead to increased overall belt use.

The data from the four statewide surveys of automatic restraint use collected for this project provide a snapshot of the belt-wearing habits of motorists in late model vehicles. Overall, drivers of cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts had the highest shoulder belt use (92.8 percent) but low lap belt use (35.1 percent). Systems with non-motorized automatic shoulder and lap belts were used somewhat more often than the manual 3-point belt systems (74.3 percent vs 66.5 percent). Manual 3-point belts were used slightly more often in air bag cars (73.2 percent) than in recent model cars without automatic restraints (66.5 percent).

During the course of the project, statewide lap belt use in the vehicles with motorized shoulder belts increased slightly from 33.8 percent in the initial survey to a high of 37.7 percent during the program period. This means that for every 100 persons observed lap-belted in the *before* period, 112 were so observed during the program. Manual 3-point belt use in air-bag-equipped vehicles went from 66.0 percent to 74.8 percent during the program (an increase of 13.3 percent). Six months after the completion of the program, lap belt use in vehicles with motorized shoulder belts and manual lap belts decreased to a 32.6 percent use rate, while belt use in air-bag-equipped vehicles continued to increase (75.2 percent at the end of 1992). The deterioration of the gains in manual lap belt use with automatic shoulder belts is disappointing and puzzling. However, the belt use increase in air-bag-equipped vehicles is particularly encouraging since air bags are becoming the standard automatic restraint equipment in most new vehicles. Over the four data collection waves, air-bag-equipped vehicles steadily increased from 15 percent of observed vehicles in the spring of 1991 to 38 percent in the fall of 1992. Overall belt use in the state for motorists in all vehicles covered by the seat belt law showed a modest increase from 60.5 percent to 62.7 percent during the program. Belt use continued to increase to 63.9 percent by the end of 1992.

The largest gains in automatic and general belt use were realized at the concentrated program site. Manual lap belt use in vehicles with motorized shoulder belts increased from 46.3 percent to 58.0 percent (an increase of 25.3 percent) during the program period. Manual 3-point belt use increased from 78.9 percent to 87.5 percent (an increase of 12.2 percent) in air-bag-equipped vehicles and from 70.7 percent to 76.5 percent (an increase of 8.2 percent) in recent model cars without automatic restraints. Overall belt use at this site increased from 57.5 percent to 66.7 percent (an increase of 16 percent).

Improvements in belt use cannot be attributed to any single seat belt promotional program. Many education- and enforcement-oriented programs were conducted simultaneously throughout the state and at the concentrated site during this period. This project did make a concerted effort to tap into these other programs and conduct joint activities.

Several recommendations for future statewide seat belt promotions can be made based on this demonstration effort:

- **Divide a statewide campaign into regional programs.** This strategy was valuable in this project for several reasons. One, it enabled representatives within similar areas to work together and establish regional coalitions. Two, these coalitions then received messages tailored to their regional profile and they were able to construct their own unique activities. Clearly, there were differences in use rates and attitudes towards belts in the lower-belt-use western mountains and eastern coast as compared to the higher belt use seen in the more urban, central part of the state. Regionalization also provided comparison data that enhanced media coverage while generating a sense of competition.
- **Group the regions by media market.** Media markets define the print and electronic media that the residents in a region receive. Using these regions can maximize media coverage for the program efforts by targeting messages and giving the media both statewide and local activities to cover.
- **Use regional workshops and news conferences to kick off the program.** This strategy worked well for this project. About three-fourths of the media outlets in the state covered the initial events, and all subsequent events and news releases were likewise well covered. The workshop attendees were brought into the program during the morning session and then became part of the regional kickoff in the afternoon. Conducting the kickoff news conference as the conclusion of the workshop underlined the importance of the program both to the media and the local advocates.
- **Create the opportunity for self-selection into the program.** This means not locking into certain organizations to lead your regional efforts, but rather promoting the program to a wide range of groups with highway safety interests and allowing individual interests to determine who should become the program leaders. There were no best occupations or affiliations from which to draw program leaders. By inviting persons representing many different perspectives on highway safety, the scope of the resulting coalitions was expanded. The source of leadership varied from region to region, coming from health department personnel, law enforcement officers, emergency medical providers, insurance agents, driver education instructors and corporate safety officers.

- **Use automatic restraint information to revitalize old seat belt messages.** The media is always looking for a different angle. New technology, such as automatic restraints and their impact on the public, can add new interest to belt and child restraint messages. For example, traditional child passenger safety week messages received good coverage by emphasizing the proper use of child restraints in vehicles with automatic belts or air bags.
- **Choose a broad theme.** The restraint systems available to motorists vary widely. The theme *SEAT BELTS, AIR BAGS Use all you've got* was chosen to embrace all systems. Although air bags are quickly becoming standard on most new cars, the vast majority of motorists still have only belts to protect them. Care must be taken to make sure that seat belts by themselves are viewed as excellent protection.
- **Use a coalition newsletter to unite and recognize scattered programs.** Three issues of a newsletter were produced during the one-year program. The newsletter highlighted local programs, passed along new information and belt use data, and communicated upcoming statewide initiatives.
- **Include a youth focus.** Young drivers (under 25 years of age) have lower than average belt-wearing rates and are overrepresented in fatal crashes (NHTSA, 1991). Strategies targeted to this group could help to increase the overall program results.
- **Include a site with more concentrated activities to experiment with innovative approaches.** The concentrated effort site showed the largest improvements in all forms of belt use. That site had the most organizations and agencies in their coalition. They developed their own campaign theme and used additional strategies such as the distribution of incentives for belt use. Some approaches, such as the materials for auto dealers, were pilot-tested in that area before being distributed statewide.

The project had several noteworthy successes: the kickoff workshops and news conferences were well attended and received excellent media exposure; the brochures, bumper stickers, radio and TV public service announcements and set of posters aimed at teenage drivers were widely distributed; the collaboration with the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles led to child passenger safety news conferences and materials using the Turtles; an organization of over 1,000 independent insurance agents adopted promotion of automatic restraints as a statewide program; there was widespread ownership of the concentrated program; and, there was a statewide increase in the correct use of all types of belts. Perhaps the most valuable product of the project was the mailing list of over 400 highway safety advocates across the state who either attended the initial workshops or joined the project along the way. These people will constitute an excellent community resource for new initiatives provided their commitment to promoting highway safety exists beyond this project's completion.

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APPENDIX A: PROGRAM MATERIALS

Bumper Stickers

Brochure Announcing Program Workshops

Brochure on Correct Use of Automatic Restraints

**WE ARE BEHIND SEAT BELTS.
YOU NEED TO BE TOO.**

North Carolina Law Enforcement Officers

NC GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM • UNC HIGHWAY SAFETY RESEARCH CENTER

OPERATION
**BUCKLE
DOWN**

**WE ARE BEHIND SEAT BELTS.
YOU NEED TO BE TOO.**

North Carolina Emergency Medical Personnel 

NC GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM • UNC HIGHWAY SAFETY RESEARCH CENTER

**WE ARE BEHIND SEAT BELTS.
YOU NEED TO BE TOO.**

North Carolina Fire Fighters

NC GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY PROGRAM • UNC HIGHWAY SAFETY RESEARCH CENTER

◆ **SEAT BELTS, AUTOMATIC BELTS, AIR BAGS**

and CHILD SAFETY SEATS all save lives. Yet, for these systems to give us the protection we need in crashes, we have to use them correctly. Unfortunately, many people don't.

Even the smart cars of the 90s that buckle up motorists automatically or come equipped with air bags cannot do it all. People need to be educated to buckle up manual lap belts and to use their seat belts with air bags.

◆ **These workshops are designed to bring together the people who are in the best positions to get the public to use these life-saving systems correctly.** Participants will be given information and materials to conduct public awareness programs as part of their normal activities. Agencies in your area have agreed to lead this effort. Together you can make a difference.

◆ **At the end of each workshop, participants will take part in a press conference to kick off the program in that region.** The focus of this program includes working with the media to get the word out. A workshop will be held in each of the state's six media markets (see map for site and date in your area).

◆ **No registration fees.** This program is being conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center and the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and is free to anyone who would like to attend. But we do need to reserve your space. Please let us know quickly if you can come.

◆ **AGENDA**

- 8:30 - 9:00 **Registration**
- 9:00 - 9:30 **Introduction**
- 9:30 - 10:30 **Overview of Belts and Bags**

Information will cover crash dynamics, the history of belts, national and NC usage figures, the appearance of automatic systems, and common problems that lead to misuse and no use.

10:45 - 12:00 **Public Awareness Program**

The program being conducted in North Carolina will be explained, along with how different community efforts can come together to produce results in cities, counties and regions, as well as the entire state. Each group will be given ideas and materials that suit their own needs. There will also be time for discussion and feedback.

- 12:00 - 2:00 **Lunch (provided)**
- Press Conference**
- Demonstration of Seat Belts and Air Bags in Cars**

CALL, FAX OR MAIL.

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU by May 31 to make arrangements and to send you the locations of the workshops.

CALL 1-800-672-4527 (Toll free in NC) or (919) 962-2202 and ask for Paula Hendricks or fill in the following information and

FAX it to **(919) 962-8710** or

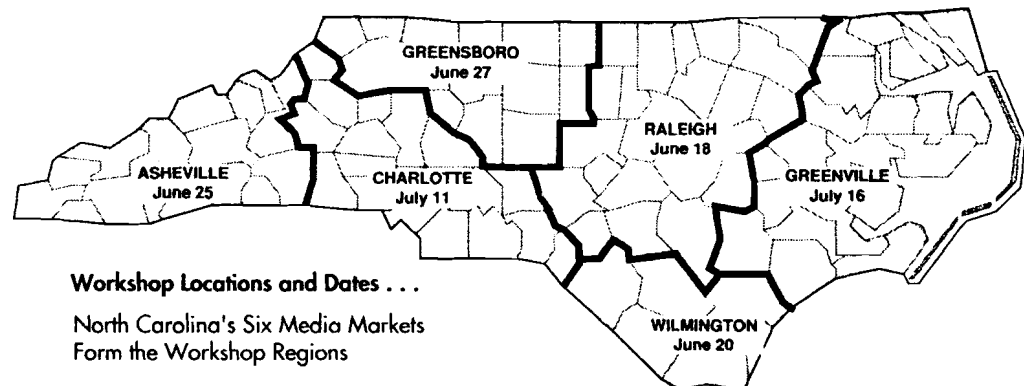
MAIL it to UNC Highway Safety Research Center
134 1/2 East Franklin Street, CB 3430
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430

Name: _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

I will be attending the workshop in:	<input type="checkbox"/> Raleigh	June 18
	<input type="checkbox"/> Wilmington	June 20
	<input type="checkbox"/> Asheville	June 25
	<input type="checkbox"/> Greensboro	June 27
	<input type="checkbox"/> Charlotte	July 11
	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenville	July 16

.....



You Could Learn a Lot
From a Dummy,
BUCKLE UP.



"Vince and Larry" © 1985 U.S. DOT

400,000 people will be in crashes
in North Carolina this year.

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS
Use all you've got.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
about seat belts, air bags or
child safety seats, write or call:

University of North Carolina
Highway Safety Research Center
CB# 3430
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430

919-962-2202 or
1-800-672-4527
(Toll free in North Carolina
8am to 5pm, Monday-Friday)

Governor's Highway Safety Program
215 East Lane Street
Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 733-3083

50,000 copies of this brochure were printed at a cost of \$9,501.00 or 07 each.
Funding provided by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS

Getting all
the crash protection
you bought

4 Common Mistakes
That Can Hurt You
Down the Road

AUTOMATIC BELTS

Common Mistake #1

Forgetting to Use Manual Lap Belt

In North Carolina, about 3 out of every 4 drivers wearing an automatic shoulder belt fail to buckle their manual lap belts. Without the added protection of the lap belt, you could slide under the shoulder belt in a crash or get thrown out in a rollover. Let the shoulder belt be a reminder to buckle your lap belt. You need both.

There are 3 main kinds of automatic belts: automatic shoulder belts that are attached to the car door; motorized shoulder belts that run along a track above the car door; and automatic lap and shoulder belts that are anchored within the car door.

Only automatic lap and shoulder belts buckle you up completely. Other belt systems need you to fasten the lap belt.



Give Automatic Shoulder Belts a Hand, Buckle that Lap Belt.

AIR BAGS

Common Mistake #2

Not Using Lap and Shoulder Belts

Cars with air bags have seat belts too. There's a good reason why. Air bags and seat belts work together to provide the best lifesaving system currently available in cars. But seat belts are still your first line of defense in all crashes.

Seat belts alone protect you in side impacts, rear-end crashes and rollovers. Air bags and seat belts protect the chest, face, and head from hitting the steering wheel, windshield or dashboard in frontal crashes. However, air bags only deploy in moderate to worse frontal crashes.

Air Bags Only Deploy in Frontal Crashes



STANDARD SEAT BELTS

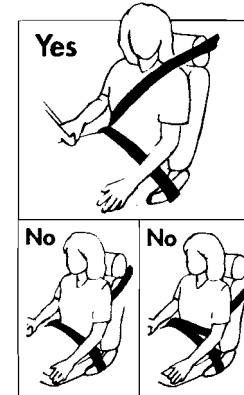
Common Mistakes #3 & 4

Not Using Manual Seat Belts

All seat belts are good, if you use them. The advantage of automatic belts is that they are designed to not let you forget to buckle up. Manual seat belts work just as well as automatic belts to protect you in all types of crashes if you make it a habit to buckle up.

Wearing Lap and Shoulder Belts Incorrectly

With all belts, correct use is very important. Shoulder belts should be snug across the chest. Lap belts should be low and snug on the hips.



Never place a shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back.

A Caution about Using Child Safety Seats in Cars with Automatic Systems

AIR BAGS Rear-facing safety seats, required for infants under 20 lbs, should not be placed in a seating position that has an air bag. Refer to your vehicle owner's manual for recommendations for using front-facing seats.

AUTOMATIC BELTS Most automatic belts are not designed to hold a safety seat securely in place. Check your owner's manual to find out if a safety seat can be used with your car's system, or use the safety seat in the rear seat, which is the safest seating position for a small child.

HEALTH DEPARTMENTS
 EMERGENCY MEDICAL PERSONNEL
 AUTOMOBILE DEALERS
 INSURANCE AGENTS
 LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES
 HIGHWAY SAFETY ADVOCATES
 INJURY PREVENTION ADVOCATES

Join others in your area
 to learn more about
 today's seat belts and air bags
 and be part of a statewide
 public awareness program
 that will kick off
 in your area
 during this meeting.

Use all you've got.

SEAT BELTS
 AIR BAGS

UNC HIGHWAY SAFETY RESEARCH CENTER
 134 1/2 East Franklin Street
 CB 3430
 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3430

SEAT BELTS
 AIR BAGS

Use all you've got.

UNC Highway Safety Research Center
 NC Governor's Highway Safety Program
 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

APPENDIX B: PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS

Use All You've Got

Radio PSA Scripts

**Prepared by: UNC Highway Safety Research Center
N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program**

This vacation season, protect yourself and your loved ones when travelling. Don't drink and drive and when it comes to seat belts, use all you've got. This has been a safety belt message from ____.

* * *

_____ reminds you to make this a safe holiday season. Buckle your seat belts and don't drink and drive -- two good habits to keep for life. This safety belt message sponsored by the _____.

* * *

This is (law enforcement officer) , buckling your seat belt is the law, but it's also good sense. Just because you drive well and obey traffic rules doesn't mean everyone else does. You need to do all you can to protect yourself and your loved ones. Buckling your seat belts is the best protection you can get. Be safe, buckle your seat belts.

* * *

Seat belts could save your life some day, but only if you wear them. Buckle up, your life might depend on it. This is _____ asking you to buckle up.

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people between the ages of one and 34. Think about it. Before any trip, long or short, **always** buckle your seat belt.

* * *

Small Boy: Mom can I go out to play?

Mother: Yes, as long as you put on a jacket. I don't want you catching a cold . . .

Older Boy: Mom can I go out for the football team?

Mother: I don't know, football looks awfully rough. What kind of equipment will you get?

Announcer: Parents are constantly looking out for their children, trying to protect them. Don't let this concern for safety stop when he gets behind the wheel of a car.

Teenage Male: Mom can I use the car tonight?

Mother: I guess, as long as you promise to wear your seat belt, drive safely, and will be home by . . .

Announcer: This safety belt message brought to you by _____.

* * *

Safety Belt PSAs
page two

Someone once said, an ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure. On the road, that ounce of prevention is the few seconds it takes to buckle your seat belt. Prevent injuries and protect your life. Buckle up every time you get in your car or truck. This safety belt message brought to you by _____.

* * *

Some of the best people live in _____ County. Seat belts are the best safety feature on any car or truck, but **only** if they are used. So let's protect the best by using the best. Buckle up _____ County. This is _____.

* * *

The holiday season is full of last minute needs and small details we try hard to not forget. One important thing to remember is to buckle your seat belt. Whether you are going to the store for one last gift or heading to Grandma's for the family dinner, don't forget to buckle up. Seat belts will get you there safely. This safety belt message brought to you by _____.

* * *

That chill in the air means that winter is about to settle in _____ County. Winter brings icy, slick roads, and makes wearing your seat belts even more important. This is _____, saying don't start out on a winter trip, long or short, without buckling up first. Winter roads can be dangerous, but seat belts will help protect you.

* * *

Don't let tragedy happen on the road. Protect yourself and your loved ones. **Always** buckle your seat belts. Seat belts could save your life. This safety belt message sponsored by _____.

* * *

People in _____ County love their pickup trucks. _____ encourages all pickup drivers to buckle up. There's nothing like a truck and there's nothing that can protect you better in your truck than a seat belt. Pickups and seat belts, they both get the job done.

* * *

A message for all drivers of pickup trucks -- You need to buckle up as much as people in cars do. People in trucks get in accidents just people like in cars. And trucks drivers can get injured when they are thrown around the cab or through the windshield. If you're not buckling up, what's holding you back? This safety belt message sponsored by _____.

* * *

Child (hushed voice): Here's a secret message for all you parents. There are three things kids will probably never tell you: that we kinda like our vegetables, that we're sleepy and ready for bed, and that baths are kinda nice. And we'll never tell you that when you buckle us up in the car we feel loved. Let's face it, if we grow up safe and healthy, it will be all your fault.

Safety Belt PSAs
page three

* * *

Announcer: We're here today interviewing an expert on seat belts.

Child: Yep, wear one all the time.

Announcer: Well, how long have you been riding buckled up?

Child: All my life.

Announcer: Really! Well did you know that the law requires adults to buckle up too?

Child: Sure, and I'm all for it.

Announcer: You mean you want your parents to buckle up too?

Child: You bet. I love my mom and dad. Besides, I can't cook.

Announcer: Take it from a pro. Make buckling up a family habit.

* * *

Seat belts save lives. Pass it on. By wearing your seat belts and making sure your children are in safety seats and belts, you can start a safety habit that will last for generations to come. You see, if you buckle up and you buckle up your children, they will learn to buckle up their children too. So start a safety habit you can feel good about. Somewhere down the road you and those you love will be glad you did.

* * *

Child: Daddy, did Grandpa buckle you up when you were little?

Father: No we didn't know about seat belts and how to ride safely back then.

Child: Yeah? Well, when I'm big, I'll tell my kids (in father's voice) I'm buckling you up just like my dad buckled me.

Father: I never thought about it that way. You know, that would make me a very happy grandfather. Buckling up could be a great family tradition.

* * *

SFX -- crashing cars, screeching tires, shattering glass -- loud to catch attention then to announcer

Announcer -- Will the four-hundred-thousand people who will be in crashes in North Carolina this year, **Please Buckle Up**. Seat belts, air bags -- use all you've got.

* * *

Cars with air bags have seat belts too. There's a good reason why. Seat belts will protect you in side crashes and rollovers. Air bags can't. Together seat belts and an air bag give the best protection you can get. Seat belts, air bags -- use all you've got.

Safety Belt PSAs
page four

* * *

Does your car have shoulder belts that move to fit around you when you start the engine? If so, don't forget to buckle the lap belt yourself. Automatic shoulder belts are great. They just need a little help. Give your automatic shoulder belt a hand, buckle your lap belt. Shoulder belts, lap belts -- use all you've got.

* * *

If your car has an air bag keep using your seat belt. Air bags only work in head-on crashes. Seat belts will protect you in all kinds of crashes. Air bags can give you added protection, but they can't take the place of seat belts. This is _____ asking you to buckle up yourself and the ones you love. Seat belts, air bags -- use all you've got.

* * *

The holiday season makes us realize how much we cherish family and friends. Show those close to you how much you care. When travelling during the holidays, make sure everyone is buckled up. Protect the ones you love with seat belts and child safety seats.

* * *

SFX -- police siren -- then to announcer

Announcer -- Make sure the only flashing lights you see this holiday season are decorations. Drive sober, obey speed limits, and buckle your seat belt. This safety message was brought to you by _____.

* * *

Ho Ho Ho. Santa Claus here, I'm getting the last few gifts loaded in my sleigh. Next I'll check my reindeer to make sure they're hooked up good and tight. Then I'll get in and buckle my seat belt. That's right, Santa buckles up every time he goes somewhere. Make sure you and your parents do too. Ho Ho Ho, buckle up and have a merry and safe Christmas.

* * *

Children: Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go.
The horse knows the way to carry the sleigh through the white and drifting snow. .

Announcer: On your trip to grandma's house, make sure everyone is protected with seat belts and child safety seats. Seat belts and child seats will help get you to grandma's safely.

* * *

Announcer -- Give automatic shoulder belts a hand.

SFX -- applause, small group of people cheering

Announcer -- Not that. I mean reach over and buckle your lap belt too. You need both. Seat belts, use all you've got.

Safety Belt PSAs
page five

* * *

Person 1: Hey, new car for Christmas?

Person 2: Yeah. Sarah and I decided to trade in our old clunker.

Person 1: It looks good. Let me see, you've got anti-lock brakes and an air bag.

Person 2: Yeah, all the latest safety equipment.

Person 1: I read even with an air bag you still need to wear your seat belt.

Person 2: That's right. The owner's manual says to always buckle up. It says the air bag only supplements the protection of a seat belt.

Person 1: You going to give me a ride in this new beauty?

Person 2: Sure. If you buckle up.

Announcer: Seat belts, air bags -- use all you've got. This message sponsored by _____.

* * *

Protect your head by using your head. Buckle up. Seat belts, air bags -- use all you've got. This safety message was brought to by _____.

* * *

Person 1: The 1965 Green Bay Packers is absolutely the best team football has ever seen.

Person 2: I disagree. The Pittsburgh Steelers of the 1970s were the best.

Person 3: What about the San Francisco 49ers? Four super bowl rings during the 80s.

Announcer: All great teams have one thing in common -- They work well together. Seat belts and air bags work together to protect you in a crash. There have been a lot of great teams, but only seat belts and air bags can save your life in a crash. Seat belts, air bags -- a team you can count on.

* * *

Announcer: If you're not wearing your seat belt . . .

SFX: Crashing cars, screeching tires, shattering glass

Announcer: what's holding you back? Seat belts, air bags -- use all you've got.

* * *

Announcer: Don't do windows.

SFX: Screeching tires, shattering glass

Announcer: Buckle your seat belt. Seat belts, air bags -- use all you've got.

* * *

**APPENDIX C: PROGRAM ADVISORIES, NEWS RELEASES
AND SAMPLE ARTICLES**

Program Kickoff Events by Region
Initial Program Belt Use Results by Region
Child Passenger Safety Issues
Update on Program Belt Use Results by Region
Reduction in Deaths and Serious Injuries

CAROLINA

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(919) 962-2091 FAX: (919) 962-2279

ADVISORY

Not for publication

June 10, 1991 -- No. NN106

Automatic seat belt, air bag misuse
topic of news conference, workshop

News conference, 1-2 p.m.
Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon

Tuesday, June 18, Main ballrooms,
Sheraton University Center, Durham

How N.C. motorists and passengers misuse air bags and automatic seat belt systems will be the focus of a news conference and workshop at the Sheraton University Center in Durham on Tuesday, June 18. The sessions, which will include a demonstration of the devices, will kick off a two-month statewide public information program aimed at helping more North Carolinians buckle up correctly.

Event sponsors are the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill, the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

North Carolina is one of two states receiving funding from the national administration for a public education program on automatic seat belts and air bags.

Research conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center has shown that seven of 10 drivers of cars with motorized, automatic seat belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forget or choose not to buckle up, the study found.

A news conference, scheduled from 1 to 2 p.m., will include a demonstration of correct use of seat belts and air bags. Speakers will be Paul Jones, director of the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program; James Long, N.C. insurance commissioner; Dr. Thad Wester, deputy state health director; area program leaders; and UNC center researchers.

(More)

Area health and emergency medical professionals, law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other highway safety advocates invited from a 22-county area of central North Carolina, including the Triangle, will attend a three-hour workshop Tuesday morning. Topics will include a look at crash dynamics, national and N.C. belt-use statistics, how different types of automatic belts and air bags work and common problems that lead to misuse or no use. Participants also will learn how they can help educate the public as part of their normal job activities.

Both participants and organizers are expected to be available for interviews throughout the day. The media are invited to attend all or any part of the session, including lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

The Sheraton University Center is located at 2800 Middleton Ave. in Durham.

From Raleigh, take I-40 west to exit 279-B. Follow the Durham Freeway, which becomes Erwin Road, until you see a Pizza Hut on the right. Turn right on LaSalle Street and take the next left on Middleton Avenue. Go two blocks until you see the Sheraton on the right.

From Chapel Hill, take U.S. 15-501 north until you see the Morreene Road exit. At the top of the ramp, go straight through the light onto Middleton Avenue. The Sheraton is located immediately on the left.

The Durham session is the first of six planned across the state. Others are scheduled in Wilmington (June 20), Asheville (June 25), Greensboro (June 27), Charlotte (July 11) and Greenville (July 16). News Services will update plans for those sessions as details are available.

For more information or a complete agenda for the June 18 workshop, call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center at (919) 962-2202 or News Services at (919) 962-2091.

- 30 -

Print Contact: Mike McFarland
Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

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NEWS

For immediate use

June 18, 1991 -- No. 349

Statewide seat belt, air bag education program launched

BY JEFF LOWRANCE
Highway Safety Research Center

CHAPEL HILL -- Persuading N.C. motorists to use automatic seat belt systems and air bags correctly is the goal of a new statewide education program launched today (June 18) in Durham.

Called "Seat Belts and Air Bags: Use All You've Got," the program features a year-long public information campaign and workshops in five other N.C. cities during the next two months.

North Carolina is one of two states receiving funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for the program, which is sponsored by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill and the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program.

UNC center research has shown that seven of 10 drivers with automatic, motorized shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forgets or chooses not to buckle lap-and-shoulder belts.

"If a door flies open in a crash, a driver or front-seat passenger who has not buckled his lap belt is left largely unprotected," said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the UNC center. "Air bags only deploy in moderate to worse frontal crashes. An unbelted person in an air bag car would be unprotected in a side-impact crash, rear-end collision or rollover."

Forgetting to buckle manual lap belts when a car is equipped with an automatic shoulder belt, not buckling manual lap-and-shoulder belts in cars with and without air bags and incorrectly positioning shoulder belts are the most common forms of misuse, according to other research.

(More)

"Most of the automatic systems will position the shoulder belt around the driver without he or she doing anything," Reinfurt said. "Many people, however, may not be aware that there is still a manual lap belt to buckle, and without it they are not fully protected. A properly used lap-and-shoulder belt is always the first line of defense in a crash."

Health and law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other state officials to attended the Durham workshop. Similar sessions are scheduled in Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, Greenville and Wilmington.

"This program is trying to bring together people who often come in contact with drivers of cars with automatic belts and air bags," said Lauren Marchetti, program director and a UNC center researcher.

"Auto dealers sell the cars and can explain the different systems available and can make safety a real selling point," she said. "Insurance agents handle coverage of the cars and can stress the need for proper belt use. And law enforcement and emergency medical professionals see first hand the consequences of not buckling up."

Workshop topics include crash dynamics, belt use statistics, explanations of how different types of automatic belts and air bags work and reasons the devices are misused or not used. Participants see demonstrations of automatic restraint systems and a rollover crash simulator on loan from the Tarboro Police Department.

After the workshops, the officials, dealers and agents will coordinate activities aimed at increasing correct use of belts in their local areas. UNC researchers will monitor automatic seat belt use across the state during the program and evaluate its impact through those statistics and feedback from regional coordinators and the public.

Paul Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program, said the program would have benefits for North Carolinians beyond improving highway safety and public health.

"In this time of trying to balance budgets and increasing health-care costs, motor vehicle injuries have become an economic concern, costing this state hundreds of millions of dollars each year," Jones said.

N.C. Insurance Commissioner Jim Long said the state's automobile insurance industry had endorsed the program because of its potential for reducing health-care costs.

(More)

"The use of seat belts and air bags saves lives and reduces injury and property damage," Long said. "The result is a substantial savings in health-care costs, health insurance costs and property insurance costs."

The program also will feature public service announcements on television stations across the state. People attending the workshops and others will distribute printed material.

"Each public service announcement will focus on one of the common types of misuse," Marchetti said. "Those attending the workshops plus other representatives of law enforcement agencies, county health departments, insurance agencies and car dealerships across all of North Carolina will receive brochures, fact sheets, posters and displays explaining automatic seat belts and air bags and their correct use."

Marchetti said organizers hope to stress the theme of the educational program -- "Seat Belts and Air Bags: Use All You've Got" -- and that cars with standard manual belts do not offer less protection.

"You just have to remember to buckle up," she said.

- 30 -

Note: Other workshop dates and locations are: June 20, Wilmington, Blockade Runner Hotel; June 25, Asheville, Ramada Inn-West; June 27, Greensboro, Holiday Inn-Four Seasons; July 11, Charlotte, Holiday Inn-Woodlawn Road; and July 16, Greenville, Hilton Hotel.

All sessions are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. News conferences featuring demonstrations of the safety devices and remarks by local officials are scheduled at 1 p.m. for each workshop. Participants and organizers are expected to be available for interviews throughout the day. The media are invited to attend all or any part of the sessions, including lunch, at noon.

News Services will update plans for other sessions as more details are available. For more information, call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center at (919) 962-2202 or News Services at (919) 962-2091.

- 30 -

Print Contact: Mike McFarland
Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

CAROLINA

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Not for publication

June 11, 1991 -- No. NN107

Automatic seat belt, air bag misuse
topic of Wilmington-area workshop

News conference, 1-2 p.m.
Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon

Thursday, June 20, Robert E. Lee Room,
Blockade Runner Hotel and Conference Center, Wrightsville Beach

How N.C. motorists and passengers misuse air bags and automatic seat belt systems is the focus of a news conference and workshop scheduled for Thursday, June 20, at the Blockade Runner Hotel and Conference Center in Wrightsville Beach. The session, which will include a demonstration of the devices, is part of a statewide public information program aimed at helping more North Carolinians buckle up correctly.

Event sponsors are the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill, the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

North Carolina is one of two states receiving funding from NHTSA for a public education program on automatic seat belts and air bags.

Research conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center has shown that seven of 10 drivers of cars with motorized, automatic seat belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forget or choose not to buckle up, the study found.

A news conference, scheduled from 1 to 2 p.m., will feature a demonstration of correct use of seat belts and air bags and an announcement about plans to make the Wilmington area the focus of the most comprehensive public education program in the state.

Speakers will include David H. Plate, president and chief executive officer, and Robert C. Winfrey, vice president, of the New Hanover Regional Medical Center. Also speaking will be Donald Blake, chairman of the New Hanover County Health Department; Yvette Ruffin, a representative of the Governor's Highway Safety Program; and UNC center researchers.

(More)

Fifty-five area health and emergency medical professionals, law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other highway safety advocates invited from Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, Pender and Robeson counties are registered to attend a three-hour workshop Thursday morning. Topics will include a look at crash dynamics, national and N.C. belt-use statistics, how different types of automatic belts and air bags work and common problems that lead to misuse or no use. Participants also will learn how they can help educate the public as part of their normal job activities.

Participants and organizers are expected to be available for interviews throughout the day. The media are invited to attend all or any part of the session, including lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

The Blockade Runner Hotel and Conference Center is located at 275 Waynick Boulevard in Wrightsville Beach. From Wilmington, take U.S. 74 or U.S. 76 to Wrightsville Beach Island. After crossing the Intercoastal Waterway drawbridge, take U.S. 74 to the stop light and turn right. Go a quarter of a mile, and the Blockade Runner is on the left.

The Wrightsville Beach session is the second of six planned across the state. Others are scheduled in Asheville (June 25), Greensboro (June 27), Charlotte (July 11) and Greenville (July 16). News Services will update plans for those sessions as details are available.

For more information or a complete agenda for the June 20 workshop, call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center at (919) 962-2202 or News Services at (919) 962-2091.

- 30 -

Print Contact: Mike McFarland
Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

CAROLINA

NEWS

NEWS SERVICES
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(919) 962-2091 FAX: (919) 962-2279

For use after 1 p.m.
Thursday, June 20

June 20, 1991 -- No. NN112

**Wilmington chosen for N.C.'s most
comprehensive belt, air bag program**

BY JEFF LOWRANCE
Highway Safety Research Center

CHAPEL HILL -- Wilmington-area motorists will be the target of North Carolina's most complete public education program on correct use of automatic seat belt systems and air bags during the next year.

The announcement was made Thursday (June 20) at a Wrightsville Beach workshop attended by local health and law enforcement officials, automobile dealers and insurance agents.

The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill and the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program awarded the New Hanover Regional Medical Center and the New Hanover County Health Department a \$25,000 grant to conduct the community program.

Correct use of automatic seat belt systems will be monitored more frequently in Wilmington, New Hanover County and area sites than in other N.C. cities. More public information activities are planned in the Wilmington area than elsewhere.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration awarded North Carolina \$250,000 for "Seat Belts and Air Bags: Use All You've Got," a year-long public education campaign launched Tuesday (June 18) in Durham. The program features workshops in four other N.C. cities and communication such as public service announcements on television.

North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for education programs.

(More)

After the workshops, the officials, dealers and agents will coordinate activities aimed at increasing correct use of belts in their local areas. UNC researchers will monitor automatic seat belt use across the state during the program and evaluate its impact through those statistics and feedback from regional coordinators and the public.

UNC center research has shown that seven of 10 drivers with automatic, motorized shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forgets or chooses not to buckle their lap-and-shoulder belts.

"If a door flies open in a crash, a driver or front-seat passenger who has not buckled his lap belt is left largely unprotected," said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the UNC center. "Air bags only deploy in moderate to worse frontal crashes. An unbelted person in an air bag car would be unprotected in a side-impact crash, rear-end collision or rollover."

Forgetting to buckle manual lap belts when a car is equipped with an automatic shoulder belt, not buckling manual lap-and-shoulder belts in cars with and without air bags and incorrectly positioning shoulder belts are the most common misuses, according to other research.

Organizers hope to stress the theme of the educational program -- "Seat Belts and Air Bags: Use All You've Got" -- and that cars with standard manual belts do not offer less protection.

"You just have to remember to buckle up," said Lauren Marchetti, a UNC researcher and program director.

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Note: The New Hanover Regional Medical Center was expected to distribute a separate news release Thursday about its own traffic injury prevention program. The center's program will be recognized for being an area leader in seat belt safety and posting a 70 percent belt use rate among employees. Corning Inc., a Wilmington manufacturing facility, also was to receive a 70 percent award.

Print Contact: Mike McFarland

Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

UNC Highway Safety Research Center: Jeff Lowrance, (919) 962-2202

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ADVISORY

Not for publication

June 19, 1991 -- No. NN110

Automatic seat belt, air bag misuse
topic of Asheville-area workshop

News conference, 1-2 p.m.

Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon

Tuesday June 25, Galleria Room,
Ramada Inn-West, Asheville

How N.C. motorists and passengers misuse air bags and automatic seat belt systems is the focus of a news conference and workshop scheduled for Tuesday, June 25, at the Ramada Inn-West in Asheville. The session, which will include a demonstration of the devices and a roll-over crash simulator, is part of a statewide public information program aimed at helping more North Carolinians buckle up correctly.

Event sponsors are the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill, the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

North Carolina is one of two states receiving funding from NHTSA for a public education program on automatic seat belts and air bags.

Research conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center has shown that seven of 10 drivers of cars with motorized, automatic seat belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forget or choose not to buckle up, the study found.

A news conference, scheduled from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., will feature a demonstration of correct use of seat belts and air bags and the roll-over simulator.

Speakers will include Paul Jones, director of the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program, N.C. Insurance Commissioner Jim Long and UNC center researchers.

(More)

Thirty-five area health and emergency medical professionals, law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other highway safety advocates invited from a 17-county area in western North Carolina are registered to attend a three-hour workshop Tuesday morning. Topics will include a look at crash dynamics, national and N.C. belt-use statistics, how different types of automatic belts and air bags work and common problems that lead to misuse or no use. Participants also will learn how they can help educate the public as part of their normal job activities.

Participants and organizers are expected to be available for interviews throughout the day. The media are invited to attend all or any part of the session, including lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

The Ramada Inn-West is located at 435 Smoky Park Highway in Asheville. From I-40, take exit 44 to the intersection of U.S. 19 and U.S. 23.

The Asheville session is the third of six planned across the state. Others are scheduled in Greensboro (June 27), Charlotte (July 11) and Greenville (July 16). News Services will update plans for those sessions as details are available.

For more information or a complete agenda for the June 25 workshop, call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center at (919) 962-2202 or News Services at (919) 962-2091.

- 30 -

Print Contact: Mike McFarland
Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

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June 19, 1991 -- No. NN111

Automatic seat belt, air bag misuse
topic of Greensboro-area workshop

News conference, 1-2 p.m.
Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon

Thursday June 27, Ballroom Level
Holiday Inn-Four Seasons, Greensboro

How N.C. motorists and passengers misuse air bags and automatic seat belt systems is the focus of a news conference and workshop scheduled for Thursday, June 27, at the Holiday Inn-Four Seasons in Greensboro. The session, which will include a demonstration of the devices and a roll-over crash simulator, is part of a statewide public information program aimed at helping more North Carolinians buckle up correctly.

Event sponsors are the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill, the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

North Carolina is one of two states receiving funding from NHTSA for a public education program on automatic seat belts and air bags.

Research conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center has shown that seven of 10 drivers of cars with motorized, automatic seat belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forget or choose not to buckle up, the study found.

A news conference, scheduled from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., will feature a demonstration of correct use of seat belts and air bags and the roll-over simulator. Speakers will include Paul Jones, director of the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program; Sylvester Daughtry, chief of the Greensboro Police Department; Ed Bristol, a representative from the N.C. Department of Insurance; and UNC center researchers.

Sixty-five area health and emergency medical professionals, law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other highway safety advocates invited from a 14-county area in the Piedmont-Triad region are registered to attend a three-hour workshop Thursday morning. Topics will include a look at crash dynamics, national and N.C. belt-use statistics, how different types of automatic belts and air bags work and common problems that lead to misuse or no use. Participants also will learn how they can help educate the public as part of their normal job activities.

(More)

Participants and organizers are expected to be available for interviews throughout the day. The media are invited to attend all or any part of the session, including lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

The Holiday Inn-Four Seasons is located at 3121 High Point Road in Greensboro. From I-40, take the High Point Road exit. From I-85, exit to I-40 and take the High Point Road exit.

The Greensboro session is the fourth of six planned across the state. Others are scheduled in Charlotte (July 11) and Greenville (July 16). News Services will update plans for those sessions as details are available.

For more information or a complete agenda for the June 27 workshop, call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center at (919) 962-2202 or News Services at (919) 962-2091.

- 30 -

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Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

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ADVISORY

Not for publication

July 3, 1991 -- No. NN121

Automatic seat belt, air bag misuse
topic of Charlotte-area workshop

News conference, 1-2 p.m.

Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon

Thursday July 11, John Alexander Room

Holiday Inn, Woodlawn Road, Charlotte

How N.C. motorists and passengers misuse air bags and automatic seat belt systems is the focus of a news conference and workshop scheduled for Thursday, July 11, at the Holiday Inn on Woodlawn Road in Charlotte. The session, which will include a demonstration of the devices and a roll-over crash simulator, is part of a statewide public information program aimed at helping more North Carolinians buckle up correctly.

Event sponsors are the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill, the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

North Carolina is one of two states receiving funding from NHTSA for a public education program on automatic seat belts and air bags.

Research conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center has shown that seven of 10 drivers of cars with motorized, automatic seat belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forget or choose not to buckle up, the study found.

A news conference, scheduled from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., will feature a demonstration of correct use of seat belts and air bags and the roll-over simulator. Speakers will include Paul Jones, director of the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program; N.C. Insurance Commissioner Jim Long; Dr. Tim Cole, chief, Injury Control Section, N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources; and UNC center researchers.

(More)

Sixty area health and emergency medical professionals, law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other highway safety advocates invited from a 16-county area in the southern and western Piedmont region are registered to attend a three-hour workshop Thursday morning. Target counties included Alexander, Anson, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Rowan, Stanly, Union and Watauga. As of July 2, those registered included officials from Albemarle, Asheboro, Balfour, Boone, Charlotte, Concord, Davidson, Kannapolis, Lincolnton, Matthews, Rockingham, Monroe, Salisbury, Shelby, Statesville, Star and Troy.

Workshop topics will include a look at crash dynamics, national and N.C. belt-use statistics, how different types of automatic belts and air bags work and common problems that lead to misuse or no use. Participants also will learn how they can help educate the public as part of their normal job activities.

Participants and organizers are expected to be available for interviews throughout the day. The media are invited to attend all or any part of the session, including lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

The Holiday Inn is located at 212 Woodlawn Road in Charlotte. From I-77, take Exit 6-A. The hotel is located immediately on the left. From I-85, take the Billy Graham Parkway-Charlotte International Airport Exit. Turn onto Billy Graham Parkway and go about five miles. The parkway becomes Woodlawn Road at I-77, and the Holiday Inn is on the immediate left.

The Charlotte session is the fifth of six planned across the state. The last one is scheduled in Greenville on July 16. News Services will update plans for that session as details are available.

For more information or a complete agenda for the July 11 workshop, call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center at (919) 962-2202 or News Services at (919) 962-2091.

- 30 -

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ADVISORY

Not for publication

July 11, 1991 -- No. NN123

**Automatic seat belt, air bag misuse
topic of Greenville-area workshop**

News conference, 1-2 p.m.
Workshop, 9 a.m.-noon

Tuesday, July 16, Carolina Ball Room
Hilton Inn, 207 S.W. Greenville Blvd., Greenville

How N.C. motorists and passengers misuse air bags and automatic seat belt systems is the topic of a news conference and workshop Tuesday, July 16, at the Hilton Inn in Greenville. The session, which will include a demonstration of the devices and a roll-over crash simulator, is part of a statewide public information program aimed at helping more North Carolinians buckle up correctly.

Event sponsors are the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill, the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). North Carolina is one of two states receiving funding from NHTSA for the public education program.

Research conducted by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center has shown that seven of 10 drivers of cars with motorized, automatic seat belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forget or choose not to buckle up, the study found.

A news conference, scheduled from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m., will feature a demonstration of correct use of seat belts and air bags and the roll-over simulator. Speakers will be Paul Jones, director of the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program; Ed Bristol, special assistant to the N.C. insurance commissioner; Charles Hinman, chief of the Greenville Police Department; Linda C. Thompson, vice president of nursing, Pitt County Memorial Hospital; and UNC center researchers.

One hundred health and emergency medical professionals, law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other highway safety advocates invited from a 23-county area in the eastern and coastal regions are expected to attend a three-hour workshop Tuesday. Target counties included Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell and Washington.

(More)

As of July 10, those registered included officials from Ayden, Bayboro, Camden, Camp Lejeune, Elizabeth City, Farmville, Havelock, Hertford, Goldsboro, Greenville, Jackson, Kinston, Manteo, Morehead City, New Bern, Plymouth, Raleigh, Roanoke Rapids, Robersonville, Rocky Mount, Snow Hill, Tarboro, Washington, Williamston, Windsor and Winton. Call News Services for the names and titles of participants from your area.

Workshop topics will include a look at crash dynamics, national and N.C. belt-use statistics, how different types of automatic belts and air bags work and common problems that lead to misuse or no use. Participants also will learn how they can help educate the public as part of their normal job activities.

Participants and organizers are expected to be available for interviews throughout the day. The media are invited to attend all or any part of the session, including lunch from noon to 1 p.m.

The Hilton Inn is located at 207 S.W. Greenville Boulevard. Greenville Boulevard is U.S. 264. Hotel phone number is (919) 355-5000. A map is enclosed.

The Greenville session is the last of six to be held across the state. For more information or a complete agenda for the July 16 workshop, call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center at (919) 962-2202 or News Services at (919) 962-2091.

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Print Contact: Mike McFarland
Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

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For Immediate Use

Nov. 4, 1991

Note: Included is a graphic showing
N.C. safety belt figures and a list
of counties in the six regions surveyed.

N.C. motorists neglecting lap belts, study shows

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL -- More than a third of N.C. motorists in cars with automatic restraint systems fail to fasten their lap belts, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released today (Nov. 4) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show that automation does not guarantee improved seat belt usage.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate center director.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are not getting all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need."

Automatic restraint systems come in three types. In one, lap and shoulder belts fit automatically around the motorist. In the second, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

(More)

In the latest survey, researchers observed 2,415 N.C. motorists between mid-March and early June. They recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Asheville, Charlotte, the Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point Triad, Greenville, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington. At the same time, researchers monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state.

Overall safety belt use ranged from 66 percent in the Raleigh-Durham region to 47 percent in the Asheville region, according to the survey. The Triad region was second at 63 percent, followed by the Charlotte region (61 percent), the Greenville region (58 percent) and the Wilmington region (50 percent). Urban area drivers posted higher use rates than rural drivers.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars. Most new Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. cars already come with driver-side air bags. General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, plans to install both driver- and passenger-side air bags in all new cars sold in North America by September 1994.

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers of cars with automatic shoulder belts is a top priority in a yearlong statewide educational effort that began last summer, said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's public information manager.

(More)

"Air bags alone are not good enough," she said. "We want everyone to know to use all they've got. The combination of an air bag and lap and shoulder belts is currently the best protection available."

Last June and July, as the recent monitoring period concluded, the UNC center and the governor's program kicked off the educational program about automatic seat belts and air bags. North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for the effort from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The most recent study results have been shared with each region's program leaders, who include auto dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local public information activities toward the people who need this information -- those who aren't using all of the protection they bought," Marchetti said.

A new survey that began Oct. 1 may show the impact of the program. Results are expected next spring, said Reinfurt.

"To a great extent, North Carolina's numbers should be representative of the nation's automatic seat belt use," he said. "A U.S. Department of Transportation study that was conducted in 19 cities and looked only at shoulder belt use arrived at numbers very similar to those found here."

-30-

(Cole is a second-year graduate student at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Carrboro resident.)

Print Contact: Mike McFarland

Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

Counties in the six regions surveyed

Asheville region: Avery, Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Graham, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey.

Charlotte region: Alexander, Anson, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Montgomery, Rowan, Scotland, Stanly, Union and Watauga.

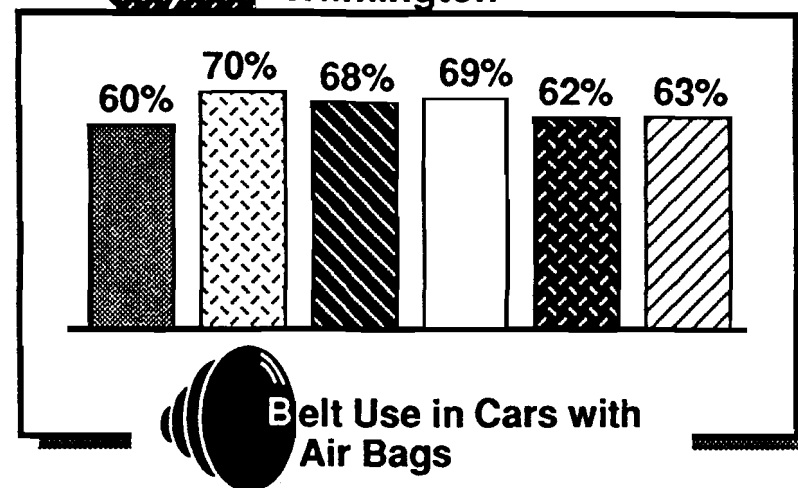
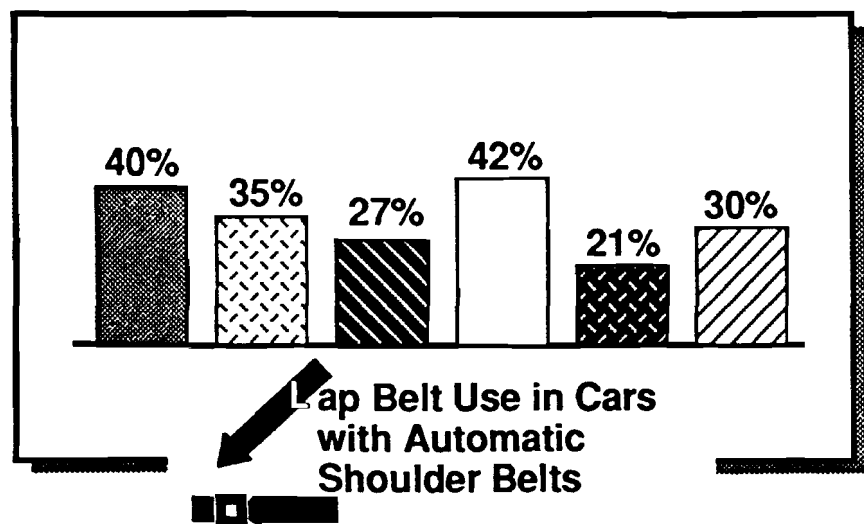
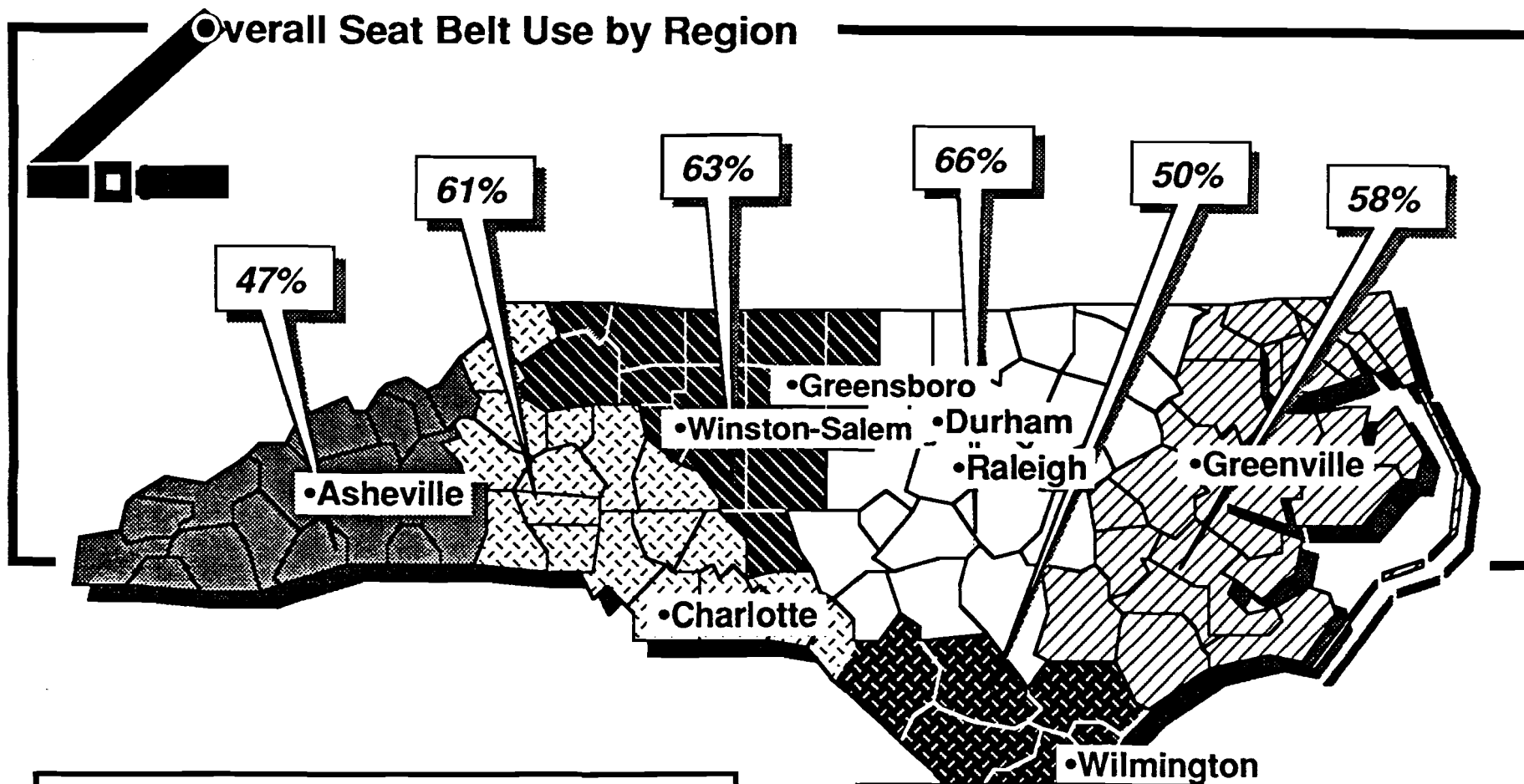
Greensboro-High Point-Winston-Salem region: Alamance, Alleghany, Ashe, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin.

Greenville region: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrell and Washington.

Raleigh-Durham region: Chatham, Cumberland, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Orange, Person, Sampson, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne and Wilson.

Wilmington region: Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, Pender and Robeson.

Overall Seat Belt Use by Region



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For Immediate Use

Nov. 4, 1991

Note: Local contacts and phone numbers are on page 3. A graphic shows results for the 17-county Asheville region and the state.

Asheville area drivers below state average in belt use: study

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL -- Asheville area drivers are less likely to buckle up than the average N.C. motorist, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released today (Nov. 4) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show that in vehicles with the three most common types of automatic restraint systems, Asheville area drivers wear their shoulder belts at levels slightly below the state average, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

"The same is true for lap belts except for drivers of cars equipped with motorized shoulder belts," Reinfurt said. "About 40 percent of these drivers are buckling their manual lap belts, while the state average is at 34 percent."

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

In the most recent survey, Asheville region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Asheville, Charlotte, the Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point Triad, Greenville, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington.

(More)

The Asheville region comprises 17 counties: Avery, Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Haywood, Henderson, Graham, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania and Yancey.

Researchers also monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state. Urban and rural areas were represented.

Overall safety belt use ranged from 66 percent in the Raleigh-Durham region to 47 percent in the Asheville region, according to the survey. The Triad region was second at 63 percent, followed by the Charlotte region (61 percent), the Greenville region (58 percent) and the Wilmington region (50 percent). Urban area drivers posted higher use rates than rural drivers.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

The survey results show that automation does not necessarily result in higher usage rates, Reinfurt said.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," he said.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are not getting all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need."

Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars. Most new Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. cars already come with driver-side air bags. General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, plans to install both driver- and passenger-side air bags in all new cars sold in North America by September 1994.

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

(More)

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers of cars with automatic shoulder belts is a top priority in a yearlong statewide educational effort that began last summer, said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's public information manager.

"Air bags alone are not good enough," she said. "We want everyone to know to use all they've got. The combination of an air bag and lap and shoulder belts is currently the best protection available."

Last June and July, as the recent monitoring period concluded, the UNC center and the governor's program kicked off the educational program about automatic seat belts and air bags. North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for the effort from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The most recent study results have been shared with each region's program leaders, who include auto dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local public information activities toward the people who need this information -- those who aren't using all of the protection they bought," Marchetti said.

The UNC center study uses the state's average belt use as a basis for comparison, Reinfurt said. "The average should not be the number local areas set as a goal. In fact, North Carolina's average belt use rates lag behind those of several other states."

A new survey that began Oct. 1 may show the impact of the program. Results are expected next spring, he said.

"To a great extent, North Carolina's numbers should be representative of the nation's automatic seat belt use," Reinfurt said. "A U.S. Department of Transportation study that was conducted in 19 cities and looked only at shoulder belt use arrived at numbers very similar to those found here."

- 30 -

(Cole is a second-year graduate student at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Carrboro resident.)

Asheville region program leaders: Carrol Hemphill, Emergency Medical Services, Marion, (704) 652-3982, and Marcia Tate, Haywood County Health Department, Waynesville, (704) 452-6675.

Print Contact: Mike McFarland

Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

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For Immediate Use

Nov. 4, 1991

Note: A local contact and phone number is on page 3. A graphic shows results for the 18-county Charlotte region and the state.

Charlotte area drivers above state average in belt use: study

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL -- Charlotte area drivers are more likely to buckle up than the average N.C. motorist, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released today (Nov. 4) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show that in vehicles with the three most common types of automatic restraint systems, Charlotte area drivers wear their shoulder belts at levels slightly above the state average, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

But there is room for improvement. "Even though the Charlotte area's lap belt use is higher than the state average, less than four out of 10 drivers are remembering to buckle manual lap belts when a motorized shoulder belt is available," Reinfurt said.

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

In the most recent survey, Charlotte region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Charlotte, Asheville, the Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point Triad, Greenville, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington.

(More)

The Charlotte region comprises 18 counties: Alexander, Anson, Burke, Cabarrus, Caldwell, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenberg, Montgomery, Richmond, Rowan, Scotland, Stanly, Union and Watauga.

Researchers also monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state. Urban and rural areas were represented.

Overall safety belt use ranged from 66 percent in the Raleigh-Durham region to 47 percent in the Asheville region, according to the survey. The Triad region was second at 63 percent, followed by the Charlotte region (61 percent), the Greenville region (58 percent) and the Wilmington region (50 percent). Urban area drivers posted higher use rates than rural drivers.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

The survey results show that automation does not necessarily result in higher usage rates, Reinfurt said.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," he said.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are failing to get all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need."

Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars. Most new Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. cars already come with driver-side air bags. General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, plans to install both driver- and passenger-side air bags in all new cars sold in North America by September 1994.

(More)

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers of cars with automatic shoulder belts is a top priority in a yearlong statewide educational effort that began last summer, said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's public information manager.

"Air bags alone are not good enough," she said. "We want everyone to know to use all they've got. The combination of an air bag and lap and shoulder belts is currently the best protection available."

Last June and July, as the recent monitoring period concluded, the UNC center and the governor's program kicked off the educational program about automatic seat belts and air bags. North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for the effort from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The most recent study results have been shared with each region's program leaders, who include auto dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local public information activities toward the people who need this information -- those who aren't using all of the protection they bought," Marchetti said.

The UNC center study uses the state's average belt use as a basis for comparison, Reinfurt said. "The average should not be the number local areas set as a goal. In fact, North Carolina's average belt use rates lag behind those of several other states."

A new survey that began Oct. 1 may show the impact of the program. Results are expected next spring, he said.

"To a great extent, North Carolina's numbers should be representative of the nation's automatic seat belt use," Reinfurt said. "A U.S. Department of Transportation study that was conducted in 19 cities and looked only at shoulder belt use arrived at numbers very similar to those found here."

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(Cole is a second-year graduate student at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Carrboro resident.)

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Nov. 4, 1991

Note: A local contact and phone number is on page 3. A graphic shows results for the 23-county Greenville region and the state.

Greenville area drivers at N.C. average for shoulder, lap belt use, study shows

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL -- About six out of 10 Greenville area drivers are using their shoulder and lap belts, equalling the statewide overall belt use rate, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

But figures released today (Nov. 4) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show plenty of room for improvement, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

"In cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts, 70 percent of the Greenville area motorists are forgetting to buckle manual lap belts," Reinfurt said.

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

In the most recent survey, Greenville region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Greenville, Asheville, Charlotte, the Triad, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington.

(More)

The Greenville region comprises 21 counties: Beaufort, Bertie, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Craven, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Gates, Greene, Hertford, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Pitt, Tyrrell and Washington.

Researchers also monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state. Urban and rural areas were represented.

Overall safety belt use ranged from 66 percent in the Raleigh-Durham region to 47 percent in the Asheville region, according to the survey. The Triad region was second at 63 percent, followed by the Charlotte region (61 percent), the Greenville region (58 percent) and the Wilmington region (50 percent). Urban area drivers posted higher use rates than rural drivers.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

The survey results show that automation does not necessarily result in higher usage rates, Reinfurt said.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," he said.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are failing to get all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need."

Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars. Most new Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. cars already come with driver-side air bags. General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, plans to install both driver- and passenger-side air bags in all new cars sold in North America by September 1994.

(More)

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers of cars with automatic shoulder belts is a top priority in a yearlong statewide educational effort that began last summer, said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's public information manager.

"Air bags alone are not good enough," she said. "We want everyone to know to use all they've got. The combination of an air bag and lap and shoulder belts is currently the best protection available."

Last June and July, as the recent monitoring period concluded, the UNC center and the governor's program kicked off the educational program about automatic seat belts and air bags. North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for the effort from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The most recent study results have been shared with each region's program leaders, who include auto dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local public information activities toward the people who need this information -- those who aren't using all of the protection they bought," Marchetti said.

The UNC center study uses the state's average belt use as a basis for comparison, Reinfurt said. "The average should not be the number local areas set as a goal. In fact, North Carolina's average belt use rates lag behind those of several other states."

A new survey that began Oct. 1 may show the impact of the program. Results are expected next spring, he said.

"To a great extent, North Carolina's numbers should be representative of the nation's automatic seat belt use," Reinfurt said. "A U.S. Department of Transportation study that was conducted in 19 cities and looked only at shoulder belt use arrived at numbers very similar to those found here."

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(Cole is a second-year graduate student at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Carrboro resident.)

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Note: Local contacts and phone numbers are on page 3. A graphic shows results for the 14-county Triad region and the state.

Triad area drivers above state average in belt use: study

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL -- Triad area drivers are more likely to buckle up than the average N.C. motorist, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released today (Nov. 4) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show that in vehicles with the three most common types of automatic restraint systems, motorists in the Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point region wear their shoulder belts at levels slightly above the state average, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

But there is room for improvement. "Triad drivers fell below the state average when it comes to using manual belts," Reinfurt said. "Less than three out of 10 drivers were observed with buckled manual lap belts when a motorized shoulder belt was available."

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

In the most recent survey, Triad region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: the Triad, Charlotte, Asheville, Greenville, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington.

(More)

The Triad region comprises 14 counties: Alamance, Alleghany, Ashe, Caswell, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Guilford, Randolph, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Wilkes and Yadkin.

Researchers also monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state. Urban and rural areas were represented.

Overall safety belt use ranged from 66 percent in the Raleigh-Durham region to 47 percent in the Asheville region, according to the survey. The Triad region was second at 63 percent, followed by the Charlotte region (61 percent), the Greenville region (58 percent) and the Wilmington region (50 percent). Urban area drivers posted higher use rates than rural drivers.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

The survey results show that automation does not necessarily result in higher usage rates, Reinfurt said.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," he said.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are failing to get all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need."

Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars. Most new Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. cars already come with driver-side air bags. General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, plans to install both driver- and passenger-side air bags in all new cars sold in North America by September 1994.

(More)

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers of cars with automatic shoulder belts is a top priority in a yearlong statewide educational effort that began last summer, said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's public information manager.

"Air bags alone are not good enough," she said. "We want everyone to know to use all they've got. The combination of an air bag and lap and shoulder belts is currently the best protection available."

Last June and July, as the recent monitoring period concluded, the UNC center and the governor's program kicked off the educational program about automatic seat belts and air bags. North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for the effort from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The most recent study results have been shared with each region's program leaders, who include auto dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local public information activities toward the people who need this information -- those who aren't using all of the protection they bought," Marchetti said.

The UNC center study uses the state's average belt use as a basis for comparison, Reinfurt said. "The average should not be the number local areas set as a goal. In fact, North Carolina's average belt use rates lag behind those of several other states."

A new survey that began Oct. 1 may show the impact of the program. Results are expected next spring, he said.

"To a great extent, North Carolina's numbers should be representative of the nation's automatic seat belt use," Reinfurt said. "A U.S. Department of Transportation study that was conducted in 19 cities and looked only at shoulder belt use arrived at numbers very similar to those found here."

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(Cole is a second-year graduate student at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Carrboro resident.)

Triad region program leaders: Mike Reavis, Yadkin County Health Department, Yadkinville, (919) 679-4203, and Sgt. Charlie Knight, Greensboro Police Department, (919) 373-2216.

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Note: A local contact and phone number is on page 3. A graphic shows results for the 22-county Triangle region and the state.

Triangle area drivers post highest safety belt use rates in state: study

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL -- Triangle area drivers have posted the highest overall safety belt use rate -- 66 percent -- in the state, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released today (Nov. 4) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill showed overall belt rates in other regions ranged from 63 percent in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro/High Point Triad region to 47 percent in the Asheville region.

Triangle drivers still need to improve their safety habits, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

"Even though Triangle drivers' use of manual lap belts in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts topped the state average at 42 percent, that still means that nearly six out of 10 drivers fail to get full protection because their lap belts are not buckled," Reinfurt said.

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

(More)

In the most recent survey, Triangle region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Raleigh-Durham, Asheville, Charlotte, the Triad, Greenville and Wilmington.

The Triangle region comprises 22 counties: Chatham, Cumberland, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Nash, Northhampton, Orange, Person, Sampson, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne and Wilson.

Researchers also monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state. Urban and rural areas were represented.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

The survey results show that automation does not necessarily result in higher usage rates, Reinfurt said.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," he said.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are failing to get all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need."

Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars. Most new Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. cars already come with driver-side air bags. General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, plans to install both driver- and passenger-side air bags in all new cars sold in North America by September 1994.

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

(More)

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers of cars with automatic shoulder belts is a top priority in a yearlong statewide educational effort that began last summer, said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's public information manager.

"Air bags alone are not good enough," she said. "We want everyone to know to use all they've got. The combination of an air bag and lap and shoulder belts is currently the best protection available."

Last June and July, as the recent monitoring period concluded, the UNC center and the governor's program kicked off the educational program about automatic seat belts and air bags. North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for the effort from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The most recent study results have been shared with each region's program leaders, who include auto dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local public information activities toward the people who need this information -- those who aren't using all of the protection they bought," Marchetti said.

The UNC center study uses the state's average belt use as a basis for comparison, Reinfurt said. "The average should not be the number local areas set as a goal. In fact, North Carolina's average belt use rates lag behind those of several other states."

A new survey that began Oct. 1 may show the impact of the program. Results are expected next spring, he said.

"To a great extent, North Carolina's numbers should be representative of the nation's automatic seat belt use," Reinfurt said. "A U.S. Department of Transportation study that was conducted in 19 cities and looked only at shoulder belt use arrived at numbers very similar to those found here."

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(Cole is a second-year graduate student at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Carrboro resident.)

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Note: Local contacts and phone numbers are on page 3. A graphic shows results for the six-county Wilmington region and the state.

Wilmington area drivers below state average in safety belt use: study

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL -- Wilmington area drivers buckle up less often than the average North Carolinian, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released today (Nov. 4) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show that in vehicles with the three most common types of automatic restraint systems, Wilmington area drivers used both shoulder and lap belts at levels below the state average, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

"The difference in automatic belt use in the Wilmington region and the state's ranged from three to 12 percentage points," Reinfurt said. "Residents of the city of Wilmington and New Hanover County posted the highest usage rates in the region with overall belt use at 58 percent."

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

In the most recent survey, Wilmington region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Wilmington, Asheville, Charlotte, the Triad, Raleigh-Durham and Greenville.

The Wilmington region comprises six counties: Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover, Pender and Robeson.

Researchers also monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state. Urban and rural areas were represented.

Overall safety belt use ranged from 66 percent in the Raleigh-Durham region to 47 percent in the Asheville region, according to the survey. The Triad region was second at 63 percent, followed by the Charlotte region (61 percent), the Greenville region (58 percent) and the Wilmington region (50 percent). Urban area drivers posted higher use rates than rural drivers.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

The survey results show that automation does not necessarily result in higher usage rates, Reinfurt said.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," he said.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are failing to get all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need."

Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars. Most new Chrysler Corp. and Ford Motor Co. cars already come with driver-side air bags. General Motors Corp., the world's largest automaker, plans to install both driver- and passenger-side air bags in all new cars sold in North America by September 1994.

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

(More)

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers of cars with automatic shoulder belts is a top priority in a yearlong statewide educational effort that began last summer, said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's public information manager.

"Air bags alone are not good enough," she said. "We want everyone to know to use all they've got. The combination of an air bag and lap and shoulder belts is currently the best protection available."

Last June and July, as the recent monitoring period concluded, the UNC center and the governor's program kicked off the educational program about automatic seat belts and air bags. North Carolina was one of two states to receive funding for the effort from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The coordinating agencies awarded New Hanover Regional Medical Center and the New Hanover County Health Department a \$25,000 grant to conduct the community program, making Wilmington an area for special scrutiny.

The most recent study results have been shared with each region's program leaders, who include auto dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local public information activities toward the people who need this information -- those who aren't using all of the protection they bought," Marchetti said.

The UNC center study uses the state's average belt use as a basis for comparison, Reinfurt said. "The average should not be the number local areas set as a goal. In fact, North Carolina's average belt use rates lag behind those of several other states."

A new survey that began Oct. 1 may show the impact of the program. Results are expected next spring, he said.

"To a great extent, North Carolina's numbers should be representative of the nation's automatic seat belt use," Reinfurt said. "A U.S. Department of Transportation study that was conducted in 19 cities and looked only at shoulder belt use arrived at numbers very similar to those found here."

- 30 -

(Cole is a second-year graduate student at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a Carrboro resident.)

Wilmington region program leaders: Carol Bosworth, Traffic Injury Prevention Program, New Hanover Memorial Hospital, Wilmington, (919) 343-2698; Denise Teachey, New Hanover County Health Department, Wilmington, (919) 251-3234; and Connie Scott, Robeson County Health Department, Lumberton, (919) 671-251-3234.

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**Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles to visit
N.C., kick off child passenger safety week**

Friday, Feb. 7, News conferences at airports in
Wilmington, Raleigh-Durham, Greensboro, Asheville

Donatello and Michaelangelo, two of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, will visit North Carolina Friday, Feb. 7, to help state officials kick off Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week. The turtles will participate in news conferences at airports in **Wilmington, Raleigh-Durham, Greensboro and Asheville** to show they support kids in seat belts and child safety seats. (See next page for details about the visit to each city.) It marks the first time that the cartoon and movie characters have promoted seat belts and child seats.

The Ninja Turtles' appearance is part of this year's Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week (Feb. 9-15) activities, which are being coordinated and sponsored by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

The turtles will join local law enforcement officials, health educators and representatives from the UNC center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program at each airport, where they will be greeted by children from local day care and kindergarten classes. The turtles, who pantomime but do not talk, will pose for photos with the kids.

Local officials will announce the characters' state and national involvement and unveil a new slogan that will be used on future Ninja Turtle materials. To encourage kids to buckle up, the Turtles will say, "CowaBUCKLE Dude!," a spin-off of their popular saying "Cowa Bunga Dude."

Law enforcement officials will present "Saved by the Safety Seat" and "Saved by the Safety Belt" awards to local children who survived serious automobile crashes because they were restrained by a safety seat or safety belt. The officials will describe the crashes and the possible outcomes if the children had not been protected.

After Friday's visit, the Ninja Turtles will go to Washington, D.C., where they will appear Tuesday, Feb. 11, with Dr. C. Everett Koop, retired U.S. Surgeon General and chairman of the National Safe Kids Campaign, at a news conference kicking off national Child Passenger Awareness Week activities.

- 30 -

Print Contact: Mike McFarland

Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

Ninja Turtle News Conference Schedule -- Friday, Feb. 7

Wilmington

Time: 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Place: New Hanover International Airport, first level, area next to baggage pickup.

Participants: Bob Winfry, vice president, and Carol Bosworth, Injury Prevention Program, New Hanover Regional Medical Center; law enforcement officials from New Hanover, Robeson and surrounding counties; UNC center and Governor's Highway Safety Program representatives; and children receiving awards.

Contact: Carol Bosworth, (919) 343-2698

Raleigh-Durham

Time: 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Place: Raleigh-Durham International Airport, Aeronautical (Aero-Services) conference room, (919) 840-2200

Participants: Col. W.A. Ballard, commander, N.C. Highway Patrol; law enforcement officials from Cary, Durham, Greenville and possibly Charlotte; UNC center and Governor's Highway Safety Program representatives; and children receiving awards.

Contact: Jeff Lowrance, (919) 962-2202

Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Place: Piedmont-Triad International Airport, area next to Airport Authority Administration Office.

Participants: UNC center and Governor's Highway Safety Program representatives; law enforcement officials from Guilford, Forsyth and Yadkin counties; and children receiving awards.

Contact: Officer Tony Aprile, (919) 373-2216

Asheville

Time: 3:45 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Place: Asheville Regional Airport, Piedmont Aviation, (704) 684-6873)

Participants: Marcia Tate, Haywood County Health Department; law enforcement officials from Buncombe, Haywood and McDowell counties; UNC center and Governor's Highway Safety Program representatives; and children receiving awards.

Contact: Marcia Tate, (704) 452-6675

Note: Reporters from anywhere in the state can call Jeff Lowrance at the UNC center for more details. He can be reached at 1-800-672-4527.

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NEWS

For use Friday, Feb. 7, or thereafter

Feb. 5, 1992 -- No. 74

Parents shouldn't depend only on child safety seats for protection

By JEFF LOWRANCE
Highway Safety Research Center

CHAPEL HILL -- Automatic seat belt systems and air bags in newer cars do not automatically work well with child safety seats, according to an expert at the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.

Parents owning newer cars must take extra steps to adequately protect their small children, said William L. Hall, the UNC center's manager for children and youth studies.

"For the most part, automatic seat belts and air bags are good safety devices that have benefited many people," he said. "But parents and other drivers of children need to know that there are problems involved with using these automatic systems with child safety seats."

Hall's comments come as the state prepares to observe North Carolina Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week Feb. 9-15. The event, which is proclaimed by Gov. James Martin and sponsored by the Governor's Highway Safety Program, coincides with a national observance. Organizers stress the importance of parents and others driving children making sure youngsters get the most protection possible.

Hall cautioned that none of the automatic shoulder belts installed in cars as standard equipment can secure a child safety seat at all. The lap belts supplied with most automatic systems will lockup only in a crash or sudden stop. This means that the lap belt cannot be pulled down tight and locked, which is necessary to secure a child seat.

(More)

The National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) warns that passenger-side air bags could injure newborns and infants riding in the front seat, Hall said.

"When an airbag deploys, it inflates quickly to cushion the occupant," he said. "In order to inflate so quickly, the air bag has to pop out of the dash with a good deal of force.

"Rear-facing infant carriers placed in the front seat rest so close to the dash they will catch the brunt of the air bag's force before it fully inflates. NHTSA feels this could place too much force on the infant carrier and the baby."

Cars come equipped with automatic seat belts or air bags only in the driver- and right-front-passenger seating positions. Currently, only a few models come with passenger-side air bags as a standard feature, but more will be available in the near future. Cars have been equipped with automatic restraint systems since the late 1980s.

Results of previous UNC center studies show that the back seat is usually the safest place for children during a crash. Many parents, however, like to keep their newborn and infant children in front, where they can be watched. Parents and guardians who drive newer cars should consider what type of restraint system their cars have and the effort it will take to protect their children in the front seat, Hall said.

"A good guideline to remember is if the baby weighs 20 pounds or less it must be placed in a rear-facing child seat," he said. "And no rear-facing child seat should be placed where there is an air bag.

"For children who weigh more than 20 pounds and can ride in front-facing safety seats, parents should refer to their vehicle's owners manual. Each car manufacturer has recommendations for the use of front-facing child seats in cars with passenger-side air bags."

Cars without air bags come with one of two basic types of automatic seat belt systems. In one, both lap and shoulder belts work automatically. In the second, the shoulder belt works automatically, but the lap belt must be buckled manually.

Cars with the automatic lap and shoulder belts can be modified to handle forward-facing child seats in front seating positions. Parents can take the car back to the dealer and have a manual lap belt installed. This manual belt will lock and hold the child seat securely. General Motors dealerships will install these belts on GM cars free of charge.

(More)

Using a safety seat in the front seat of a car with automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts is more difficult, Hall said.

"The manufacturers of most cars with automatic shoulder and manual lap systems recommend that parents purchase special heavy-duty locking clips from the dealerships," he said. "These clips shorten the lap belt enough to hold the child seat tightly, but can be difficult and inconvenient to use. Usually, the best solution for these cars is to fasten the child seat in the back seat."

Hall cautioned, however, that newer cars with rear-seat lap-and-shoulder belts may require different locking clips for child seat use.

"The lap-shoulder belts found in the back seat of newer cars provide good protection to adults and older children. The only drawback is that they need to be adjusted with a locking clip to secure a child seat. The locking clip needed for this use usually comes with the child seat and is easy to use."

The middle seating position in the rear seat usually comes with a standard manual lap belt. This position works well with child seats and no locking clip is needed, Hall said.

"One of the best things parents and guardians can do is to read the instructions that came with their child's seat and read their vehicles' owners manual," Hall said. "Then they need to follow those instructions and recommendations."

Parents with questions about child safety seats, automatic seat belts or air bags can call the UNC center Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at (919) 962-2202 or toll free in North Carolina at 1-800-672-4527.

- 30 -

Note: Hall is available for interviews and additional questions from reporters about child safety. Call him at (919) 962-2202 or toll-free in North Carolina at 1-800-672-4527.

Print Contact: Mike McFarland
Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

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For use Friday, Feb. 7, or thereafter

Feb. 6, 1992 -- No. 84

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles help N.C. launch child safety efforts

By JEFF LOWRANCE
Highway Safety Research Center

CHAPEL HILL -- Heroes to kids and now champions of safety, the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are helping North Carolina promote seat belts and child safety seats.

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles one-day tour of the state Friday, Feb. 7, kicked off N.C. Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week and initiated their public support for the use of seat belts and child safety seats. The Turtles' visit and other awareness week activities Feb. 9-15 are sponsored by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"Knowing that automobile crashes are the number one threat to the lives of children, we are proud and excited to have the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles help deliver the message that children need special protection," said Lauren M. Marchetti, manager for public information programs at the UNC center.

"The Turtles will be teaming up with hard-working people in North Carolina and all across the nation to help children get the best protection possible when travelling on the road," she said.

Two of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Donatello and Michaelangelo, greeted day care and elementary school children and appeared at airport news conferences in Asheville, Greensboro, Raleigh and Wilmington. At each site, law enforcement officers and emergency medical professionals presented "Saved by the Safety Seat" and "Saved by the Safety Belt" awards to local children who survived serious automobile crashes because they were restrained by a safety seat or safety belt.

During the news conferences, Donatello and Michaelangelo joined with state representatives and local officials to unveil "Cowa-BUCKLE Dude!" -- a new slogan that will be used on future Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle materials to encourage kids to buckle up. "Cowa-BUCKLE Dude!" is a spin-off of "Cowabunga Dude," the Turtles' popular saying.

(More)

"Kids love the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," said Mark and Renay Freedman of Surge Licensing Inc., the exclusive worldwide licensors of the Turtles. "We are pleased that the Turtles will carry such an important message as child passenger safety awareness to the kids who hold them so dear."

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' involvement with seat belts and child passenger safety originated from discussions between officials from the New Hanover Regional Medical Center's Traffic Injury Prevention Program in Wilmington and Surge Licensing Inc. The UNC center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program then worked with Surge Licensing to bring Donatello and Michaelangelo to North Carolina.

"It's fitting that the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles first show their support of seat belts and child safety seats in North Carolina," Marchetti said. "North Carolina was one of the first states to pass a child passenger protection law. The children who received awards are living proof that the law has been effective."

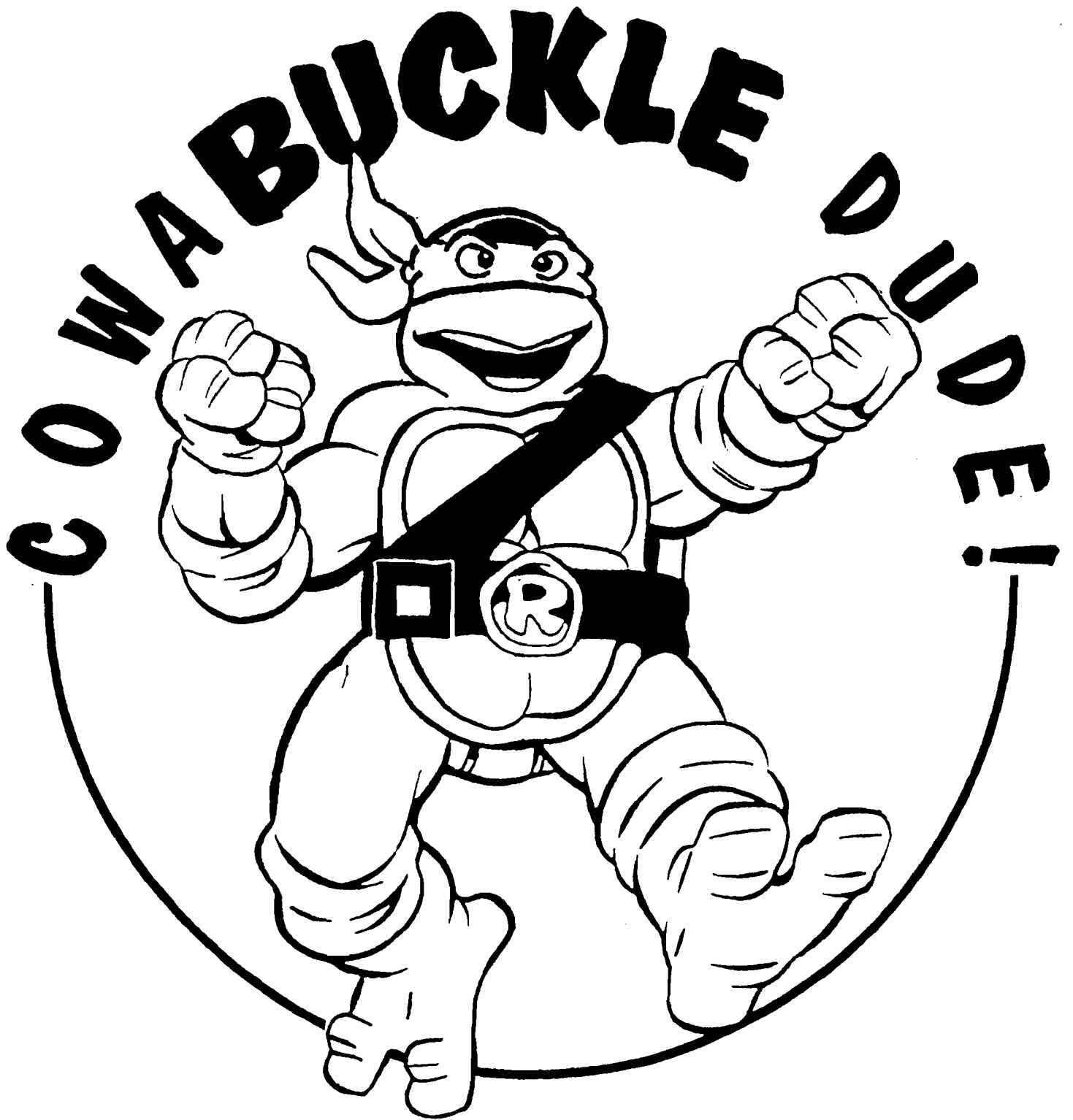
The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is scheduled to announce that the Turtles will be national spokesmen for passenger safety at a Washington, D.C., news conference on Tuesday, Feb. 11. Also expected to participate are James A. Bussey, U.S. Secretary of Transportation, and Dr. C. Everett Koop, chairman of the National Safe Kids Campaign and retired U.S. Surgeon General.

"National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week is a time to celebrate the benefits of child passenger laws and child safety seats," Marchetti said. "The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles certainly bring something special to this celebration."

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Note: Names of "Saved by the Belt" and "Saved by the Seat" award recipients are available from News Services. The children, parents and investigating officers involved are from **Wilmington, Asheville, Mars Hill, Canton, Nebo, Yadkinville, Haywood County and Durham**. Also available from News Services is a graphic of the new Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles logo with the "Cowa-BUCKLE Dude!" slogan.

Print Contact: Mike McFarland
Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA
TURTLES

Children Receiving Awards -- Friday, February 7

1. Micheern Michael Robinson
Parent -- Terry Hardwick
46 West Drive
Wilmington, NC
Investigating Officer -- Brian Pettis, Wilmington Police, (919) 343-3600
2. David Trapp (11 months)
Parent -- Robert Allen Trapp
3308 Red Berry Drive
Wilmington, NC
Investigating Officer -- A.B. Wadell, Wilmington Police, (919) 343-3600
3. Katie Trapp (3.5 years)
same as number 2
4. Cory Cox (2.5 years)
Parent -- Penny Cox -- also receiving award
74 Ivy Ridge Circle
Mars Hill, NC 28754
Investigating Officer -- Tom Battle, Asheville Police, (704) 259-5870
5. Megan Morgan (8 years)
Parent -- Sally Morgan -- also receiving award
4 Wilmoore Road
Canton, NC 28716
Investigating Officer -- Trooper D.L. Hall, SHP, (704) 627-2851
6. Molly Morgan (4 years)
same as number 5
7. Travis Wayne Perkins (6 years)
Parent -- Pam and Wayne Perkins
Tanya Drive
Nebo, NC 28752
For more information contact -- Mr. Carroll Hemphill, McDowell EMS, (704) 652-3982
8. Christina Nicole Matthews (13 months)
Parent -- Rebecca C. Matthews
Rt. 5, Box 354-A
Yadkinville, NC 27055
Investigating Officer -- Dale Trivette -- Yadkin Co. EMS, (919) 679-4232
9. Kathy Boydston
Information pending -- Haywood County
10. Steven Williams
Parent -- Ricky S. Williams
Durham
Investigating Officer -- Stan McHenry, Durham Police, (919) 560-4314

* May have more but will not know until just prior to presentation.

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For immediate use

May 8, 1992 -- No. 306

New seat belt use results show N.C. risks losing federal funding

By JEFF LOWRANCE
UNC Highway Safety Research Center

CHAPEL HILL -- More North Carolina motorists must start using their seat belts or the state risks losing future federal funding for highway safety programs.

According to research results released today (May 8) by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, a significant percentage of additional drivers must buckle up or the state will lose more than \$100,000 in grant funds for law enforcement traffic safety training and seat belt and child passenger safety education programs.

"Sixty-two percent of North Carolina drivers in all types of vehicles -- cars, trucks and vans -- are currently using their seat belts," said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director for analysis studies at the UNC center.

"This is an increase of two percentage points over the last survey," he said. "But in order for the state to qualify for the additional federal funding, North Carolina must reach a use rate of 70 percent, an increase of eight more percentage points, by the fall of 1993."

The federal funding in question is part of a three-year program designed to promote compliance with seat belt and motorcycle helmet laws. States initially qualify by having mandatory safety belt and motorcycle helmet use laws. During the second and third years of the program, states must reach certain levels of seat belt and helmet use.

(More)

North Carolina's motorcycle helmet use traditionally has been high -- more than 90 percent -- but belt use has hovered around 60 percent for several years.

"Although 70-percent usage may seem like an ambitious goal, North Carolina did have a usage rate of 78 percent in early 1987 when the belt law first went into effect," said Reinfurt.

The current 62-percent belt use rate, which is based on observational surveys at 72 sites, is an overall statewide measure.

Regional belt use rates range from a low of 40 percent in the southeast to a high of 67 percent in the central and eastern Piedmont regions including the Triad and Triangle areas, according to the UNC center. Other regional safety belt use rates are 63 percent in the foothills and southwest Piedmont, 55 percent in the coastal plains and 51 percent in the western mountains.

Urban areas in all regions posted higher use rates than rural areas. Drivers of cars were observed belted more often than drivers of pickup trucks and vans by more than 20 percentage points.

UNC center researchers will conduct more observational surveys this fall and in spring 1993 to determine if the state has reached the 70-percent rate and qualifies for the federal funding. The UNC center has monitored and recorded the state's seat belt use since 1985 through projects funded by the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"High seat belt use is a win-win situation for North Carolina," said Paul B. Jones, program director. "High belt use will mean fewer injuries and deaths on our state's highways. That translates into less money taxpayers have to spend on health care and health and auto insurance. High belt use also means that North Carolina will continue to receive needed federal funding for safety programs."

UNC center researchers are studying use of automatic restraint systems found in newer cars and conducting a yearlong statewide program to inform state motorists about correct use of automatic seat belts and air bags.

"Many drivers and front seat passengers in cars with automatic shoulder belts are not buckling their manual lap belts," said Lauren M. Marchetti, the UNC center's manager of public information programs.

"It's important that these people know that they are not getting the full protection their cars have to offer if their lap belts aren't buckled," she said.

(More)

Automatic restraint systems come in three types. In one, lap and shoulder belts fit automatically around the motorist. In the second, shoulder belts move into place automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 9,000 N.C. drivers in cars with automatic restraints over the last four years.

The latest observational surveys show that nearly two-thirds of drivers with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. In contrast, about 70 percent of drivers in cars equipped with air bags are using their manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

"Seat belt use in cars with air bags is important because air bags will only deploy in frontal crashes," Marchetti said.

Meanwhile, the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina Inc. will participate in the statewide, automatic belt education effort, UNC center officials said. Agents will conduct programs and sponsor events in their individual communities, promoting the correct use of seat belts.

"The 1,000-member organization of the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina will help make the state program a local endeavor," Marchetti said. "Independent insurance agents are in every county in the state. It is through local programs that the most gains in belt use can be achieved."

State and local agencies are launching other programs to encourage motorists to buckle up. Law enforcement agencies across the state will participate in "Operation Buckle Down" and the "Summertime Blues" campaigns. Both programs involve increased enforcement efforts combined with high-profile public information activities.

"Seat belts pay off in lives saved and injuries prevented and can even bring more money to the state," Marchetti said. "Seventy-percent belt use will mean more money, but more importantly it will mean more people surviving crashes."

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Note: The Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina Inc. will distribute a news release Monday, May 11, detailing the involvement of agents in seat belt programs across the state. For more information, call Pat Williams at 1-800-849-6556.

Print Contact: Mike McFarland

Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

Highway Safety Research Center Contact: Jeff Lowrance, (919) 962-2202

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NEWS

Embargoed for use after 6 p.m.,
Sunday, December 20

Dec. 16, 1992 - No. 742

UNC study shows death, serious injury rate drops as seat belt use increases

BY DAVID WILLIAMSON
UNC-CH News Services

(EMBARGOED) CHAPEL HILL -- The rate of serious and fatal automobile crash injuries has dropped by about a third across the state since passage of North Carolina's mandatory seat belt law, according to a new study.

The study, conducted at the University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center, shows that the death and serious injury rate for front seat occupants of cars, vans and pickup trucks had risen steadily to 5 five percent by late 1985, the year the law went into effect.

During the 15-month warning ticket phase of the law, from October 1985 to January 1987, deaths and major injuries leveled off. Since then, they have dropped to less than 3.5 percent of the total, a 30 percent reduction.

"We are excited about these results because we think they show pretty conclusively that the seat belt law is having its intended effect, which is to protect state motorists," said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center. "Belt use by people covered by the law has gone up at the same time the death and injury rate has gone down."

Other factors, such as safer vehicles or less of the more dangerous night driving could also be playing a role, Reinfurt said.

it is climbing, which is a good sign that people in newer cars are choosing to use all the protection their cars offer."

North Carolina was one of two states receiving grants from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration last year to devise strategies for educating the public about automatic restraint systems.

Forgetting to buckle lap belts when a car is equipped with an automatic shoulder belt, not buckling manual lap and shoulder belts in air bag-equipped cars and positioning shoulder belts improperly are the most common forms of misuse, she said.

"A lot of people in communities across the state have worked hard over the past year to educate drivers about automatic restraints and air bags," Marchetti said. "They include law enforcement officers, emergency medical and health professionals, corporate safety people and independent insurance agents. We appreciate all their efforts, which have made a difference."

- 30-

Note: Marchetti can supply the names of individuals in the six regions of North Carolina who participated in the education program. She and Reinfurt can be reached at 800-672-4527 or (919) 962-2202 for more information.

Print Contact: David Williamson

Broadcast Contact: Barbara Thompson

Low seat-belt use could cost state

● Nearly four out of 10 drivers in North Carolina don't use seat belts. In addition to costing lives, it could cost the state money next year.

By TAFT WIREBACK
Staff Writer

North Carolina may get belted out of a federal safety program next year if the state's drivers don't improve their rate of seat-belt use.

A recent study by the UNC High-

way Safety Research Center found that, statewide, only 62 percent of drivers are buckling up.

Federal and state officials are not amused. If that doesn't improve to 70 percent by the fall of 1993, Uncle Sam may dock the state \$100,000 per year in safety education funds.

Meanwhile, the State Highway Patrol has stepped up enforcement of the seat belt law, enacted in 1985. Citations and \$25 fines for belt-law violations increased from 83,000 in 1989 to 117,000 last year.

So why would someone not use a belt?

"Some folks claim they don't wear them just because they don't think about them," said Jeff Lowrance, of the safety center in Chapel Hill. "Others think they aren't comfortable."

Drivers in the Triad and other urban areas are more likely to use belts, the UNC study found. Two of three drivers in those areas use belts. Usage is lowest in the mountains and southeastern part of the state.

Greensboro has even better cooperation: Four of five drivers there buckle up.

Tony Aprile, of the Greensboro Police Department's traffic division, credits the department's aggressive education program.

Statewide, pickup trucks and business vans have the lowest rate of compliance, 20 percent lower than passenger cars, the UNC study says.

Usage is especially low among pickup drivers. Lowrance said it may be because drivers feel more secure in a truck — which he says is a false sense of security because trucks usually don't have as many safety features as cars.

Buckle up: Loot you save may be your state's

Poor safety-belt habits imperil N.C. tax funds

By CRAIG WHITLOCK
Staff writer

CHAPEL HILL — Unless more pickup truck drivers, young people and rural residents start buckling up, North Carolina may not get \$100,000 in federal funding for highway safety programs.

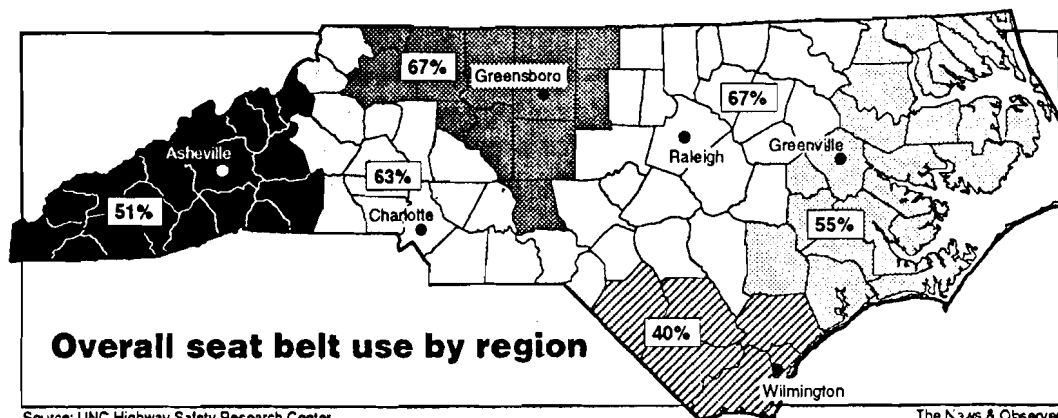
A study released Friday by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center shows that 62 percent of drivers in the state use their seat belts.

That figure needs to climb to 70 percent by the fall of 1993 for North Carolina to become eligible for an estimated \$100,000 in federal funds. The money would be used to promote seat-belt use and step up enforcement efforts.

North Carolina adopted a mandatory seat-belt law in October 1985, the eighth state in the nation to do so. If caught unbuckled, motorists can be hit with a \$25 fine.

Because it has seat-belt and motorcycle-helmet laws, the state received \$428,000 from the federal government for highway safety programs this year. The money came from a \$151 billion mass-transit and highway bill passed by Congress in 1991.

North Carolina will be eligible for an additional \$300,000 next year, assuming at least half the state's drivers continue to wear seat belts. But to qualify for money in the third and final year of the program, 70 percent of motorists need to buckle up regularly by the fall of 1993.



Source: UNC Highway Safety Research Center

The News & Observer

Other states find themselves in a similar situation. Only in Hawaii do more than 70 percent of drivers wear seat belts.

North Carolina ranks slightly above average in seat-belt use nationwide, and it leads in the Southeast. But some demographic groups in the state are still reluctant to strap themselves in their vehicles.

"We know who some of these groups are — pickup truck drivers, young people, people from the mountains and other rural areas are particularly bad," said Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director for analysis studies at the UNC center.

Overall, seat-belt use has risen

dramatically in North Carolina in recent years. Before the law was adopted, the number of drivers wearing seat belts hovered around 25 percent, Reinfurt said.

The number of drivers who buckled up tripled when police started handing out tickets in January 1987, when 78 percent of motorists began using seat belts.

But that figure dropped soon after and has remained steady at about 60 percent since 1987.

"When people realized they weren't going to be ticketed every time they didn't wear a seat belt, a goodly percentage went back to their old habits," Reinfurt said.

Besides educating people about the safety risks of driving around

unencumbered, Reinfurt said the best way to encourage seat-belt use was for police to redouble enforcement efforts.

He said Highway Patrol officers are strict about handing out tickets, but that on the local level, "there are an awful lot of police who are soft."

The federal money goes to the Governor's Highway Safety Program, which allocates the bulk of it to local police, who in turn pay officers overtime to enforce the seat-belt law, said Don Nail, program director.

The rest of the money pays for public-service announcements, education seminars in the schools and other programs.

However, no declines in injuries have been observed either for rear seat occupants of those vehicles or for others such as motorcyclists.

The study, sponsored the Governor's Highway Safety Program, involved monitoring seat belt use at 72 sites across the state twice a year since 1985. UNC observers stood at intersections and recorded the number of front seat occupants buckling up.

"Driver belt use went from about 25 percent just prior to the warning ticket phase to nearly 45 percent during that 15-month warning period," Reinfurt said. "Use rates soared in the beginning of the citation phase to nearly 80 percent and have leveled off to about 60 to 63 percent since then."

Although the number of vehicles in crashes per month has gone up from 24,575 in mid-1985 to 30,148 most recently because of more cars on state roads, the number of front seat occupants killed or severely hurt dropped from 1,160 per month to 1,052, he said.

UNC researchers did not separate deaths from serious injuries because the number of deaths fluctuates so much from month to month, Reinfurt said. Still, a study carried out by HSRC investigators for the legislature shortly after the law passed estimated 180 lives had been saved through the first 18 months of the citation phase.

"To me, one of the most encouraging trends is that seat belt use in cars with air bags is going up," said Lauren M. Marchetti, a center researcher who directed a yearlong, statewide education program to encourage proper use of automatic seat belt systems.

"In the spring of 1991, our research showed that more than seven of 10 drivers with automatic, motorized shoulder belts failed to buckle their manual lap belts," Marchetti said. "More than one in three drivers of cars with air bags either forgot or chose not to buckle their lap and shoulder belts."

Now, she said, there is still a long way to go, but the percentage of drivers with motorized systems who buckle lap belts has improved to 35 percent. The percentage of belt use among drivers in cars equipped with air bags has increased to 75 percent.

"As more cars came equipped with air bags, we feared that belt use would dip to mirror the state average," Marchetti said. "Instead,

TURTLE MANIA ... AGAIN



The Herald-Sun/MARK DOLEJS

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle "Michelangelo" gives 4-year-old Alaa Ahmad Mubaflat a big hug during a news conference held to kick off N.C. Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week at Raleigh-Durham International Airport. Alaa was saved by a child restraint seat in an automobile accident.

THE HERALD-SUN

AREA BRIEFS

Turtles bring safety message to RDU

CowaBUCKLE, dude."

That's the message two of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles will bring to the Triangle on Friday during a stop at Raleigh-Durham International Airport.

Donatello and Michelangelo will be on hand to help state officials kick off Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week.

They will join local law-enforcement officials, health educators and representatives of the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center and Governor's Highway Safety Program.

Children from area day-care and kindergarten classes also will be on hand.

"CowaBUCKLE, dude" is the slogan that will be used on future Ninja Turtles materials. It is a spinoff on their well-known saying "Cowabunga, dude."

The turtles' RDU appearance, part of a state tour and an appearance in Washington with the U.S. surgeon general, marks the first time the cartoon and movie characters have promoted seat belts and child seats.

Buckling down for safety

Motorists urged to use lap belts

By ERIKA N. DUCKWORTH
Staff Writer

Drivers who use motorized shoulder belts or air bags would reduce their chance of injury by combining them with a manual safety belt, safety experts said Thursday at a demonstration in Greensboro.

The program, "Seat Belts, Air Bags — Use All You've Got," is a joint public education effort of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Highway Safety Research Center, the Governor's Highway Safety Program and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Motorized or automatic safety belts are only fully effective with the combined use of a manual lap belt, safety experts said. Without one, a motorist can slide out from under the belt in a crash or, in some cases, be injured by the belt itself.

Don Reinfurt, associate director of the UNC research center,



Jerry Wolford / News & Record

SIMULATED CRASH: A child and an adult dummy are thrown from an automobile in the roll-over simulator. The two dummies were not wearing seat belts.

cited two separate examples — one driver was ejected through his sunroof and another was decapitated by her shoulder belt. Both had failed to use their manual belts.

Air bags offer added protection, Reinfurt said, but they only work in sizable frontal crashes beginning at 14 mph. The danger of not using a lap belt is compounded by the chance that the air bag mechanism may not respond.

"There's always a chance with any device that it will not work when it's supposed to," Reinfurt said. "(Air bags) are not designed to work in minor frontal crashes, where you can still get hurt pretty badly."

Demonstrations were given in a roll-over crash simulator provided by the Tarboro Police Department, and Vince and Larry, the television crash-test dummies, passed out Life Savers candies to reiterate the message.

Sixty-five professionals in the areas of medical care, insurance, automobile dealership and law enforcement attended the workshop to discuss the misuse of automatic car safety equipment during the demonstration at the Holiday Inn Four Seasons.

Other cities, including Charlotte and Greenville, are scheduled for the demonstration as part of a statewide education effort.

CAROLINAS

SECTION **C**
Classified **5C**

Seat belts aren't popular despite fines, education

By **BRUCE HENDERSON**
Staff Writer

They've been scolded, sweet-talked, fined and maimed, but four out of 10 drivers in Charlotte and surrounding counties still won't wear their seat belts.

And that's better than some regions of North Carolina, the UNC Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill reported Monday. In the Asheville area, fewer than half buckle up. In the Raleigh-Durham area, two-thirds do.

A state law requiring seat belt use has been in effect since 1985.

The center took a hard line when it spied on 2,415 drivers from March to June. Researchers, who surveyed drivers at stop lights, counted out those who were buckled behind automatic shoulder

belts but did not have their manual lap belts buckled.

Shoulder restraints aren't protection enough without lap belts, the center says. Neither are air bags if seat belts aren't also used.

Earlier this year, North Carolina was one of two states to get federal funding for an education program about automatic belts and air bags last summer. A new survey to gauge the effectiveness of that program began last month.

Charlotte police learned that public education and the threat of \$25 fines can encourage people to strap in.

An Aug. 25 police survey of Charlotte motorists found 51% using their seat belts. Police stepped up enforcement, issuing 56 seat belt citations in August and 79 in September. They also issued

public service announcements on seat belt use.

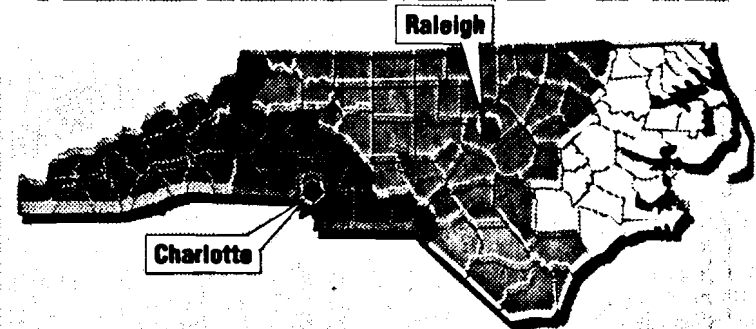
A Sept. 22 survey found 57% with their belts on.

Drivers under 25 are the worst offenders, the UNC study found. Women used belts more than men.

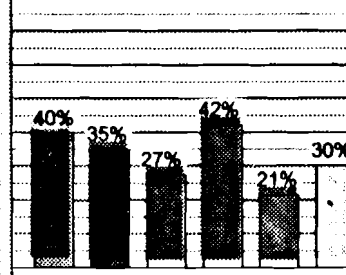
And only about a third of drivers with automatic shoulder restraints also buckled their manual lap belts. That's dangerous because drivers and passengers can slip under the shoulder harness during a crash.

Both the police and the highway safety center surveys focused on adult use of seat belts. N.C. law, however, also requires that children be properly restrained. Children under 3 years old must be restrained in child safety seats. Those 3 to 6 must be buckled in a seat belt. The penalty is \$25.

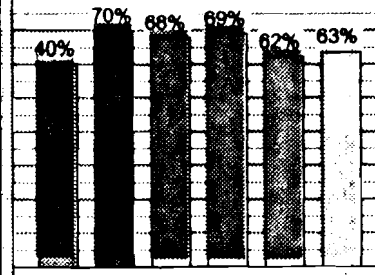
N.C. seat belt use by region



Lap belt use in cars with automatic shoulder belts



Belt use in cars with air bags



SOURCE: UNC-Chapel Hill Highway Safety Research Center

MIKE FISHER/Staff

Triangle tops state in safety-belt use, study finds

By CAROL B. COLE
UNC-CH News Services

CHAPEL HILL — Triangle area drivers have posted the highest overall safety belt use rate — 66 percent — in the state, according to a study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released this week by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill showed overall belt rates in other regions ranged from 63 percent in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro/High Point Triad region to 47 percent in the Asheville region.

Triangle drivers still need to improve their safety habits, said Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

"Even though Triangle drivers' use of manual lap belts in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts topped the state average at 42 percent, that still means that nearly six out of 10 drivers fail to get full protection because their lap belts are not buckled," Reinfurt said.

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts

"Even though Triangle drivers' use of manual lap belts in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts topped the state average at 42 percent, that still means that nearly six out of 10 drivers fail to get full protection because their lap belts are not buckled."

Donald W. Reinfurt

Associate director, Highway Safety Research Center

must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program, monitor the effect of the state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

In the most recent survey, Triangle region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Raleigh-Durham, Asheville, Charlotte, the Triad, Greenville and Wilmington.

The Triangle region comprises

22 counties: Chatham, Cumberland, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Halifax, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, Nash, Northampton, Orange, Person, Sampson, Vance, Wake, Warren, Wayne and Wilson.

Researchers also monitored overall belt use in all types of vehicles at 72 other sites across the state. Urban and rural areas were represented.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic

shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

In cars where shoulder and lap belts were both automatic, lap belt usage jumped to 75 percent. Sixty-five percent of motorists in air bag-equipped vehicles wore their lap belts.

Regardless of the type of restraint system, drivers under age 25 posted the lowest shoulder and lap belt use rates of all age groups. In general, females' use of all belt systems surpassed males'. Black drivers posted higher shoulder belt and lap belt use rates than white drivers, except for using manual lap belts with motorized automatic shoulder belts.

The survey results show that

automation does not necessarily result in higher usage rates. Reinfurt said.

"Although lap belt use is high in cars with completely automatic lap-and-shoulder belts, it is extremely low in cars in which the shoulder belt is automatic and the driver has to manually buckle the lap belt," he said.

"More than six out of 10 drivers in cars with motorized automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts," Reinfurt said. "These people are failing to get all the protection their cars have to offer and all the protection they need." Automatic seat belts and air bags have become standard equipment in many American-made cars.

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Triad drivers more likely to buckle up

CHAPEL HILL — Triad area drivers are more likely to buckle up than the average N.C. motorist, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released in November by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show that in vehicles with the three most common types of automatic restraint systems, motorists in the Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point region wear their shoulder belts at levels slightly above the state average, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

But there is room for improvement. "Triad drivers fell below the state average when it comes to using manual belts," Reinfurt said. "Less than three out of 10 drivers were observed with buckled manual lap belts when a motorized shoulder belt was available."

The three types of automatic restraint systems include lap and shoulder belts that fit automatically around the motorist. In another, shoulder belts fasten automatically, but lap belts must be buckled manually. The third system combines an air bag and manual lap-and-shoulder belts.

UNC center researchers have observed more than 8,000 N.C. drivers in newer cars over the last three years. The surveys, conducted for the Governor's Highway Safety Program,

Greenville region (58 percent) and the Wilmington region (50 percent). Urban area drivers posted higher use rates than rural drivers.

Among N.C. motorists with automatic systems, 76 percent had their shoulder belts fastened, and 64 percent wore their lap belts.

But motorists with certain types of automatic belts rated much lower in lap belt usage. For instance, only 20 percent of those whose cars were equipped with non-motorized automatic shoulder belts and manual lap belts had fastened their lap belts. When the shoulder belt was motorized, 34 percent wore their manual lap belts.

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their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely injured or killed because they weren't wearing their manual lap belts."

Educating drivers about automatic shoulder belts is a yearlong effort that said Lauren M. I. center's public information officer.

"Air bags are enough," she said. "One has to know to use them. The combination of lap and shoulder belts is the best protection."

Last June an ongoing monitoring program by UNC center and gram kicked off a campaign about air bags. North Carolina is one of two states to receive a grant from the Traffic Safety Administration.

The most recent survey has been shared with program leaders.

dealers, health educators, insurance agents and law enforcement and emergency medical personnel.

"They will be able to take these numbers and use them to aim local

Charlotte Area Drivers Above State Average In Use Of Belts

Charlotte area drivers are more likely to buckle up than the average N.C. motorist, according to the nation's most comprehensive study of lap and shoulder belt use in cars with automatic systems.

Figures released on November 4 by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill show that in vehicles with the three most common types of automatic restraint systems, Charlotte area drivers wear their shoulder belts at levels slightly above the state average, said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the center.

But there is room for improvement. "Even though the Charlotte area's lap belt use is higher than the state average, less than four out of 10 drivers are remembering to buckle manual lap belts when a motorized

state's 6-year-old seat belt law and related safety trends.

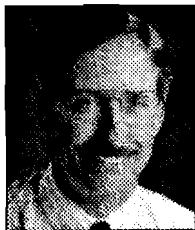
In the most recent survey, Charlotte region drivers were among 2,415 observed between mid-March and early June across the state. Researchers recorded automatic safety belt use at 36 sites in six regions: Charlotte, Asheville, the Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point Triad, Greenville, Raleigh-Durham and Wilmington.

Motorists who rely on just shoulder belts or air bags are compromising their safety, said Paul B. Jones, director of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

"When they have a choice people are obviously forgetting to buckle their manual lap belts," Jones said. "We are seeing more and more crash reports where people were severely

Charlotte Observer Friday

July 12, 1991 *....



ALLEN
NORWOOD

Don't use seat belt? Listen up!

The vehicle rolled over once, twice, three times.

It seemed to move in slow motion, but the two bodies were tossed about violently. The mother's head banged into the roof, twisting her head to a grotesque angle, then her shoulder crushed the 2-year-old's stomach into the dashboard.

The child was flung through a window, and landed on the back of his head on the blacktop.

The mother's upper body was jammed through the other window. The vehicle — making its last, almost lazy revolution — rolled onto her head and torso.

If a scene like that doesn't convince you to wear your seat belt, nothing will.

The bodies were dummies, and the vehicle was a pickup cab mounted on a revolving axle, or rollover simulator, courtesy of the Tarboro Police Department. The location wasn't an interstate, but a corner of the parking lot at the Holiday Inn-Woodlawn.

The audience consisted of police officers, emergency medical workers, corporate safety experts and others interested in highway safety.

More than 50 attended Thursday's workshop, the fifth of six such sessions that are part of a yearlong, statewide push to persuade drivers to use automatic seat belt systems and air bags correctly. The program is sponsored by the UNC Highway Safety Research Center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

It's important because 70% of drivers with automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts, and 25% of drivers with air bags don't buckle up.

Overall, fewer N.C. drivers are using seat belts than a few years ago. Seat belt usage peaked at 78% — after drivers began getting fined for failing to buckle up — but it's now about 60%.

Experts say that's partly because of the false sense of security that comes with automatic restraints and air bags.

Experts also say that belts cut adult fatalities by half and that child restraints save two-thirds of potential victims.

I know, I know: "Buckle up" is a tired, old slogan.

If the rollover simulator didn't grab your attention, keep reading.

Some emergency room doctors have quit referring to crashes as accidents, because injuries are so preventable. They usually involve alcohol — and unused seat belts.

"They're not accidents at all," said Dr. Michael Thomason, a surgeon at Carolinas Medical Center.

When Thomason speaks to young drivers in schools and the like, he takes along a pocketful of organ donor cards.

"If you don't want to buckle up," he tells them, "at least consider being an organ donor."

Grisly — but to the point.

Lauren Marchetti of the Highway Safety Research Center, who led Thursday's workshop, said all the sessions across the state have been heavily attended by emergency medical workers.

These aren't do-gooder safety nuts. These men and women, many of them volunteers, are the ones who have to mop up the carnage after auto wrecks.

I asked Eddie Brown, director of the Cleveland County Emergency Medical Service, if his bosses made him attend the workshop.

"I am the boss," he said. "That's why we're here."

Cleveland EMS workers responded Wednesday night to a wreck on N.C. 180. The two passengers without belts were hurt, Brown said, but the two who wore belts weren't injured.

"Come ride with us for a day and a half," said Cleveland EMS worker Arey Poston. "That will convince you about seat belts."

If that baby in the rollover simulator had been real, an EMS worker would have lifted the broken body.

That's why so many EMS workers were there.

Program emphasizes seat-belt use

Herald-Sun 6/19/91
From Herald-Sun staff reports

A statewide education program designed to persuade motorists to use automatic seat belts and air bags opened Tuesday in Durham.

Called "Seat Belts and Air Bags: Use All You've Got," the program features a year-long public-information campaign and workshops in five other N.C. cities during the next two months. North Carolina is one of two states receiving money from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for the program, which is sponsored by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center in Chapel Hill and the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program.

Center research has shown that

Common misuses

- Forgetting to buckle manual lap belts when a car is equipped with an automatic shoulder belt.
- Not buckling manual lap-and-shoulder belts in cars with and without air bags.
- Incorrectly positioning shoulder belts.

seven of 10 drivers with automatic, motorized shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts. One in four drivers of cars with air bags either forgets or chooses not to buckle lap-and-shoulder belts.

"If a door flies open in a crash, a

driver or front-seat passenger who has not buckled his lap belt is left largely unprotected," said Dr. Donald W. Reinfurt, associate director of the UNC center. "Air bags only deploy in moderate to worse frontal crashes. An unbelted person in an air-bag car would be unprotected in a side-impact crash, rear-end collision or rollover."

"Most of the automatic systems will position the shoulder belt around the driver without he or she doing anything," Reinfurt said. "Many people, however, may not be aware that there is still a manual lap belt to buckle, and without it they are not

SEATBELTS

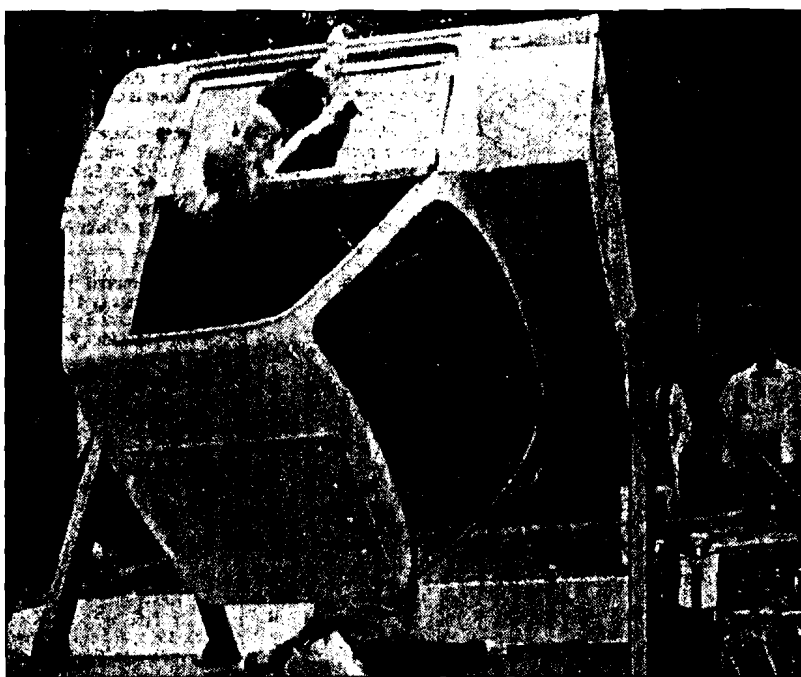
FROM C1

fully protected. A properly used lap-and-shoulder belt is always the first line of defense in a crash."

Health and law enforcement officials, automobile dealers, insurance agents and other state officials to attended the Durham workshop. Similar sessions are scheduled in Asheville, Charlotte, Greensboro, Greenville and Wilmington.

After the workshops, the officials, dealers and agents will coordinate activities aimed at increasing correct use of belts in their local areas. UNC researchers will monitor automatic seat belt use across the state during the program and evaluate its impact through those statistics and feedback from regional coordinators and the public.

The program also will feature public service announcements on television stations across the state. People attending the workshops and others will distribute printed material.



Associated Press

Buckle up: At the launch of statewide safety program, a seat belt simulator is used to demonstrate how a mother and child can be thrown from a tumbling vehicle.

Group pushes new buckle-up campaign

By JAMES CLAUDE BENTON
Associated Press

DURHAM — N.C. motorists should use every part of their auto safety systems to keep health costs and insurance rates down, proponents of a new statewide program said Tuesday.

Called "Seat Belts and Air Bags: Use All You've Got," the yearlong education program intends to show North Carolinians the benefits of using new auto restraint systems correctly.

"Technology has changed... but there's a lack of knowledge out there as to how important the shoulder belt and lap belt is

combined with an air bag," said Paul Jones of the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

Almost 60% of all North Carolinians now wear seat belts, Jones said. And seat belt use has reduced the number of traffic-related deaths and injuries since 1985, the year a mandatory seat belt law was enacted.

While most motorists use some sort of safety restraint, Donald Reinfurt of the Highway Safety Research Center at UNC-Chapel Hill says studies show that 70% of drivers fail to correctly use manual lap belts with automatic shoulder belts.

Twenty-five percent of drivers

of cars with air bags do not use their lap and shoulder belts, Reinfurt said.

He said some people initially objected to mandatory seat belt laws because they felt it was an infringement on their personal freedom. That criticism eventually wore off because people saw the results of wearing seat belts, he said.

"We don't die in a vacuum. The EMS people come out and scrape us off the pavement. We're paying for that," he said.

"To receive the full benefits of these new systems, North Carolina motorists need to use correctly all that they bought."

Automatic car seat belts reducing use of manual harnesses, says UNC study

CHAPEL HILL — Fewer than three of 10 drivers of cars with motorized, automatic seat belts buckle their manual lap belts, leaving them at a significantly higher risk of injury or death, a new study shows.

The two-year study by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill suggests many of the drivers forget to buckle their lap belts or are just lazy. Others do not know they have lap belts and need to use them.

"If his door flies open in a crash, a driver who has failed to buckle his lap belt is completely unprotected," said Donald Reinfurt, associate director of UNC's Highway Safety Research Center. "We know that the combination of automatic shoulder belt and man-

ual lap belt is much more effective than either part by itself."

Reinfurt will present the study to the annual meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine in Scottsdale, Ariz., next week. It is the first look at the influence of automatic restraints on manual lap belt use in both rural and urban areas, Reinfurt said.

In the study, trained observers recorded belt use among drivers of 1986 and later-model cars who were stopped at traffic lights. Nearly 50 highway settings on different days and at different times of day were monitored across North Carolina.

"Because cars and people are similar across the United States

throughout North Carolina should be typical of the nation," Reinfurt said.

The study also showed that about 80 percent of drivers of newer cars with automatic seat belts are using them, compared with about 76 percent of drivers with older, manual seat belts. Just under 74 percent of drivers in cars equipped with air bags were using belts.

"People have a misconception that once they have air bags, they're fully protected, but that's true only for moderate or worse frontal crashes," Reinfurt said. "Air bags are not designed to inflate in other types of crashes such as side or rear impacts or rollovers."

non-motorized automatic restraint systems disconnected them, the study showed. That was especially true for General Motors cars.

"Apparently, people don't like to have to climb in under the strands of webbing which also make the door harder to open," Reinfurt said. "A good many people who do use these belts appear to be using them as manual systems."

One surprise was that usage rates for manual and automatic belt systems for newer cars were almost the same. Reinfurt said he had expected automatic belt usage to be higher.

Reinfurt predicted that the trend

Drivers rely too much on automatic seat belts, UNC study finds

The Associated Press

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APPENDIX D: INSURANCE AGENTS PROGRAM MATERIALS

News Release
Information Packet
70%+ Belt Use Program Memo
Automatic Restraint Print Ads

INDEPENDENT INSURANCE AGENTS OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.

Post Office Box 10097 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27605
919/828-4371 • 1/800/849-6556 • Fax 919/821-3172
Education Hot Line 1/800/849-6555



NEWS FROM THE IIANC.....

5/91
401

CONTACT: Drew Pierce, director of communications
(919) 828-4371

FOR RELEASE MAY 11, 1992

RALEIGH--Nearly 1,000 North Carolina independent insurance agencies this month have united in a statewide campaign to increase the voluntary use of seat belts and air bags in the Tar Heel State.

The agencies, which are members of the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina Inc. (IIANC), are working through the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center (HSRC) in Chapel Hill and the Governor's Highway Safety Program. The goal is to raise voluntary seat belt usage to at least 70 percent by the end of 1992.

Currently, the number of people in North Carolina using seat belts hovers around 60 percent, said Lauren Marchetti, HSRC project director and public information manager.

Those who are most likely to use seat belts already do so, said Marchetti. Those who do not use them now are the hardest to reach group, and they are also the group that are most likely to have violations and crashes. However, independent agents hope to change this.

"More than most people, independent agents are aware of the deaths and serious injuries that result from the failure of people to wear seat belts," said Robert Bird, IIANC executive vice president. "Independent agents know that seat belts save lives and prevent injuries, so we can be enthusiastic about this program."

There is a lot of emphasis now on using seat belts and air bags, he said. Some insurance companies are giving credits for cars with safety equipment.

"It's common knowledge that those who wear seat belts are much less likely to be injured in an accident, which saves the companies, the public and society a lot of money," he said.

- more -

The campaign officially begins the week of May 11, just in time for holiday and summer vacation traffic, and continues through the end of the year. It consists of a distribution of literature, videotapes, bumper stickers and posters from IIANC member agencies to the public. Promotion of the campaign is planned through cable television in the six major media markets across the state.

Agents plan to visit schools, businesses and other organizations in their respective communities to urge that motorists and their passengers use seat belts. A variety of workshops, displays and projects may be arranged, such as presentations by Vice and Larry, the comical crash dummies seen on t.v., and Emergency Room nurses. A project idea to raise awareness among young drivers is to operate a life guard station in the parking lot of high schools in which students recognize those who are buckled up.

"This is a good project that saves lives, and we hope the communities will take advantage of the free resources the agents are offering," said Jackie Ireland Jr., an independent agent with Pamlico Insurance Services in Bayboro who is chairman of the IIANC Young Agents' projects subcommittee. "Our goal is to get the message in front of as many people as possible. Independent agents are in every local town, and we would jump at the chance to tell people about the benefits of buckling up."

For more information, contact a local independent insurance agency that displays the "Big I" logo. To receive project materials or to schedule a program, call the IIANC office at (800) 849-6556.

The IIANC is a non-profit association representing 1,000 independent agencies and nearly 10,000 agents in North Carolina. Its functions include providing continuing education and services for independent agents and public service projects for the community.

AGENT NEWS



ROBERT F. BIRD, EXEC. VICE PRESIDENT P.O. BOX 10097, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27605
919/828-4371 1/800/328-6556 FAX 919/821-3172

PLEASE READ, INITIAL AND ROUTE TO KEY PERSONNEL									
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SAFETY BELT PROMOTION

WATCH CNN NEWS NETWORK WEEK OF MAY 11!

Your Association and its Young Agents Committee, in cooperation with the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program, is participating in a statewide campaign to increase the use of automobile seat belts in North Carolina to 70 percent during this year.

To focus attention on the effort and promote seat belt usage, IIANC will sponsor a one-week advertising program on the CNN News Network in all of the major media markets in North Carolina.

A schedule of 30-second announcements will run throughout each broadcast day on CNN during the **WEEK OF MAY 11**. A total of 20 spots will be aired on each cable system.

The cable systems being used will reach 519,595 homes in North Carolina with a potential viewing audience of more than 1.5 million.

The principal media markets are Asheville, Charlotte/Mecklenburg, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, High Point, Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville, Wilmington-New Hanover and Greenville-Washington-New Bern. Numerous individual cable systems in each of the broadly defined media markets will be carrying IIANC announcements.

News releases will be sent to all of the newspapers and other media serving North Carolina to inform the public of this effort.

Attached is information to assist you, should you wish to join this very worthwhile project.

BE SURE TO WATCH THE WEEK OF MAY 11!

**TIMETABLE OF EVENTS REGARDING SEAT BELT PROGRAMS
AND
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO AGENTS**

Currently, all agencies have received a kit of materials for use in promoting the use of seat belts. Order forms and instructions are contained in the kit.

NOTE: Media campaign is likely to generate requests for materials which you have not ordered. These requests will help you determine how many materials to order and should help prevent over and under ordering of supplies. If someone should drop by for a bumper sticker, etc. and you have not received your order, be sure to take their name and address to mail to them.

Following is a timetable of events that will help to make this program a success:

MAY 8:

Daily newspapers throughout North Carolina will receive a news release from the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center with all the information about the program and mentioning Independent Agents participation in it.

MAY 8:

Independent Insurance Agents will receive a sample news release (attached) which they can use to announce their own participation in the program in their local newspapers. The release will require that you fill in some essential information, retype it and deliver it to your newspaper news editor. Hand delivering the release will produce the best results. If you are unable to hand deliver it, mail it so that newspapers will receive it on Monday, May 11.

MAY 11:

Daily newspapers and business journals will receive a news release from the Association office providing perspective on the participation of Independent Insurance Agents in the seat belt campaign.

WEEK OF MAY 11:

Statewide television campaign on CNN cable news network will be aired. A total of 20 to 27 30-second announcements will be broadcast during the week. They will inform your clients of your involvement in this important program and urge that everyone use seat belts.

OVER

SPECIAL TIPS FOR AGENTS:

1. Radio. If you have a radio station in your town, call and ask them to do a series of public service announcements regarding the availability of materials promoting seat belts. Send them a copy of the news release customized for your agency and ask them to use it.
2. Individual Agency Advertising. In your kit of materials are ad slicks ready for use. You can purchase space in your local paper of these ads and simply add your name and address to the bottom. If you are currently running ads in your newspaper, add a small bold face note within your regular ad announcing your involvement in the seat belt program. A line such as: (We are promoting seat belt usage, and we have materials you might need. Call us for information.) Adding a line to your current ad will cost nothing extra in space and any charges made by the newspaper should be minimal.
3. Special use of News Release. After customizing your news release, run off copies and mail the release to schools, large businesses, organizations, etc. with whom you might want to interact during the campaign. You can write a short note on the margin asking them to call you for information, if you like. This will improve the impact of the news release in the paper.

SUGGESTED NEWS RELEASE FOR LOCAL AGENTS

(name of insurance agency) in (name of town) is participating in a statewide campaign to increase voluntary seat belt usage to at least 70 percent by the end of the year.

The campaign is being conducted by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

The local Independent Insurance Agency will distribute literature, posters, and other informational materials throughout the remainder of the year.

"We have a kit of sample materials from which we can order materials for churches, schools, businesses and organizations," said (agency spokesperson).

"We invite representatives of interested groups to visit our office and help us determine how many items to purchase so that we can supply community needs."

Representative of the (name of insurance) agency will visit schools, churches, civic clubs, and other public forums to explain the need for increase belt usage and to distribute materials.

(Agency spokesperson) said he/she had become aware of the importance of seat belts in saving lives and preventing injuries through dealing with persons involved in auto crashes.

"More than most people, we deal with the consequences of car crashes, so we have first hand experience with the benefits of seat belt usage."

Independent Insurance Agents across North Carolina are participating in the campaign to increase seat belt usage.

INDEPENDENT INSURANCE AGENTS OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.

Post Office Box 10097 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27605
919/828-4371 • 1/800/849-6556 • Fax 919/821-3172
Education Hot Line 1/800/849-6555



May 5, 1992

To: Company Managers

From: Bob Bird, Executive Vice President

Re: **SAFETY BELT PROMOTION**

IIANC and its Young Agents Committee, in cooperation with the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center and the Governor's Highway Safety Program, is participating in a statewide campaign to increase the use of automobile seat belts in North Carolina to 70 percent during the year.

To focus attention on the effort and promote seat belt usage, IIANC will sponsor a one-week advertising program on the CNN News Network in all of the major media markets in North Carolina.

A schedule of 30-second announcements will run throughout each broadcast day on CNN during the **WEEK OF MAY 11**. A total of 20 spots will be aired on each cable system.

The cable systems being used will reach 519,595 homes in North Carolina with a potential viewing audience of more than 1.5 million.

The principal media markets are Asheville, Charlotte/Mecklenburg, Winston-Salem, Greensboro, High Point, Raleigh-Durham-Fayetteville, Wilmington-New Hanover and Greenville-Washington-New Bern. Numerous individual cable systems in each of the broadly defined media markets will be carrying IIANC announcements.

News releases will be sent to all of the newspapers and other media serving North Carolina to inform the public of this effort.

In conjunction with this program, we would like for your company to join with us in bringing North Carolina up to 70% this year. See information attached on the **70% HONOR ROLL**. This is a simple program to do and you probably already have a captured group of 100 or more drivers in your company.

We thank you in advance for your assistance.

**Cars with
air bags have
seat belts
too.**

**There's a
good reason
why.**

Air bags and seat belts work together to provide the best lifesaving system currently available in cars.

But seat belts are still your first line of defense in all types of crashes. Seat belts alone protect you in side crashes, rear-end collisions and rollovers.

Air bags only deploy in fairly severe frontal crashes.

Your North Carolina Independent Insurance Agent reminds you to always buckle your seat belt.



In North Carolina about three out of every four drivers wearing automatic shoulder belts fail to buckle their manual lap belts.

Without the added protection of the lap belt, you could slide under the shoulder belt in a crash or get thrown out in a rollover. Let the shoulder belt be a reminder to buckle your lap belt. You need both.

Your North Carolina Independent Insurance Agent cares about your safety. If you have any questions about your car's safety features, just ask. We want you and your family to be protected every time you hit the road.

**Ask us about
seat belts
and air bags.**

**We care about
your safety.**



APPENDIX E: CONCENTRATED SITE PROGRAM MATERIALS

**Advisories, News Releases and Sample Articles
Program Brochure**



NEW HANOVER COUNTY

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2029 SOUTH 17TH STREET
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28401-4946
TELEPHONE (919) 251-3200

ROBERT S. PARKER
Health Director

LYNDA F. SMITH
Assistant Health Director

NEWS ADVISORY 5/7/92

Not for publication

New Hanover County law enforcement agencies and health and medical professionals targeting seat belt use with incentive program.

News Conference, 10:00 a.m. ~ 10:35 a.m.

Law enforcement seat belt check points beginning at 10:45 a.m. and continuing through day.

Monday, May 11, Heli-pad next to Emergency Room Entrance
New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Wilmington

Rain location: New Hanover County Health Department Auditorium

An incentive program to encourage more Hanover County motorists to buckle up kicks-off Monday, May 11, with a news conference and law enforcement seat belt checkpoints set up at several sites in Wilmington and New Hanover County.

The program will run from Monday through Labor Day and aims to get at least 70 percent of New Hanover County drivers using their seat belts. The New Hanover County Seat Belt Coalition is sponsoring the summer-long program.

Lead coalition members include: the police departments of Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach and UNC-Wilmington; the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department; NC State Highway Patrol; New Hanover County Health Department; New Hanover Regional Medical Center; and several area businesses.

As a theme, the program will use the slogan and statistic, "10,000 people are in crashes in New Hanover County each year. Please Buckle Up." During the program, motorists "caught" using their seat belts will receive small prizes and the opportunity to enter drawings for larger monthly and grand-prizes. Over 10,000 prizes will be given during the program.

The program goal of 70 percent matches both state and federal seat belt use rate targets. Current belt use in New Hanover County is 62 percent, even with the current state average.

NEWS ADVISORY 5/7/91 (Continued)
Page Two

A new conference, scheduled from 10 to 10:35 a.m., will kick-off the program and announce upcoming activities and incentives aimed at drivers who do not use their belts. Speakers include Bob Parker, director of the New Hanover County Health Department; Bob Winfry, vice president of the New Hanover Regional Medical Center; and Chief Robert Wadman of the Wilmington Police Department.

Representatives from the Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach, UNC-Wilmington police departemnts, New Hanover County Sheriff's Department, and State Highway Patrol also will be present. All speakers and representatives will be available for interviews.

A list of law enforcement checkpoint sites follows. These checkpoints will provide good visuals and other opportunities to talk with officers and motorists.

10:45 a.m. South on 17th Street Extension, just south of Shipyard Boulevard, Wilmington

1:00 p.m. West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach

2:00 p.m. US 421, north of North Avenue, Kure Beach

For more information about the checkpoints, contact the police department in each city.

NOTE: The program also has a billboard erected at 1439 West 4th Street, facing north, near Merritt's Barbecue. The billboard can provide other good visual opportunities.

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CONTACT: Denise Teachey
New Hanover County Health Department
Telephone (919) 251-3234



ROBERT S. PARKER
Health Director

LYNDA F. SMITH
Assistant Health Director

NEW HANOVER COUNTY

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2029 SOUTH 17TH STREET
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28401-4946
TELEPHONE (919) 251-3200

NEWS

May 11, 1992

For Immediate Use

**Program aims to encourage New Hanover Motorists to buckle up:
70-percent use rate is goal**

WILMINGTON -- New Hanover County motorists are the target of an incentive and education program to encourage seat belt use. The program will give over 10,000 prizes to belted drivers and passengers this summer.

The announcement was made Monday (May 11) at a Wilmington news conference conducted by the New Hanover County Seat Belt Coalition. Immediately following the news conference, county and city law enforcement agencies set up seat belt checkpoints in Wilmington, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach.

"On average, 10,000 people are involved in automobile crashes in New Hanover County each year," said Denise Teachey of the New Hanover County Health Department. "Chances are that you or someone you know could be one of this year's 10,000.

"The member agencies and businesses of the seat belt coalition want no one to get caught unprotected. We ask everyone to buckle their belts," Teachey said.

Your Health — Our Priority

Agency coalition members include: the police departments of Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach and UNC-Wilmington; the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department; NC State Highway Patrol; New Hanover County Health Department; New Hanover Regional Medical Center and New Hanover County Schools. Area business members include Bob King Auto Mall, Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina, Inc., Wilmington Area New Car Dealers Association, radio stations WVBS-FM and WAAV-AM, and Naegele Outdoor Advertising.

The program will run through Labor Day with coordinators hoping to see at least 70 percent of New Hanover County motorists buckling up. The goal of 70 percent matches both state and federal seat belt use rate targets. Current belt use in New Hanover County is 62 percent, even with the current state average.

As a theme, the program will use the slogan and statistic, "10,000 people are in crashes in New Hanover County each year. Please Buckle UP." Throughout the summer, motorists spotted using their seat belts will receive small prizes and the opportunity to enter drawings for larger monthly and grand prizes. County and city law enforcement agencies, radio stations and other area businesses will be scouting traffic, looking for belted motorists.

We are excited that each law enforcement agency in the county has joined this effort, and is making seat belts a priority," said Teachey. "Not only are law enforcement officers upholders of the seat belt law, they also see first hand the aftermath of crashes and the needless injuries and deaths that result from people not using their belts."

Until Labor Day, city and county law enforcement agencies will be stopping traffic periodically to check for seat belt use. Unbelted motorists will receive instructions to buckle up and information about seat belt safety.

During the program, new car shoppers will receive additional information about the seat belt and air bag systems found in newer models. Wilmington area new car dealers will place safety information cards in new vehicles and have brochures available for their customers.

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Note: For more information, contact Denise Teachey, New Hanover County Health Department, 251-3234.



NEW HANOVER COUNTY

HEALTH DEPARTMENT
2029 SOUTH 17TH STREET
WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28401-4946
TELEPHONE (919) 251-3200

ROBERT S. PARKER
Health Director

LYNDA F. SMITH
Assistant Health Director

NEWS RELEASE

SUBJECT: New Hanover County pickup truck drivers fail to use seat belts, pull down county's belt use rate

CONTACT: Denise Teachey *DT*
Health Promotions Director
251-3234

DATE: August 11, 1992

WILMINGTON -- Drivers of pickup trucks, full-sized vans and utility vehicles are hindering the efforts of a New Hanover County safety program.

The New Hanover Seat Belt Coalition launched a program in May to encourage more area drivers to buckle up. The member agencies of the coalition, including the New Hanover County Health Department, all local law enforcement departments, the New Hanover Regional Medical Center, and the Traffic Injury Prevention Program of the medical center, set as a goal for the program to get 70 percent of county drivers using their seat belts by Labor Day.

Overall, the percentage of area drivers buckling up has risen. Since the program's kickoff on May 11, the rate of belt use in New Hanover County has grown from 62 to 64 percent. The two percentage point swing represents approximately 2,400 drivers. During the past year, belt use has grown from 58 percent, an increase of some 7,200 New Hanover drivers. Most, if not all, of the increase in seat belt use can be attributed to drivers of cars and mini vans.

Your Health — Our Priority

Looking at the overall seat belt use rate by vehicle type shows that 69 percent of drivers in cars and mini vans in New Hanover County are buckling up while only 51 percent of pickup, full-sized van and utility vehicle drivers are using their belts.

Denise Teachey of the county health department says drivers of pickups, vans and utility vehicles will be the key to the program's future success.

"If the county is to achieve a seat belt use rate of 70 percent a lot more pickup and work vehicle drivers will have to start buckling up.

"We feel that people driving cars and mini vans are responding well to the program, but pickup truck drivers aren't responding at all. It's frustrating because drivers of pickup trucks and vans can be seriously injured in crashes just like people in cars," says Teachey.

Since the program's start-up, the Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach, and UNC-W police departments; New Hanover Sheriff's department; and the State Highway Patrol have conducted seat belt check points. At these stops, belted motorists have received small prizes and had their names entered in drawings for larger monthly and grand prizes. Motorists not buckled up received seat belt brochures and instructions to fasten their belts.

Shortly after Labor day, the program's grand prize of \$500 will be awarded to a driver who was spotted using seat belts.

Officers of the Sheriff's department also write tickets for failing to use seat belts, but not during program-sponsored checkpoints.

"We do see a greater number of pickup truck and utility vehicle drivers not wearing seat belts both during the program checkpoints and

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and routine traffic enforcement," says Cpl. Larry Peck of the New Hanover Sheriff's department.

"The Sheriff's department does not target pickup drivers specifically for seat belt tickets. But based on the low percentage of such drivers buckling up, it stands to reason that more are being stopped and written up for not using their seat belts," adds Cpl. Peck.

A recently-awarded grant will enable the Wilmington police department to increase its enforcement of seat belt use. The NC Governor's Highway Safety Program has given the Wilmington police department a \$10,000 grant to boost the issuing the seat belt tickets. The grant will cover overtime hours officers will devote to stopping unbelted motorists and writing seat belt citations.

"The Department is continuing with the program checkpoints, but we are also stopping more individual drivers and citing them for not having their seat belts buckled," says Sgt. Wayne Norris of the Wilmington police.

"We have more officers out patrolling on weekends and at other times, looking for both proper seat belt use and child safety seat use. We think the word is starting to spread because the officers feel like more drivers are starting to buckle up," says Sgt. Norris.

The member agencies of the Seat Belt Coalition chose 70-percent seat belt use as a goal to coincide with state and federal goals. Coalition members state that pickup truck and utility vehicle drivers will be important to reaching the goal, but more seat belt use by passenger car and mini van drivers will be needed.

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"Pickup truck and work vehicle drivers need to remember that they are no less likely to be in a crash than someone in a car," cautions Teachey. "It's important that everyone on the road buckle their seat belts. No matter what kind of vehicle you are driving."

This phase of the New Hanover County seat belt program will end sometime around mid-September.

For more information contact Denise Teachey, New Hanover County Health Department, 251-3234.



ROBERT S. PARKER
Health Director

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NEW HANOVER COUNTY

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NEWS ADVISORY 9/17/92

Not for publication

Summer seat belt incentive program ends with report to media and grand prize drawing.

News Conference, 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

Monday, September 21, 1992
Heli-pad next to Emergency Room Entrance
New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Wilmington

Rain location: Auditorium, New Hanover County Health Department

The ongoing New Hanover County seat belt incentive program concludes Monday with a news conference and grand-prize drawing at the New Hanover Regional Medical Center helicopter landing pad.

During the news conference, scheduled for 10:00 a.m., members of the sponsoring New Hanover Seat Belt Coalition will report on the success of the program and announce the winner of its \$500 grand prize. Captain Steve Smith of the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department will serve as the news conference's lead speaker. Captain Smith will brief media representatives on the effectiveness of the program based on the county's current seat belt rate.

Other conference speakers will include Bob Parker, director of the New Hanover County Health Department; David H. Plate, president of the New Hanover Regional Medical Center; and other local law enforcement officers. Local new car dealer, Bob King, will present a large-size check for \$500 to the grand prize winner. All speakers will be available to answer questions during and after the conference. The grand prize winner will pose for photographs.

The seat belt incentive program began May 11. At that time, approximately 62 percent of drivers in New Hanover County were buckling their seat belts. By early August, the county belt use rate reached 64 percent, an increase of 2,400 drivers. During the past year, belt use has grown from 58 percent, meaning some 7,200 New Hanover drivers began buckling up.

Your Health — Our Priority

One activity of the program involved county law enforcement agencies conducting periodic seat belt check points. At these stops, motorists wearing their belts received small prizes and the opportunity to enter their names in the program's grand-prize drawing. Unbelted motorists received safety belt brochures and instructions to buckle up.

The grand prize winner will be selected from more than 1,100 entries received by the New Hanover County Health Department.

Members of the New Hanover Seat Belt Coalition include: the Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach and UNC-W police departments; the New Hanover County Sheriff's Department; North Carolina State Highway Patrol; New Hanover County Health Department; New Hanover Regional Medical Center; New Hanover County Schools and the Independent Insurance Agents.

For more information about the news conference or the seat belt incentive program, contact Denise Teachey of the New Hanover County Health Department (919) 251-3234.

Wilmington
Star News
5/8/92

DATELINE NEW HANOVER

Buckle up — and reap rewards

Motorists may garner
prizes starting Monday

From staff and wire reports

Health and law enforcement officials are teaming up to try and make it stick that motorists need to make it click in New Hanover County.

The southeastern region has the lowest rate of seat-belt use in the state, at 40 percent, according to a study released Friday.

A program offering prizes to motorists spotted wearing their seat-belts at a variety of checkpoints around the county will begin Monday, according to the New Hanover County Health Department.

North Carolina risks losing federal funding for highway safety programs unless more motorists buckle up.

The research by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center shows that 62 percent of North Carolina drivers use their seat belts. The rate was determined by observers watching drivers around the state.

Donald Reinfurt, associate director of analysis studies at the UNC center, said North Carolina's rate must reach 70 percent by fall 1993. Otherwise the state could lose \$100,000 in federal funding for law enforcement, traffic safety training and seat-belt and child passenger safety education programs.

The funding is part of a three-year program to promote compliance with seat-belt and motorcycle helmet laws. States qualify with mandatory safety belt and motorcycle helmet use laws. During the second and third years of the program, states must reach certain levels of seat-belt and helmet use.

North Carolina's motorcycle helmet use usually is more than 90 percent, but belt use has hovered around 60 percent for several years.

"Although 70 percent usage may seem like an ambitious goal, North Carolina did have a usage rate of 78 percent in early 1987 when the belt law first went into effect," Mr. Reinfurt said.

The use rate is based on observations at 72 sites.

Belt-use rates in other regions were: 67 percent in the central and eastern Piedmont regions, including the Triangle and Triad areas; 63 percent, foothills and southwest Piedmont; 55 percent, coastal plains; and 51 percent, western mountains.

Urban areas in all regions posted higher rates than rural areas. Drivers of cars used belts more often than drivers of pickup trucks and vans by 20 percentage points.

UNC center researchers plan more surveys this fall and in spring 1993 to determine if the state reaches the 70 percent rate. The center has monitored and recorded the state's seat-belt use since 1985 through projects funded by the Governor's Highway Safety Program.

Staff Writer Richard Myers contributed to this report.

Wilmington Star News
Tuesday, May 12, 1992

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Buckled-up drivers get thumbs up

By CELIA RIVENBARK

Staff Writer

Traffic on South 17th Street Extension slowed to a crawl Monday as motorists who saw police cars ahead shifted in their seats, fumbling for driver's licenses.

What was going on here? Had some deranged criminal escaped? Or was it just a routine license check?

The motorists' expressions ranged from boredom to fear as they watched the police officers and sheriff's deputies ap-

proach.

A woman rolled down her window and extended her license.

But Officer Jim Barnhill just grinned and handed her a sun visor.

"That's for buckling up like you should," said Officer Barnhill. He handed her a coupon to enter her name in a drawing for \$500.

"Whaaaaa?"

The next car pulled up and Officer Barnhill scanned the back seat to make sure the two youngsters were safely belted in. They were.

"Looks like they'd love some of these neon sunglasses," he said, handing over three pairs of hot pink sunglasses with "Buckle Up" printed on the legs.

"Wow, thanks!" said the pleasantly surprised mother.

Across the road, the police officers' public relations move hit a snag as an officer found himself issuing a citation to a driver whose license had expired.

"Tell him not to check licenses," said Officer Barnhill. "We're not here for that right now."

Please see **BUCKLE** on page 3D



"Larry the Crash Dummy" and Wilmington Police Officer Jim Barnhill reward a motorist for buckling up.

Buckle

Continued from page 1D

—An elderly woman clutched her sun visor prize and made an impromptu thank you speech befitting a pageant winner.

—"I'd like to thank you," she told Officer Barnhill. "I haven't won a single thing in years."

—A few drivers weren't savvy enough to buckle up when they saw the roadblock ahead.

—No T-shirts, flying disks, visors or sunglasses for them — just a friendly reminder that "buckling up is the law and it's for your own good."

— "Larry the Crash Dummy," dressed in a stifling jumpsuit and crash helmet, gave thumbs up signs

to the motorists who had buckled up and glared from inside his helmet at motorists who didn't have their seat belts fastened.

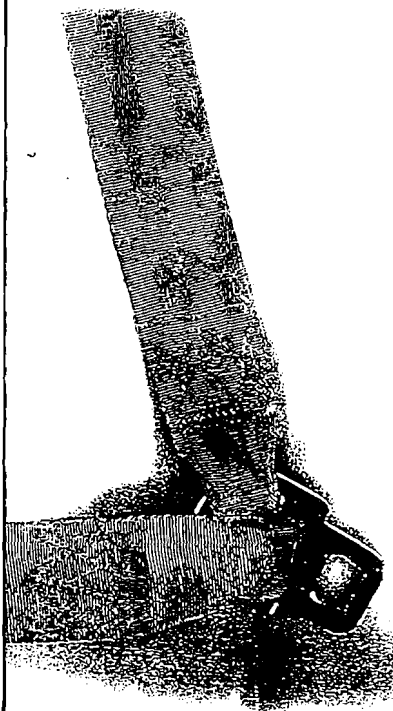
The roadblock program, also to be held in Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach, marked the kick-off of a summer-long seat belt promotion. The New Hanover County Seat Belt Coalition, made up mostly of law enforcement and health workers, will sponsor prizes for motorists spotted using their seat belts.

The program will run through Labor Day with a goal of at least 70 percent of New Hanover County motorists buckling up. Current belt use in the county is 62 percent.

Wilmington Police Chief Robert Wadman said using officers to hand out prizes to motorists is a chance to "give a positive message to drivers. We don't just issue citations."

10,000 People

On average, 10,000 people are involved in automobile crashes in New Hanover County each year. Chances are that you or someone you know could be one of this year's 10,000. Don't get caught unprotected. Buckle your seat belt.



Over 10,000 Prizes

Starting in May and continuing through August, Wilmington area motorists can win prizes for buckling their seat belts.

Law enforcement agencies, health department and hospital professionals, insurance agents, radio stations, auto dealers and others are working together to get 70 percent of New Hanover County motorists buckled up by Labor Day.

These agencies and people will be giving over **10,000 small prizes** to motorists spotted wearing seat belts. Each belted person also receives an entry card for larger monthly and grand prize drawings.

Buckle your seat belts, watch for special buckle-up billboards and listen to the radio for more information about this campaign and the prize giveaways.

Sponsored by the New Hanover County Seat Belt Coalition.

10,000

A small, detailed illustration of a car is positioned in the upper right corner, partially overlapping the large number '10,000'. The car is shown from a side profile, facing right, and appears to be a sedan or coupe from the late 20th century.

people will be in crashes in New Hanover Co. this year.

SEAT BELTS AIR BAGS
Use all you've got.

The member agencies and businesses of the New Hanover County Seat Belt Coalition encourage all motorists to buckle up and sponsor this seat belt incentive program.

The Police Departments of:
Wilmington
Carolina Beach
Kure Beach
Wrightsville Beach
UNC-Wilmington

New Hanover County Sheriff's Dept.
NC State Highway Patrol
New Hanover County Health Department
New Hanover Regional Medical Center
New Hanover City Schools

B-100, WVBS-FM99.9
WGNI-FM103
WAAV-AM980

Bob King Auto Mall
Independent Insurance Agents of NC, Inc.
Wilmington Area New Car Dealers Assoc.
Naegle Outdoor Advertising