

Subject: Kudos on Phase IV Successes!

Good Afternoon! I have been meaning to touch base with you, since the Phase IV occupant protection training tour ended, but travel to two more states and several time-sensitive projects got in the way.

The tour was VERY busy and exciting, and I believe that each of you will build on the interest and awareness it helped generate. It was so fulfilling to see your community members come together to learn and share.

Many of the accredited course attendees were personally committed to protecting occupants, and were interested in accurate information and resource guidance. A few were past advocates that wanted to get involved again. Some seemed to be "sent" by their supervisors, and didn't know what to expect. And there were even a small number of certified CPS technicians who came for continuing education. The bottom line was that all were on the same page, by the end of your sessions, and continued communication will keep them and their agencies on your teams.

I heard first responders talking about getting more involved, better assessment of injuries and reviewing emergency transport policies. I heard police officers talk about commitment to enforcement, education and referral. I heard LOTS of those who are parents or grandparents comment on improving their personal occupant protection practices, and setting a positive example for community members. I even heard a number of people looking into further training and certification. The benefits of this program go beyond strengthening coalitions and community awareness, which by themselves are fantastic. The program also seems to be directly encouraging and enabling behavioral changes!

Right after our final accredited course in Butte, we did some work at the Montana Law Enforcement Academy. 49 recruits received two hours of occupant protection education, as part of their required basic training. On a Friday afternoon, when the students should have been thinking about getting out of school for the weekend, the response was phenomenal! Heads were nodding, questions were asked, comments were shared, and a number of folks even stayed after dismissal to ask questions or express their appreciation.

And that's not all! The next day, we presented a new version of the material to OVER 200 Spring Fever Trauma Conference attendees. In addition to the basics on occupant protection, the session focused on empowering people to make good choices. Since most conference presentations were about physically treating injuries, I wasn't sure how folks would respond to one on preventing them, but the early feedback leads me to believe that that the session was very well received – and the fact that a number of folks were taking notes, throughout, may mean more active advocacy and referral. And everyone stayed for an engaging Saved By The Belt ceremony, where they heard real-life stories about good choices saving lives!

I could go on forever... but I won't. Thank you for all of your hard work to make these events so successful, in your communities. Your extra effort, combined with the leadership, coordination and hands-on involvement of HMHB, is incredible to me! And thank you, in advance, for the active communication that you will undoubtedly continue to have with the attendees and their agencies.

I have attached some of the photos from the tour, so you can promote your success and see some of the parts you weren't directly involved with.

Keep up the great work to help families protect themselves –

Joe

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