

Subject: Thanks for an AMAZING Phase IX!

Good Morning!

We just wrapped up the second year of Montana's comprehensive program to increase the proper use of passenger restraints. And what a finale it was! Thanks to all of your hard work, we were able to raise awareness, plant seeds for activities and partnerships, and empower folks to make a difference in your communities!

We started out in Browning, delivering awareness training to police officers and 1st responders. Patty, Sheryl and Jackie definitely did their homework, and the on-site discussions Patty had lead me to believe that the Blackfeet occupant protection efforts will expand and utilize the resources she introduced. We even had a powerful member of the Tribal Council with us, for one of the classes, and some attendees seemed enthusiastic about further training and certification.

The most exciting part was an opportunity to work directly with some of the kids! While we had two law enforcement trainings scheduled, all officers chose to attend the same one. A terrific mom asked Patty if we could do a class for kids age 9-13, since we had a schedule opening, and naturally we were thrilled to do it. We put an age-appropriate course together, and the kids seemed to love it. They shared their many personal experiences with crashes, asked and answered questions, volunteered to help assess seat belt fit, and were incredibly attentive and well-behaved. My guess is they will teach their families and friends a few of the highlights. That's not all, though! An EMT, who attended the night session, asked if he could bring high school students to the next day's training. Those kids were great, too, and some of them stayed late and expressed an interest in using the information and becoming 1st responders!

Then we went on to Bozeman and Belgrade to provide 1st responder classes. Scott and Stacy really had things together, with the previous experience of law enforcement and healthcare trainings under their belts. While almost all attendees were not currently certified (yet), some had helped with inspections and wanted to learn more. From what they shared, I have a feeling that the Bozeman certification class will have a lot of interest!

Livingston was new territory for these HMHB occupant protection efforts. Jesse helped arrange and deliver a morning 1st responder training, which the fire department's chief personally attended, and a well-attended law enforcement training in the afternoon. And in between, Patty, Jesse and I had a great lunch meeting with Jim Mastin, Livingston's fire chief. It sounds like he's very committed to expanding injury prevention efforts, through his department!

In Helena, we started out with an updated and revised version of Crash Injury & Healthcare, at St. Pete's. Tracie, Kendra and Patty worked hard to fill the room with around 40 physicians and healthcare providers, and CME credit was provided by the University of Washington. Members of the group were actively involved in the training, asking lots of terrific questions and coming up with ideas for applying the information they gained. And then we went on to the Helena Fire Department, where we trained members of a second shift. It sounded like at least one or two of those attendees will seek certification, as well!

I'll let the attached photo essay tell the rest of the story, but I do want to share a few of the many incredible responses. A police officer briefly left the training, for an emergency call, but came back and told us about the occupant protection tickets he wrote as a result of the training. An ambulance crew had to leave for a brief call, but they came back and told us they were talking about the material while they were out. A police dispatcher went and got her daughter, after the training, and hurried back to have us verify seat belt fit. A 60-year-old attendee expressed that she was now empowered to protect her grandkids and others. And some real KIDS are better able to protect themselves and make a difference in their tribal communities!

Thanks to HMHB, MDOT, the many sponsors, and all of you, injuries are being prevented and lives will be saved! Way to go... and I look forward to working with you on the 2008 childcare and community trainings! Thank you so much for allowing me to be a part of your team.

Joe

Joseph M. Colella
Traffic Safety Projects
7718 Harvest Hills Court
Mount Airy, Maryland 21771-8442
301-829-8637
ColellaSafety@comcast.net