

Seatbelt enforcement campaign underway

***Editors note: the following release was submitted by the Hiawatha Police Department***

**(KNZA)--Beginning October 28 through November 1, The Hiawatha Police Department will join other Kansas Law Enforcement Agencies to stop what has been likened to an epidemic in Kansas.**

**In 2016, 44 children ages 0-19 lost their lives due to car crashes in Kansas. Sadly, almost half of those children were not wearing their seat belts.**

**“In the health field, they talk about making sure children have received their immunizations to prevent deadly diseases,” said Chief John Defore. “But what many parents don’t think about is that wearing a seatbelt properly is the best prevention of serious injury or death in a vehicle.”**

**According to the 2017 Kansas observational seatbelt survey, children are much more likely to be buckled up if the driver is wearing their seatbelt. If the driver is buckled, about 98% of the children are restrained. If the driver is not buckled, only about 29% of the observed children were buckled. We want adults to model good driving behaviors for children.**

**Starting on October 28 through November 1, law enforcement across Kansas will be extra-vigilant when patrolling around schools. For more than 20 years, officers have educated and warned drivers and passengers regarding the importance of using seatbelts while in their vehicle.**

**There should be no surprises when it comes to this enforcement effort. Officers will issue citations to anyone who does not obey Kansas law.**

**Chief Defore says, “Even one child’s death is unacceptable. Please slow down, especially in school zones, eliminate the distractions, and always buckle up.”**

**For the latest data and to see more about Kansas safety belt laws, go to:  
[www.ktsro.org](http://www.ktsro.org)**