RESEARCH PROJECT DESCRIPTION

PROJECT NUMBER:
01457

PROJECT TITLE:
Statewide Restraint-Use Coordinator

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:
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PROJECT OBJECTIVES:
The overall goal of this project is to increase coordination and communication on restraint use issues in Alabama. By constantly moving this topic closer to the forefront in safety agencies, traffic safety accomplishments will occur. Current traffic safety programs will be supplemented by providing an individual to serve as statewide coordinator in the area of restraint use. The coordinator will assist in organizing and conducting safety activities, while coordinating with related agencies and organizations to deliver maximum reduction of crashes, injuries and fatalities per dollar expended.

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
The Safety Management Action, and Resources Taskforce (SMART) was created in 2000 by multiple agencies and organizations in Alabama. More than 50 individuals volunteered their time to create and implement a coordinated traffic safety plan. They represented nine state agencies, three federal agencies, five units of local government, two universities, and other organizations. Participants adopted a draft safety plan, identified the top safety issues, and established priorities. For each priority issue, two agencies were assigned for action. Restraint use was one of the two highest priority issues. In fact, seat belt and child seats constituted three of the top five priorities.

After statewide priorities were established, the overwhelming issues became (1) how to continue to coordinate traffic safety activities among so many agencies and organizations, and (2) how to measure progress and adjust priorities and action assignments. The issue was compounded by the fact that every player in the picture already had a crowded plate before SMART was established. This proposed project addresses those issues, by providing one individual whose primary job assignment is to improved seatbelt coordination and to increase restraint use.

PROJECT TASK DESCRIPTIONS:
1) Develop or revise the restraint-use aspects of the strategic plan, achieve approval, coordinate with others, and begin execution.
2) Track issues that might impact goals and objectives.
3) Identify conditions and activities necessary to maintain eligibility for federal funding of restraint programs, and organize and coordinate activities to ensure that eligibility is secured.
4) Develop strategies to increase restraint use.
5) Prepare grant applications for appropriate federal and other funding of restraint programs.
6) Coordinate seatbelt programs with CTSPs (community traffic safety planners).
7) Coordinate with law enforcement agencies to ensure that the most effective times and locations are being subjected to selective enforcement.
8) Work with other agencies and organizations that have restraint use programs.
9) Evaluate the results of crash data and other surveys as the basis for planning new programs.
10) Develop oral or written reports to deliver to diverse audiences (stakeholders, legislators, the public, etc.).

MILESTONES AND DATES:
Startup – October 1, 2001
All 10 tasks will be conducted concurrently
Conclude project – September 30, 2002

FUNDING AGENCY:
Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT:
No direct student involvement is anticipated for this project.

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RESEARCH PROJECTS:
This is a companion proposal to 01458, which provides an alcohol involvement coordinator for state safety programs.

TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITIES:
No plans have been made for specific technology transfer activities, but they will occur as natural byproducts of the activities of the coordinator.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT:
This project has the real potential to reduce the consequences of traffic crashes on a large scale. The most effective safety projects today are those that encourage the public to wear seat belts, which is a major thrust of this project.

TRB KEYWORDS:
Traffic crash, safety programs, seat belts, child restraints, safety coordinator, crash reduction