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TxDOT's six goals: Prepare for the future; Enhance safety; Maintain the transportation system; Relieve congestion; Enhance connectivity; Work with our partners to identify funding strategies

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## **TxDOT Tells Texas Teens: Love Your Life, Buckle Up**

*Teen Click It or Ticket campaign expands this year to encourage teen safety belt usage*

**AUSTIN, February 13, 2012** – As Valentine's Day approaches, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is calling on teens to love their lives and buckle up with the launch of the Teen Click It or Ticket campaign. This year, TxDOT is partnering with more than 700 high schools and community colleges statewide to reach more than 750,000 Texas students with the important message that buckling up can save your life.

Teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers. In Texas, the use of seat belts saved an estimated 1,425 lives in 2010. At the same time, nearly half of the 291 teen drivers and occupants of passenger vehicles, ages 16–20, killed in motor vehicle crashes were not wearing their safety belts at the time of the crash. The Teen Click It or Ticket campaign, in its second year statewide, aims to increase seat belt usage among teenage drivers, age 16–20, across the state.

“A few seconds – that’s all it takes to buckle up. In that same amount of time, you can lose your life in an accident because you weren’t wearing your seat belt,” said Carol T. Rawson, P.E., TxDOT’s traffic operations division director. “TxDOT is committed to educating teens about the deadly effects of not wearing a seat belt, and this campaign says to every teen: ‘If you love your life, buckle up.’”

As part of the campaign, TxDOT has distributed kits, including banners, lawn signs, posters and window decals, to high schools and community colleges around the state. These materials reinforce the importance of buckling up. Additionally, TxDOT officials will be visiting high traffic locations throughout the month with a wrecked truck from which two teens wearing their seatbelts emerged after what could have been a fatal rollover. The truck will tour the following areas:

- Bryan – February 14
- San Antonio – February 15-16
- Dallas – February 18
- Rio Grande Valley – February 23
- Huntsville – February 25
- Houston – February 27-28
- Austin – March 8

- Arlington – April 1

Since September 2009, Texas Law requires all occupants of a vehicle, no matter their age or location in the vehicle, must be secured by a safety belt. Seat belt use by rear passengers has been observed as lower than that of those in the front. Violators risk fines of up to \$250 and those on the Graduated Driver License Program could have their license suspended. This campaign also aims to continue increasing awareness of this law among teens.

Teens are also invited to share their stories, win prizes and learn more about the importance of wearing their seatbelts at the website, [www.seatbeltsrock.com](http://www.seatbeltsrock.com).

### **The Texas Department of Transportation**

The Texas Department of Transportation is responsible for maintaining nearly 80,000 miles of road and for supporting aviation, rail and public transportation across the state. TxDOT and its approximately 12,000 employees strive to empower local leaders to solve local transportation problems, and to use new financial tools, including tolling and public-private partnerships, to reduce congestion and pave the way for future economic growth while enhancing safety, improving air quality and preserving the value of the state's transportation assets. Find out more at [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov). Fan us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/TxDOT>. Follow us on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/txdot](http://www.twitter.com/txdot).

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