RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER:
01455

PROJECT TITLE:
Walk Our Children Campaign For Alabama

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:
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PROJECT OBJECTIVE:
The specific goal of this project is to provide administrative support and organizational activities to continue the successful “Walk Our Children” program, improving child pedestrian safety as a key part of the overall state safety program.

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
In 1999, 179 pedestrian children (under the age of 15) were injured in traffic crashes in Alabama. An additional 13 children were killed in pedestrian crashes. These are severe statistics that represent anguish and suffering for 192 families. During the past decade, the trend in this State has been a reduction in pedestrian deaths and injuries; however, the number of pedestrian deaths on Alabama streets jumped 11.4 percent between 1998 and 1999. Action is needed to mitigate this situation.

Fortunately, there are ways to combat these types of traffic crashes. One effective program is the “Walk our Children to School” campaign, which has been conducted in Alabama since 1997. It calls for parents to walk their children to school on a designated day, which allows the parents to provide first-hand safety training to their children. At the same time it makes parents aware of potential safety hazards on the routes that their children use daily. This often causes the parents to become advocates for safety improvements along these routes.

PROJECT TASK DESCRIPTIONS:
1) Assemble a project team and obtain data from previous walk-your-child programs.
2) Target several cities and school systems.
3) Provide safety messages to drivers and parents of children aged eight-15 who walk to school.
4) Develop a safety awareness campaign using advertisements and public service announcements.
5) Communicate the message of the campaign.
6) Collaborate, coordinate and communicate with state agencies, safety organizations and the media about child pedestrian safety.
7) Document the success of the program.

MILESTONES AND DATES:
Startup – May 1, 2001
Task 1: conclude June 15, 2001
Task 2: conclude June 30, 2001
Task 3: conclude October 31, 2001
Task 4: conclude November 30, 2001
Task 5: conclude March 31, 2002
Task 6: conclude March 31, 2002
Task 7: conclude April 30, 2002
Conclude project – April 30, 2002

FUNDING AGENCY:
Alabama Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT:
No university students will be employed by this project; however, students in K-12 will be actively involved in the “walk” portion of the project.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS:
This project is not directly related to any other UTCA projects.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITIES:
Technology transfer will occur through news releases and distribution of the project report.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT:
This project has the real potential to identify sidewalks and street crossings that might impose undue risk upon child pedestrians. As a consequence, these locations can be targeted for improvement by local governments, civic groups, etc., to improve child pedestrian safety.

TRB KEYWORDS:
Traffic crash, pedestrian safety, child safety, school crossings, sidewalks, crosswalks