

"Bucks for Buckles" puts emphasis on seatbelt safety

(KAIR)--Thousands of vehicles will travel the Kansas roadways during the Labor Day weekend, with many families heading out on one last trip or getaway as the school year begins.

Safe Kids Kansas, sponsored in part by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, State Farm and the Kansas Department of Transportation, want to encourage families to buckle up and drive safely to protect what a news release calls "their most valuable asset," their families.

This year, from now through September 11, a safety belt awareness campaign called "Bucks for Buckles" is being held in 45 cities across Kansas. Local volunteers distribute dollars bills to drivers who have all occupants buckled up securely in their vehicle. Those riding unrestrained will receive educational materials about the effectiveness of seat belts and child safety seats in saving lives and reducing injuries.

According to Safe Kids Kansas, in 2020, 426 people lost their lives on Kansas roadways, with State Director Cherie Sage saying, "the single most effective means of protecting the lives of you and your passengers is wearing seat belts and using appropriate child restraints every time you ride in the vehicle – even short distances."

According to the 2021 KDOT Seat Belt Survey, 85 percent of Kansans surveyed were wearing their seat belts. This compares to the national average is 90 percent. Kansas ranked 38 in belt use in 2021 among 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Seat belts save more than 15,000 lives yearly and are cited as the best defense against drunk, aggressive and distracted drivers.

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