



REGION 6 – Teen Seat Belt Demonstration Project **March 2009 Project Highlights**

PLANNING

- As the project date approaches the States are phasing out of planning and into implementation of the component strategies. Members of the Planning Team took advantage of an opportunity to meet in person at the national Lifesavers conference in Nashville, Tennessee at the end of the month. Representatives of the four participating States, the PRG evaluators and the MCG project coordinators met to review the current status of activities and discuss the preparations for the campaign.
- In addition the proposed campaign timelines for the next two teen mobilizations in late 2009 and early 2010 were considered by the Planning Team. The fall 2009 timeline poses a challenge as it will require early start up of law enforcement activity within the new fiscal year. As Mardi Gras is widely celebrated in two of the States the timing of the winter 2010 campaign will be critical for ensuring adequate enforcement and staffing resources. Further discussion will take place and draft timelines will be prepared during the next month.

ENFORCEMENT

- The States are well along in their law enforcement recruitment activities. New Mexico has reported that their process is completed. The State is combining the teen enforcement with CIOT in the eight designated counties which will end up encompassing a three week time period. New Mexico will make awards to the top three agencies based on citation numbers. Phase II of the State's media campaign will focus on the enforcement message. Officers around the State will be distributing music download cards at checkpoints to teens that are buckled up. The cards are good for three free songs.
- Louisiana will be meeting with the participating enforcement agencies on April 7 to discuss the teen campaign and distribute materials for the project. To date they have encountered no difficulties in recruiting participation.
- The Mississippi highway safety office participated in the winter meeting of the Mississippi Association of Highway Safety Leaders (MAHSL) to provide an update on the teen project and their recruitment effort with law enforcement agencies in the program areas. The law enforcement liaison working on the teen project was injured and not able to assist as anticipated during the month. The State will be putting forth a doubled effort in April.
- The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) has begun executing grant agreements with the 29 law enforcement agencies. The law enforcement coordinators continue to recruit new agencies to add to the 20 which have already signed up to participate in the incentive programs.

COMMUNICATIONS – PAID and EARNED MEDIA

- Louisiana was very pleased to report that they have contracted with a media firm for the teen campaign. The Highway Safety Commission is optimistic that this new relationship will strengthen the potential for their messaging to reach the target teen audience.
- The Tombras Group is providing each State as requested with the "Out of Nowhere" television and radio spots produced previously for Colorado and Nevada which are tagged with the State's identification and logo. It is the State's responsibility to provide the spots to their local stations.
- In Mississippi the media contractor has focused on finding more unique placement opportunities for their media message such as ball field signage. The media schedule for the campaign was fine tuned during the month with the contracts for movie theater screens finalized and bonus spots negotiated.
- New Mexico's contractor has developed a web site to promote their teen awareness and education program which precedes the enforcement campaign. This will be a radio based program to promote the www.clickdentsplat.com web site for the video contest. Prizes include a chance to produce the next New Mexico DOT ad and Visa gift cards. The site will be ready soon for public use and will have quizzes, trivia information, statistics and graphics that will change by the minute, daily and weekly throughout the campaign. Participants who finish the quiz will have an opportunity to get a free music download. The State has partnered with an Albuquerque radio station which has the highest ratings for the target demographic. Later other radio stations will also run promotional updates to encourage support of the program which it is hoped may generate television and newspaper coverage. The media advisory, press release and information regarding the video competition are attached to this report.
- Texas has increased their paid media budget for the teen campaign to \$368,000 which will be followed by over \$3 million for the CIOT advertising. When supplemented by the national CIOT media buy the State will have a substantial presence on the State's air waves to deliver the enforcement message.
- EARNED MEDIA: Customized earned media planners were produced by Akins-Crisp and distributed to each State early in the planning calendar. The planners contain a fact sheet, news release, and post new release. The items can be further customized to provide local data and project information.
- KICKOFF EVENTS:
 - ⇒ Louisiana held a meeting with their earned media contractor to plan a Rock the Belt press event at a high school in Baton Rouge on May 4 to be followed by a CIOT press event in Lake Charles on May 19. Tapping into movie theaters where teens typically congregate the State will have lobby promotions during two May weekends where teams of teenagers will demonstrate "Rock the Belt", encourage moviegoers to participate and hand out information. Drop in press releases have been created for all participating local law enforcement agencies which will be distributed electronically in early April. Other promotional materials to be distributed include banners, flyers, electronic artwork and copies of the TV and radio ads.
 - ⇒ The press conferences leading up to the enforcement period in New Mexico will alert the public in the designated counties of the promotional activities that are taking place to encourage teens to buckle up. Ralph "Judge" Chavez, a highly regarded and successful football coach in the Albuquerque area who is also a driver education instructor has agreed to host the teen press event there.
 - ⇒ In Texas there will be 4 press events taking place during the week of April 20 in the teen program areas. Each will feature a rollover convincer demonstration. A wrecked vehicle mounted on a trailer will be transported to each of the media events. Teen spokespersons will recount the story of the Texas teen that buckled up and lived.

OUTREACH

- The Louisiana Youth Prevention Services is providing outreach services both in the schools and with other community organizations. During the month the agency continued to work with the State on the remaining planning activities for this component.
- In Mississippi a series of three student workshops for Rock the Belt was conducted at a local church, State Student Advisory Board meeting and the Salvation Army. The program included a showing of the "Room to Live" video, discussion of the teen campaign elements and distribution of Rock the Belt t-shirts and stress balls. The Student Advisory Board will be producing a video for Teens on the Move and will be used during the fall campaign. Flyers were created this month for distribution in April.
- New Mexico is sending out toolkits to every high school in the eight designated counties through Safer New Mexico Now. The toolkit will contain a cover letter to the school principal, driver education instructors and faculty which will detail the project goals and request their assistance in using their voices to make students aware of the need to buckle up. The State Secretary of Education was contacted and agreed to give her support and encouragement for this effort. Materials are being produced in support of the Click don't Splat video promotion including large posters for doors, static clings for windows, smaller posters for hallways and chalk for individuals to create messages throughout the school and clubs. All of the materials will be shared on the web site to promote the video competition for teens age 14 - 20 years. The design chosen may appear fairly graphic but the choice was deliberate in order to get the attention of teens. The State's partners have been working hard to get the information out to the location sites as well as gathering contact information.
- Texas' contract ThinkStreet filmed the rollover convincer video which features a teen spokesperson, teen observers, a seat belt expert and a State trooper. The fun and informative video has gone live on the specially developed teen web site: www.clickitorticketmusic.com and is available for download for a limited time. (It is a large file which takes 4 minutes to download.)
<https://rcpt.yousendit.com/677130674/2e45927979bf564236de0954c65cfd23>
- There are currently 200 high schools participating in the campaign and they will be distributing promotional materials including posters, banners, business cards, static clings and yard signs. All of the materials direct teens to the web site where after watching the rollover video the viewer will be able to download a free song. A lot of excitement has been generated about the potential of the site reaching the teen audience. AAA of Texas will publish an announcement in their member publication with the teen campaign dates. The magazine reaches over 900,000 homes in the State.

EVALUATION

- PRG worked with MCG to revise the schedules for the States' reporting of survey and activity data.
- PRG staff spent considerable time during the month conducting orientation and/or training for seat belt surveyors in Louisiana, Mississippi and New Mexico. Texas required no training as the State's contractor was already conducting surveys of teen seat belt use. The State highway safety office pushed to get an executed contract in place with their contractor in place before spring break.
- Baseline data collection began in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas (and is currently being conducted in New Mexico). Data collection included both observational and DMV awareness surveys. The Louisiana DVM surveys took place

in Baton Rouge, Baker, Denham Springs, Shreveport and Bossier City. In Mississippi 43 observation sites were chosen in the four Gulf counties.

- At this time baseline data for both types of surveys are being entered into appropriate databases for analyses.
- PRG also participated in a meeting with MCG and Region 6 representatives at the national Lifesavers conference.

COORDINATION

- The project web site: www.region6teenbeltproject.org continues to be updated frequently with creative materials, project updates, new links and documents developed by the States to promote or implement their project.
- Preliminary planning has begun for establishing the dates of the remaining three campaign mobilizations. It is necessary to plan as early as possible due to the impending development of the State highway safety plans for fiscal year 2010. The States must be aware of the timing of the campaign activity so that they can plan accordingly for law enforcement, media and evaluation contracts and funding during the year.

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For additional information contact:
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ATTACHMENTS:

New Mexico "Click. Don't Splat" Campaign:
Media Advisory
Press Release
Letter to Driver Education Instructors