

**Subject:** Thanks for a GREAT week of protecting Montanans!

Good morning! After a great week in Montana, I spent 12 hours in Maryland and started another 2-state tour. In between projects and during travel, I have taken some time to reflect on the GREAT educational phase that YOU made happen. Thanks for all that you do.

The events were full of terrific people trying to do the right thing – keep their friends, families and community members out of harm's way. First responders, law enforcement officers, early childhood professionals, parents, advocates, educators and other leaders shared the same goals. They got the training they needed, and they will do what they can to reduce the number of Montana deaths (217), Montana injuries (9,431), and those Montana injuries that are so severe that they incapacitate (1,300).

We were able to do a class in Drummond (thanks Tom Gill!), where 1<sup>st</sup> responders from several agencies across the area received injury assessment info, emergency transport considerations, and the training they need to help prevent or reduce injuries. We did a similar class in Kalispell (thanks Wendy Olson!), expanding and enhancing a growing advocate network. We were also able to train police officers in Kalispell, giving them a better understanding of Montana statutes AND the laws of physics. Now they will be better able to discuss and enforce the laws, while identifying some dangerous restraint errors and referring folks to expert resources.

Not only that, but we were able to train early childhood professionals at The Nurturing Center's 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Regional Early Childhood Conference (thanks Mary Lyons!). These are the folks that transport their own families AND kids from other families. They are now empowered to do it safely, prevent potential injuries, and protect themselves from exposure to liability. The verbal and written evaluations told us that it was the best continuing education course that several had taken, and that reinforces the importance of the material.

OKAY... HERE IS A BIG ONE FOR ME! We participated in the Montana CRIME Prevention Conference – reinforcing that being unrestrained or incorrectly restrained is against the law. When Lorelle Demont asked about the possibility, it seemed like a stretch, but we ended up doing a customized workshop AND the closing keynote. The bottom line is that 73% of those who die on Montana roadways are unrestrained, and more than half of those who are incapacitated by serious injuries are unrestrained. The cost of these violations, in Montana lives, injuries and money is HUGE... and some people don't get it UNLESS we treat it as an unacceptable crime. The result was deep interest, great support, new potential partners, and wonderful news coverage.

The success is all because of the work you are doing to make a difference, and the support that you provide. Thank you, and please look at the attached photo essay to see the real story! A special thanks to HMHB, Patty Carrell, and those of you who did the hard part of the job – actually arranging, coordinating and recruiting. And special credit should go to Lorelle Demont and MDT for identifying a need and contributing additional funds to make this unplanned and extra week feasible!

Next week is National Child Passenger Safety Week, and I will be back to help with continuing education for certified technicians, a special workshop for certified instructors, and lots of awareness training for specialized groups. See you then – and THANK YOU for all that you are doing to make a difference!

Joe

**Joseph M. Colella**  
**Traffic Safety Projects**  
**301-466-8140**