

Improving safety can help put the brakes on fatalities

Last year in Kansas, 42 teenagers lost their lives in traffic crashes. Those 14- to 19-year-olds make up more than 10 percent of all the people who died in crashes.

“I can’t imagine what the families of those 42 teens had to deal with. Your world would never be the same,” said Kansas Department of Transportation Secretary Mike King. “It’s hard to imagine such an overwhelming loss of life.”

And the number one cause for the teen fatalities was inattention. It’s also the number one cause for all fatality crashes.

Improving safety and reducing distractions are important parts of the national safety campaign Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. The campaign strives to decrease all type of vehicular fatalities.

To help stress these points, more than 100 Students Against Destructive Decisions members from high schools across Kansas and other transportation safety partners attended a Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day news conference at the Capitol today.

Speakers at the event were Secretary King, Highland Park High School student Shayna McCall and Eileen Hawley, Communications Director for Gov. Sam Brownback. Afterwards, students participated in a quick click challenge to show how quickly and easily seat belts can be fastened and then watched a safety demonstration by the Kansas Highway Patrol.

Organizations that work together on the annual Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day campaign in Kansas with KDOT include the Kansas Turnpike Authority, Kansas Highway Patrol, AAA of Kansas, Kansas Contractors Association, Kansas Family Partnership, Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office, Federal Highway Administration and the Kansas Society of Professional Engineers.

For more information on Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day, go to the website www.brakesonfatalities.org.

“Remember - drive as if your life depends on it because, the truth is, it does,” said Secretary King.