

Subject: Incredible Occupant Protection Work - Phase VIII!

Good morning, Team!

Phase VIII was INCREDIBLE! We reached SO many different people, at SO many different levels of occupant protection understanding, in SO many ways!

We taught children about the importance of riding safely, adults about their role in protecting themselves, their friends and their families, and leaders about the programming and resources designed for their use. We shared the latest occupant protection developments with technicians, the ins, outs and planning needs of the new curriculum with instructors, and the new policies and protocols with all certified individuals. We empowered law enforcement officers to better understand, enforce, educate, refer and encourage, first responders to recognize and prevent injuries, and healthcare providers to take a more active role in occupant protection. We even had great interactions and meetings with current and future occupant protection sponsors and leaders.

What a week! I'll give you a summary, and the attached photo essay does an even better job of it.

The 2007 accredited training and interaction you are offering has been extremely effective. There have been occasional challenges, but the folks who attend are consistently empowered to change their own practices and share the information with the people they touch. And the trainings become even more effective when the attendees can help with a checkup event or your inspection stations. In every one of the successful classes, I have heard from some police officers, first responders or healthcare providers about their new commitment to community work enhancement – and even the possibility of seeking further training or certification. THAT is coalition building, at its finest!

The First Annual Technician/Instructor update, along with the instructor curriculum workshop that followed, were equally amazing. I have to say that the folks benefit most from networking with each other AND having personal contact with state and community leaders. CEUs and sign-offs are certainly important to keep the network going – and awareness of state programming AND the support that state agencies are committed to for ALL communities brings continuing education home. And I have to say that the hard work of the instructors, as we worked through new philosophies, materials, challenges and planning for effective curriculum delivery, was more than commendable. What a great way to network and get everybody on the same page in style, performance, planning and effectiveness!

We topped it off with sharing functional awareness with 58 new police officers, as part of the required Basic Training. This is the 5th Academy class, with sizes ranging from 38 to 58, that we have been able to help from the get-go! That's over 200 officers reaching virtually all of Montana... PLUS all of the veterans we reach in the accredited continuing education. Some have told us that this training should be required for all officers – and even on an ongoing CE or refresher basis. Thank goodness HMHB is keeping track of the numbers, as we reach more and more of the sheriffs, municipal officers, troopers, specialized officers, etc. I am certain that we will see higher levels of enforcement, road side awareness, referral, and more – and we will best gauge its effectiveness when restraint use is increased and injuries are prevented.

You all do great work! Thanks to the undying commitment and direct participation of HMHB, MDOT and other sponsors – from the very top down – it can and will continue! I have attached some pictures from the week, and I know that several of you continue to use them for reporting, recruiting and public relations. Please let me know if you need higher resolution versions of any of these.

Keep being outstanding at preventing injuries and empowering your communities –

Joe

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