

Organizational Results Research Report

June 2006
OR06.019

Deciding to Click It: Seatbelt Use by Missouri Teens

Prepared by
Missouri Transportation
Institute and Missouri
Department of Transportation

FINAL REPORT

RI06-016

**Deciding to Click It:
Seatbelt Use by Missouri Teens**

Prepared for:
Missouri Department of Transportation
Organizational Results

by

Institute of Public Policy
Truman School of Public Affairs
University of Missouri-Columbia
Dr. Lilliard E. Richardson, Jr.
Nathan Albers
Shannon Daily Stokes

Contributors: Dr. David C. Valentine
Dr. Jane M. Mosley
Bret Sanders

June 2006

The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this report are those of the principal investigator and the Missouri Department of Transportation. They are not necessarily those of the U.S. Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.

TECHNICAL REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1. Report No. OR06-019	2. Government Accession No.	3. Recipient's Catalog No.	
4. Title and Subtitle Deciding to Click It: Seatbelt Use by Missouri Teens		5. Report Date June 2006	
		6. Performing Organization Code	
7. Author(s) Dr. Lilliard E. Richardson, Jr., Nathan Albers, Shannon Daily Stokes		8. Performing Organization Report No.	
9. Performing Organization Name and Address Institute of Public Policy Truman School of Public Affairs University of Missouri-Columbia		10. Work Unit No.	
		11. Contract or Grant No. RI06-016	
12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Missouri Department of Transportation Organizational Results P. O. Box 270-Jefferson City, MO 65102		13. Type of Report and Period Covered Final Report	
		14. Sponsoring Agency Code MoDOT	
15. Supplementary Notes The investigation was conducted in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.			
16. Abstract We conducted twelve focus groups across Missouri with two main purposes: 1) to more fully understand how teenagers make decisions on seat belt use, and 2) to determine what outreach methods have the potential to influence safety decisions. Our target group was teenagers in the 15- to 19-year-old age range, and we had 101 such participants. In addition, nineteen other youths aged 11 to 14 years old participated in some of the discussions. Our analysis focuses on the attitudes and behaviors of older teens, but the younger teens' views augment the analysis.			
17. Key Words Teen, seatbelt		18. Distribution Statement No restrictions. This document is available to the public through National Technical Information Center, Springfield, Virginia 22161	
19. Security Classification (of this report) Unclassified	20. Security Classification (of this page) Unclassified	21. No. of Pages 46	22. Price

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
PROJECT GOAL.....	3
OVERVIEW	3
METHODS.....	3
CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS	4
SURVEY PROTOCOL.....	6
FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL	6
SURVEY FINDINGS	7
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS.....	7
REPORTED SEATBELT USE.....	8
FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS.....	10
SEATBELTS & TEENS	10
<i>Reactions to Seatbelts</i>	10
<i>Situational Seatbelt Use</i>	11
<i>Parental Influence</i>	14
<i>Influence of Peers</i>	14
<i>Seatbelts and the Law</i>	15
<i>Lax Enforcement of the “Law”</i>	16
CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS	17
<i>Views on Billboard and Public Service Announcements</i>	19
Arrive Alive Billboard	20
Truck Billboard.....	21
Impressions of Billboards	21
<i>Public Service Announcements</i>	21
Graduation	22
Everything But You	22
Habit	22
Radio Outreach Methods	23
<i>Incentives</i>	24
Bracelet	24
CD Case	25
Sunglasses Clip	25
Mirror.....	26
T-Shirt.....	26
Overall thoughts on incentive items.....	27
CONCLUSIONS.....	27
APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE	31
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS	36
APPENDIX C: BILLBOARDS	37
APPENDIX D: INCENTIVES	38
APPENDIX E: TEEN DRIVING SURVEY	40
APPENDIX F: RADIO SCRIPTS	42

Executive Summary

We conducted twelve focus groups across Missouri with two main purposes: 1) to more fully understand how teenagers make decisions on seat belt use, and 2) to determine what outreach methods have the potential to influence safety decisions. Our target group was teenagers in the 15- to 19-year-old age range, and we had 101 such participants. In addition, nineteen other youths aged 11 to 14 years old participated in some of the discussions. Our analysis focuses on the attitudes and behaviors of older teens, but the younger teens' views augment the analysis.

The focus groups were held in metropolitan areas, smaller cities and rural locations throughout Missouri. Key organizations were identified in each community and asked to recruit teens for each focus group. The number of individuals in a focus group ranged from six to fifteen with an average size of nine participants. The focus groups were evenly distributed between males and females. Approximately 63 percent of the participants were white, and a majority came from rural areas of the state. African Americans were slightly over-represented in the focus groups (27 percent) and were generally located in urban areas and the southeastern portion of the state. A small percentage of Hispanics were also represented in the focus groups.

One overwhelming pattern emerged regarding teens and seat belt use. Seatbelt habits are formed much earlier than driving age so efforts to change behavior need to be directed to children and young teens. Parent's use of seat belts also has an impact on whether teens use them. Parents can be pivotal in maintaining seatbelt use during the danger zone of the pre-teens and young teens. Further, parental seatbelt use sets an important example that children notice. Parental use is not always emulated by teens, but non-use certainly appears to be more closely imitated.

Two patterns emerged regarding efforts to encourage seat belt use. One, realism should be used in public service announcements. Celebrity endorsements, non-serious voices, and stylized images do not impact teens the same way gore, serious voices, and compelling realistic images and statistics do. They prefer real people in their age group who have relevant experiences to talk about traffic safety in ads or school programs, and celebrities are not taken seriously unless they have relevant experience. They also want less stylized ads or billboards, and they want edgier, more realistic ads that show actual accidents and the full consequences. Second, for teens who rarely wear their seat belts, public service announcements will not convince them, but significant law enforcement efforts and fear of expensive tickets will. To increase seatbelt use, law enforcement officers should be encouraged to issue citations when appropriate, but passage of a primary enforcement seatbelt law appears to be a more important component in changing perceptions that wearing a seatbelt is the law in Missouri.

The discussions also suggested that urban legends about seatbelts are firmly rooted in Missouri culture and that these beliefs may contribute to low seatbelt usage rates. At nearly every location, facilitators heard stories about how seatbelts could kill someone. Further, many teens have a fundamental misunderstanding of how basic physics work in an accident (once a body is in motion, it will remain in motion). Reminders to wear seatbelts and stories attempting to scare them straight will work for some situational users, but outreach efforts will have to more directly confront these misunderstandings to have much effect with those teens (and likely some adults) who persist in these beliefs.

Project Goal

The goal of this research project was to better understand how young drivers in Missouri make decisions on seat belt use and to determine what outreach methods have the potential to influence their future decisions related to traffic safety.

Overview

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young Americans, and young drivers have disproportionately high rates of fatal crashes per 100,000 drivers. In 2003, almost 8,000 drivers under 20 years old were involved in fatal crashes, and this marked an increase of over 5 percent in one decade. Further, 3,657 drivers aged 15 to 20 years old were killed, and over 300,000 drivers under the age of 21 years were injured in vehicle crashes. Young drivers (15 to 20 years old) account for six percent of all drivers, but they account for 14 percent of fatal crashes and 18 percent of all police-reported crashes. In addition, NHTSA estimates that the economic costs of police-reported crashes involving 15- to 20-year-olds were \$40.8 billion in 2002. Overall, there is considerable evidence that young drivers pose a substantial safety risk due to inexperience, immaturity, and a willingness to engage in risky behavior.

Methods

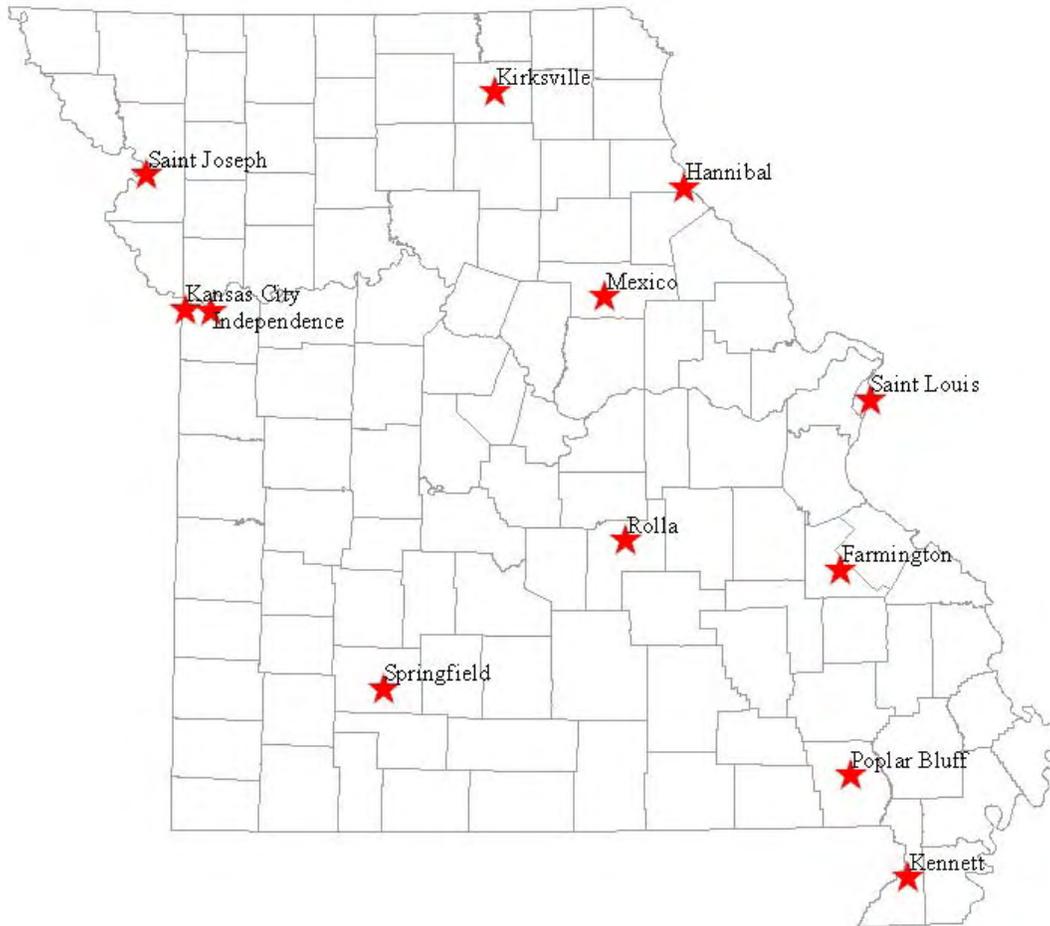
Twelve focus groups¹ were conducted across the state of Missouri with individuals between 11 and 20 years old, and 101 of the participants were between the ages of 15 to 19. The focus groups were held in major metropolitan areas, smaller cities and rural locations throughout Missouri. Sites were selected based on geographic location, recent young driver media campaigns, and in consultation with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MDOT). Table 1 shows the geographic location for the focus groups.

Table 1: Focus group sites

Large Metro Areas	Smaller Cities	Non-Metropolitan
Independence	Rolla	Farmington
Kansas City	St. Joseph	Hannibal
St. Louis City	Springfield	Kennett
		Kirksville
		Mexico
		Poplar Bluff

¹ The contract required a minimum of 8 focus groups plus Kennett and Farmington as specific locations.

Figure 1: Focus group sites



Key organizations were identified in each community and asked to recruit teens for each focus group. Past experience and the short time frame available for arranging these focus groups made open recruitment (through fliers or newspaper ads) infeasible. By targeting local organizations with access to the demographic group of interest, the focus groups could be arranged in days rather than months. For example, the YMCA of South St. Louis agreed to allow a focus group on the same day a teen leadership group was meeting for other purposes. A monetary incentive (\$200) was provided to the organizations that were able to secure a meeting location and arrange for a group of participants. By working directly with an organization and conducting the focus group at the same time people were gathered for other reasons, the attendance goals were met in most locations. Table 2 shows the specific meeting locations and organizations who hosted focus groups for this project.

Characteristics of Participants

Organizations contacted to host a focus group were asked to gather individuals between the ages of 15 and 19 years of age. The intention of the project was to recruit only individuals between the ages of 15 and 19 years old. In several cases, some participants were near driving permit age

(14 years old) or who were just over the target age range (20 years old), and they took part in the discussion with individuals within the desired age range. In the Springfield focus group, only one of the individuals was of driving age. While not the ideal or anticipated circumstance, the focus group composed of younger individuals provided some new insights on seatbelt usage patterns and how safety outreach messages are received by soon-to-be drivers. It was also beneficial because many of the older teens suggested that we needed to start our efforts at a younger age and that it was generally around the age of 12 to 14 that many of them quit wearing seatbelts regularly. For the purposes of this report, our analysis centers on discussions with 15- to 19-year-olds, and comments by the younger participants only augment the main analysis.

The number of individuals in a focus group ranged from six to fifteen with an average size of nine participants. The size of the focus groups was sufficient in all locations. If a group is too small, people may be hesitant to disagree with each other. If a group is too large, some individuals may not feel comfortable speaking with so many others in the room. The size of the focus groups in this project provided a small enough setting so teens felt comfortable speaking while also allowing a diversity of ideas to be expressed. Table 2 shows the number of participants in each location.

Table 2: Focus Group Sites, Dates, and Number of Participants

City	Site	Contact Person	Number of Participants	Date
Farmington	Farmington High School	Matt Ruble / Connie Waters	7	6/16/2006
Hannibal	Hannibal YMCA	Cary Perrin	7	6/26/2006
Independence	Truman High School	Anissa Gaston	10	6/6/2006
Kansas City	NE High School	Sean Akridge	10	6/5/2006
Kennett	Kennett High School	Kim Lowry / Chad Pritchett	13	6/12/2006
Kirksville	Adair County Library	Diane Berger	9	6/27/2006
Mexico	Mexico High School/ 4H Butler County Community	Eleanor Kloeppe / Anna Mayson	13	6/16/2006
Poplar Bluff	Resource Council	Karen Crook	5	6/5/2006
Rolla	MTI	Angie Rolufs	9	5/24/2006
Springfield *	Springfield YMCA (Downtown)	Ashley DeWitt	*	6/20/2006
St Joseph	Youth Alliance	David Rich	7	6/7/2006
St Louis City	South St Louis City YMCA	James Page	11	6/2/2006
TOTAL			101	

* The Springfield focus group had 12 participants, but most were 10-14 years of age. The table includes 15-19 year olds only. A few other sites had 14 year olds in the group.

Survey Protocol

The main purpose of the project was to conduct focus groups, but a survey questionnaire was also distributed at the beginning of each session. The questionnaire was developed in spring 2006 as part of a separate project for MoDOT, and the topics covered were directly related to the purpose of the focus groups. The survey was a useful tool to gather further information about the attitudes and behaviors of teenagers. The survey results will be reported separately in the report related to the teen survey project, but the data taken from the teenagers in the focus groups has helped inform the analysis in the current report on the focus groups project. A survey alone would not have been sufficient for this project, but by having participants in the groups complete a survey prior to the discussion, the richness of the data collected for this project was increased. Each survey took approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Through the surveys, information was collected on several main areas:

- Demographic information, including ethnicity, age, and primary vehicle use;
- Knowledge of current outreach messages; and
- Attitudes and knowledge of traffic safety practices.

The survey questionnaire is included in Appendix E.

Focus Group Protocol

Each focus group was attended by at least two team members and audio taped. In most cases, rooms were arranged with chairs and tables in a U-shape or a square. This arrangement allowed the facilitator and the note taker to see name badges and walk around the room when necessary. The square arrangement also allowed the participants to see each other and engage in more free-flowing conversation than a traditional classroom arrangement would have allowed. In almost all cases, teachers or other authority figures for the host group left the room to further enhance the students' comfort level with the focus group facilitators.

Upon arrival, each participant received a nametag, an informed consent statement, and a survey. The consent document discussed focus group participant rights including confidentiality and the disclosure of risk. The consent statement was also read at the beginning of each focus group, and participants received a copy of the statement to keep. The consent statement contained contact information for the researchers and the University of Missouri-Columbia Institutional Review Board. A copy of the consent form is provided in Appendix B.

The focus group guide was drawn from two previous traffic safety behavior focus group reports² and finalized in conjunction with MoDOT. The moderately structured guide provided parameters for obtaining information on areas of interest but also allowed time for discussions on

² Adapted from: a.) Nitzburg, Marsha and Knoblauch, Richard, *Rural Pickup Truck Drivers and Safety Belt Use: Focus Group Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT HS 809 711 May 2004, and b.) Panlener, Juanita C. and Lisboa-Farrow, Elizabeth, *Program Strategies for Increasing Safety Belt Usage in Rural Areas*, U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT HS 808 505, July 1996.

behaviors and beliefs that were not anticipated. The focus group discussion guide is provided in Appendix A.

The focus group started with introductions (first name and age), a brief discussion of general safety issues and how participants make decisions regarding protection from potential harm. Following the opening discussion of safety, the conversation moved to feelings about seat belts and patterns of use. Approximately halfway through the focus group, the facilitator introduced media and outreach methods used by the MoDOT as the next topic of conversation. These questions focused on the reaction of the individuals to radio commercials, billboards, and incentive items developed by MoDOT. Finally, the discussion moved to the best methods of reaching young drivers.

Focus groups lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, depending on the number of participants and how the discussion progressed. Following the focus group, selected audio files were transcribed and then double checked for accuracy with the information from the note taker³. Surveys were coded and entered into SPSS for analysis.

Survey Findings

Participant Demographics

The focus group participants were from all over the state representing rural, suburban, and urban areas. The participants also spanned the spectrum of newer drivers with the largest percent being 15-year-olds (most of whom have driving permits). The focus groups were also successful at gathering the thoughts of licensed drivers ages 16-18, but, as table 3 indicates, the number of 19-year-olds was markedly lower than the other age groups. Not included in the table below are the nineteen 10-14 year olds we also spoke too. The majority of this age group came from the focus group held in Springfield. While not initially part of this study, these younger individuals also provided valuable information consistent with the findings from the older teens.

Table 3: Participant's Age

Age	Number	Percent
15	40	40
16	25	25
17	20	20
18	13	13
19	3	3
Unknown	3	2
TOTAL	101	

³ The short time frame available for the completion of this project prevented transcription of all audio files. Timing, geographic location and the feedback of the facilitators determined which audio tapes provided the richest sources of information for the project.

Table 4 demonstrates that the focus groups were close to evenly distributed between males and females with 5 more females participating than males.

Table 4: Participant’s Gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Female	52	51
Male	47	47
Unknown	2	2
TOTAL	101	

Focus group participants were fairly representative of the ethnic categories found in Missouri. Approximately 63 percent of the participants were white, and a majority of participants came from rural areas of the state. African Americans were slightly over-represented in the focus groups (27 percent) and were generally located in urban areas and the southeastern portion of the state. A small percentage of Hispanics were also represented in the focus groups. Table 5 provides the overall distribution of participants’ ethnicity.

Table 5: Participant’s Ethnicity

Ethnic Category	Number	Percent
White	64	63
Black/African American	28	28
Native American or Alaskan Native	1	1
Hispanic	5	5
Other	1	1
Unknown	2	1
TOTAL	101	

Reported Seatbelt Use

Tables 6 and 7 depict the participants’ responses to how often they actually wear seat belts when driving and as a passenger, respectively. While the data are not statistically significant as a representation of the overall teen population, it is interesting to note that variation between the teens who had not worn their seat belt in the last week and the ones who always claim to wear their seat belt. As drivers, 38 percent stated they had not worn their seat belt in the past week indicating that this is standard behavior compared to 55 percent who always wear their seat belt. As passengers, 45 percent claim that they have not worn their seat belt in the past week compared with only 34 percent who claim they always wear their seat belt. This pattern illustrates that respondents are split into two distinct groups: those who report that they wear their seat belts and those who wear them infrequently.

It is also important, however, to point out that the percent reporting they always wear their seatbelts is somewhat of an upper bound. As the discussion in the focus groups showed, many of

those reporting in the survey that they always wear their seatbelts have many regular exceptions to that rule. Therefore, even though the 55 percent mark for drivers always wearing their belts is no cause for celebration by itself, the underlying behavior may be even more problematic in terms of the risk teens are taking in terms of seatbelt use. As reported later, the discussions in the focus groups suggest a breakdown into three groups: habitual users, situational users and infrequent seat belt users. Both habitual and situational users report in the survey and in the initial focus group discussion that they always wear their seat belts, but with probing it becomes obvious that there are many situations in which they do not wear seat belts.

Another interesting element of this group is that more teens wear their seat belts when driving (55 percent), but fewer wear their seat belts regularly as a passenger (45 percent). This pattern is consistent with what the teens stated during the focus groups. Namely, teens tend not to wear their seat belt when in a vehicle with peers, and most report little seatbelt usage in the back seat.

Table 6: When was the last time you did not wear your seat belt when driving?

	Female	Male	Total	Valid Percent*
Today	8	8	16	21
In the past week	4	9	13	17
In the past 2 weeks	1	2	3	3
In the past month	1	0	1	1
In the past year	0	2	2	2
I always wear my seat belt	25	18	43	55
New driver	11	4	15	-
TOTAL	50	43	93	

*New drivers were excluded from the valid percent category.

Table 7: When was the last time you did not wear your seat belt when riding with someone else?

	Female	Male	Total	Valid Percent
Today	13	10	23	24
In the past week	11	9	20	21
In the past 2 weeks	7	4	11	11
In the past month	1	4	5	5
In the past year	1	4	5	5
I always wear my seat belt	20	13	33	34
TOTAL	53	44	97	

Focus Group Findings

Starting a conversation with teens on safety habits is difficult. Teens receive a plethora of safety advice from parents, schools, and the media every day. Frequently, these messages cover multiple aspects of a teen's life – drug use, sexual behavior, school violence, and driving. As a result, teens are cognizant of the “correct” responses in safety-related conversations and can be reluctant to share experiences that fall outside of the broadcasted message of adults. If a non-judgmental environment can be established with teens, then discussions of actual behavior and the reasons behind these decisions can be revealed.

This challenge of developing a non-judgmental environment was evident in the focus groups on teen seat belt use. Facilitators would begin the conversation with a general discussion of safety habits, which resulted in little to no conversation, and then move to the question of how the teens feel about seatbelts. Teens across locations were likely to respond with personal use habits for seatbelts rather than their thoughts on seatbelts. With some probing, teens in most locations did start to open up about seatbelts, their use of seatbelts, how parents, teens, and law enforcement affect their use of seatbelts, and the outreach methods that could encourage greater seatbelt use among teens.

During the course of these conversations, some expected themes emerged but so did some unanticipated ones. The most interesting aspect of the findings from the focus groups was the number of themes that were contradictory. These contradictions occurred within individual participants, within the focus groups, and across locations. The themes were often the result of a mix of outside influences including adults, media, peers, personal beliefs, and urban legends. For example, seatbelts are viewed as good, but there is also a perception that seatbelts will hurt you. Many teens wear seatbelts, just not every time they are in a car. Strong law enforcement may encourage more seatbelt use, but the fines are too low to be a deterrent. These are just a sample of the themes resulting from the focus groups and of the complexities of developing outreach methods for this segment of drivers.

The findings begin with a review of how teens feel about seatbelts and when seatbelts are used. The next section discusses why teens choose to not wear a seatbelt and how other individuals and law enforcement influence this decision making process. The findings conclude with how seatbelt use could be increased among teens and thoughts from teens on outreach methods.

Seatbelts & Teens

Reactions to Seatbelts

When the focus group participants were initially asked for their attitudes about seat belts, they generally used positive terms to describe them. Descriptions included “safe,” “responsible,” and “a good idea.” While general attitudes about seat belts were positive, there seemed to be a large disconnect between that attitude and their behavior. After the initial comments, teens often complained about the comfort of seat belts, that they were annoying, or they just didn't think about them much even though they knew they could potentially save their life. As one female in Poplar Bluff stated, “usually, they're beneficial in most cases.” A male in Rolla echoed this

mixed feeling about seatbelts saying, “I have heard that they could hurt you in a crash.” Even when discussing who should talk to teens about seatbelts this concept of harm from a seatbelt was played out: “how the seatbelt either saved their lives or it hurt ‘em worse or whatever.” At almost all focus group locations, a teen would share a story about how a person who was in a car accident would have died if the seatbelt had been in use.

These urban legends have a strong impact on a teen’s decision to use a seatbelt. Stories varied, but most followed a theme such as “if she would have had her seatbelt on she would have been crushed.” Others discussed how the seatbelt harmed the victim of an accident, such as “her seatbelt shoved up in her stomach” or “the seatbelt paralyzed him.” Others mentioned some incident involving water and the inability to get out of the seatbelt before drowning. The stories appeared to shape decision-making for some teens, and those who believe these stories are likely to forego seatbelt use in the future. For many of the teens, there appeared to be little understanding that such events are extremely rare and that the number of lives saved by seatbelts vastly outnumber those who may be disadvantaged by the seatbelts. Confronting these myths in a direct way with clear data may be a fruitful avenue for affecting attitudes and changing behavior.

On the more positive side, in the discussions of a seatbelt possibly causing harm, one or two others in the room at most locations would say “they probably save many more lives than they hurt people”. There was never complete agreement on if a seatbelt was always a positive, but many did see the risks as outweighing the benefits. As a participant in Kennett stated:

“Yeah, but just think about all the wrecks that people have had that wore their seatbelts and lived through it because of their seatbelt. They’re more likely to live through it with your seatbelt than not with it on”

When discussing general thoughts, seatbelts were commonly described as “uncomfortable” or “constricting.” For some, the comfort of a seatbelt was related to the tightness, “especially if you’re too big” or feeling that the seatbelt “doesn’t feel like it fits me.” Others complained the seatbelt is “itchy to my neck”, “annoying”, or that the locking of the seatbelt made it difficult to move (or in one case, dance) in a vehicle.

Situational Seatbelt Use

Some teens in all locations across Missouri stated “I wear my seatbelt all the time” or “I always buckle up the seatbelt.” Many teens describe seatbelt use as a habit that requires little thought on their part. As one female in Independence explained, “Sometimes like when I get in the car I don’t even think about it, I just put it on.” A male in Rolla described seatbelt use as having occurred “ever since I was a little kid . . . I always put it on just every time I get in the car. I always do it. I might have forgotten like once in my life.”

Sometimes constant seatbelt use is a habit and other times it was because “my car dings until you put a seatbelt on.” Teens who wear a seatbelt in almost all cases tended to do so out of habit. This habit was frequently the result of parents consistently mandating seatbelt use from a young age. For others, the death of a friend or relative in a vehicle was the reason for wearing a

seatbelt. As a teen in St. Louis City described “I wear my seatbelt after a boy from my school died this year who would have lived if he had on his seatbelt in the car crash though.”

This positive news is hampered by how teens define seatbelt use or the term “always.” Many teens wear the lap belt but not the shoulder belt as illustrated by this comment from a St. Louis male: “I mean I wear my seatbelt. But I don’t wear the part that goes across the shoulder. I put that behind me.” Unfortunately, this idea of wearing only the lap belt and putting the shoulder belt behind them was mentioned by several teens in several locations. These frequent mentions may indicate a common problem among teens even when quantitative data presents a more positive picture with lots of teens reporting regular use.

Situational use of seatbelts is common with teens defining what it means to “always” wear a seatbelt in a variety of ways. Some teens only wear a seatbelt when driving “because I don’t trust myself.” A reverse of this theme were teens who didn’t wear a seatbelt when driving because “I trust myself because . . . I’m the one in control.” or “because you’re in control” or “I trust my driving.” Individuals who did not wear a seatbelt while driving did sometimes wear a seatbelt when someone else is doing the driving because “I ain’t so sure about trusting them with my life.” As even further evidence of situational use of seatbelts, some teens would make decisions to wear a seatbelt based on an individual driver. As a male in Mexico described it, “if I get in the car with someone who is driving crazy and stuff, I will put on a seatbelt.”

When asked about seatbelt usage in specific areas of a vehicle, many teens admitted “in the back seat I don’t always.” Sometimes teens don’t wear a seatbelt in the backseat because of the type of vehicle, most often a large SUV or a van. The perception among these teens is that a large vehicle somehow shields them from the dangers avoided from seatbelt use. One perception was that heavier vehicles were less likely to flip over because of the greater weight so belts were not needed. A different angle was that a seatbelt is intended to keep an occupant from flying through a windshield and this is not a danger in the back of a large vehicle because the windshield is too far away. Others don’t wear a seatbelt on long trips in such vehicles “just so I can lay down” or “I don’t at all, so I can go to sleep” in a more comfortable manner.

Other teens argued that long trips, especially on the highway, were a reason to wear a seatbelt. In rural areas, highway or urban travel was viewed as dangerous. As a person in Kennett described it, “because people, people like here in town [think] nothing can happen to them. When they get on the highway there’s more cars.” Some teens expressed the belief that traffic in urban areas, such as St. Louis, is more dangerous so seatbelts should be used in these locations. Others expressed the need to wear seatbelts when they crossed state lines either due to the signage at the state line reminding them, uncertainty about greater law enforcement in other states, or because it is perceived as “the law” in those states. Weather, such as rain or ice, can also influence a decision to wear a seatbelt.

The level of safety a teen feels with the driver also influences the use of a seatbelt, such as “I feel more safe with my step dad driving, that’s why I don’t wear my seatbelt.” Parents were most frequently cited as the trusted driver for teens. A few teens stated wearing a seatbelt could be viewed as disrespectful to the driver. A female in Farmington relayed a comment she received from a driver when she went to latch her seatbelt as “what you don’t trust me or something?”

Another teen stated “depends on who is driving, if you trust the driver...” you are less likely to wear a seatbelt. The limited number of teens who discussed this issue of trust with the driver never discussed the idea of a driver in another vehicle causing an accident. This emphasis on the ability of the driver may be an area for improved outreach efforts in the future.

Short trips are also a time when teens don't wear seatbelts because they are “not in [the] car long enough.” As a male in Independence described it “if I'm going just down the street to go to Osco or something I might forget it. But usually if I'm driving far I'll usually wear it.” Another individual described it as “I really don't wear a seatbelt, because that's like I'm fixing me to drive” when going to a nearby store. Another said “people here in town don't think nothing can happen to them.” Interestingly, other teens would chime in when a focus group participant described not wearing a seatbelt on short trips. These other teens would cite a statistic about the number of accidents that happen close to home. For example, a female in St. Louis City said “I've heard that most accidents happen like within like a three-mile radius of the home.” While the number of miles from the home where the accident occurs and the percentage of vehicle accidents that happen within this area varied from location to location, the counter message on the danger of not wearing a seatbelt on short trips was constant.

Teens across locations stated that riding with friends is a time of low seatbelt usage because “usually we have too many kids in the car” or “the car is over packed.” Others described “forgetting” to wear a seatbelt when excited, especially in the presence of peers. A few teens admitted they don't wear seatbelts because they “don't think about it all.”

A select group of participants exhibited a feeling of invincibility when it comes to making a decision to wear a seatbelt. A male in Independence described his decision to not wear a seatbelt in this way:

I don't think I'm going to get in a wreck. If it does, it does man, no sense thinking about it.

Sometimes it is difficult for teens to understand why a seatbelt is important. As a male in St. Louis City explained about a few of his friends “They've been in all kinds of accidents where they could have lost their life. And they still don't wear they're seatbelt.” The concept of a seatbelt being capable of saving a life in an accident was also difficult to comprehend.

A lot of people just really don't wear their seatbelts, they just don't. Even if there's no explanation for why they don't, they just don't do it. I don't think it's that relevant to them, like they don't, because it's hard to think that that little click could save your life, just hearing it, just the seatbelt. Just that little strap can mean life or death, it's hard to think about that. It's like, this is just a piece of vinyl.

Teens offered a variety of reasons for why teens, including themselves, don't wear seatbelts. Chief among these reasons were the seatbelt habits of parents and the influences of peers.

Parental Influence

Parents or guardians provide a mixed influence on teens when it comes to using a seatbelt. If a parent doesn't wear a seatbelt, the teen seems much less likely to wear a seatbelt. Parents who have always insisted on seatbelt use have varying impacts on the teen. For some, the lifelong use of seatbelts becomes a habit that continues into driving age. For others, parents insisting on seatbelt use results in "kind of a rebellion thing...the more you tell them... they are not going to do it." The perception of nagging reduces seatbelt use for kids who feel this way.

Many teens who do not regularly wear a seatbelt when alone or with peers do wear one when they are with their parents. "When I am with my parents I wear one" (Kennett) or "I don't wear one unless I am with my mom"(Mexico) are common responses to seatbelt use when teens are with parents. In these situations, teens are not choosing to wear a seatbelt for safety considerations; rather, it is "because they make me." One teenager in Kennett who was otherwise quite resistant to seatbelts admitted that he had to wear them when he was with his father because he would not start the car until everyone had their belts clicked.

Teens felt strongly that it is a responsibility of parents to buckle up small children and instill a habit of seatbelt use. Friends who don't wear seatbelts are described as not being "trained to wear it" or "kind of out of the habit" because parents don't wear a seatbelt.

I think it's a habit thing. You get it and the first you do is buckle your seatbelt or you make your kid buckle their seatbelt and you check to make sure they're on, that's just something they do naturally when they get in a car. The parents should definitely teach their kids. And I think parents wearing seatbelts is important 'cause that child . . . [says] "Well, my mom doesn't wear a seatbelt."

Teens notice whether a parent wears a seatbelt and the frequency of parent seatbelt use. In one case, a teen discussed how his parents do not wear a seatbelt unless the journey is longer than one hour. Another talked about how before her mom bought a new car "she didn't wear her seatbelt very often," but the vehicle dings if the seatbelt is not latched so her mom now wears a seatbelt. A few teens explained they didn't wear a seatbelt before driving "because my parents never enforced it." Another explained "My parents have never worn them . . . It impacted my decision when my dad was in a car wreck and was killed. He was thrown through the windshield." Although few cases are so dramatic, parental use of seatbelts is an important aspect of a teen's decision making process.

Influence of Peers

Seatbelts were also perceived as "not cool" in some cases. In a few locations, teens flat out said that seatbelt usage was not positive because "it looks retarded" and "they're uncool." One female in Mexico described her sister-in-law as "being uptight about that" because she uses a seatbelt. Frequently, the teens in focus groups discussed how peers say not using a seatbelt is cool, as described in this statement, "that's the only thing they always say, I think it's cool not to wear a seatbelt." While the teen may not agree with the non-use of seatbelts, the attitude is known. Occasionally, other focus group participants would disagree with this point of view as demonstrated in this exchange between a female and male in Independence.

Male: *“And like a lot of people like don’t wear it because they don’t think it’s cool.”*

Female: *“I think I would rather look like a nerd than to be dead.”*

Male: *“See, I’m kind of the opposite way, I’d rather – “*

Female: *“Be killed than look like a nerd?”*

Male: *“I mean yeah.”*

A similar exchange occurred in St. Louis between two females:

Female 1: *What idiot don’t wear that seatbelt?*

Female 2: *This one right here.*

(Laughter)

Female 1: *That still makes you an idiot to not wear your seatbelt.*

Peers can influence the decision to wear a seatbelt in a positive manner as well. Some will “remind my friends” to put on a seatbelt when they get in a vehicle. If a teen buckles up in a vehicle with other teens, everyone else will “immediately do it, too.” Some request passengers wear a seatbelt for safety reasons “because I don’t want somebody to like fly around and kill somebody.” While the level of adamancy teens expressed to peers varied, some had strong views about the importance of everyone in the vehicle wearing a seatbelt.

Then it’s gonna be on me like if they get thrown out the window. They’re gonna be like, “Oh well why didn’t you make him put his seatbelt on? And why were you driving like that?” So. Like just yesterday, my friend got in the car. And I was like, “I’m not going anywhere until you put your seatbelt on.” And we sat there for like ten minutes, having an argument about putting their seatbelt on. I was like, “I’m not taking you anywhere if you don’t put it on.”

Some teens, predominately males, did not wear seatbelts on a regular basis. One described his seatbelt usage as “40% of the time” while another stated “I don’t even wear ‘em really.” For some the attitudes are rooted in a need to fit in with peers. As a male in Mexico described it,

When I am by myself I usually put my seat belt on for some reason. Not wearing a seat belt is a guy cool thing. . . in a car with a bunch of guys, people actually make fun of them for putting their seat belt on. . .seen as cautious feminine type.

Although females felt the pressures were different, asking someone to wear a seatbelt can be met with a response of “oh, quit being such as mom” according to some participants. Peer influence seems to having differing impacts based on the personality of the teen who is being pressured.

Seatbelts and the Law

The “click-it-or-ticket” campaign has had a large impact on how teens define seatbelt laws. Few teens were aware of secondary enforcement practices in Missouri because of the “click-it-or-

ticket” campaign. As one teen in Rolla explained “I think it’s a law because it’s click it or ticket so they can write you a ticket” and a teen in Kennett described “if you ain’t [wearing a seatbelt], they ticket you.” Estimates for how much a ticket for not wearing a seatbelt would cost ranged from \$10 - \$600 with most estimates in the \$50 to \$100 range. The confusion over the actual level of the fine is one case where a lack of correct information may be beneficial.

A majority of teens who participated in the focus groups believed seatbelt laws were positive. As explained by a female in St. Louis City, “I think everyone should have to wear a seatbelt. If they’re in a motor vehicle, I think they should have to wear a seatbelt.” Teens were “glad [the law] is there.”

Some teens disagree with seatbelt laws and the reasons for the disagreement varied. A few teens felt it should not be the law “because a seatbelt can hurt you” or seatbelts are “a hazard to your health.” A few felt seatbelt use “really depends on the way you drive” and should not be mandated. Some teens viewed seatbelt laws as a matter of choice, akin to individual liberties such as freedom of speech. For these teens, seatbelts have an individual impact but use or non-use does not affect anyone else. As a male in Independence explained,

See, because speeding affects other people. When you’re not wearing your seatbelt that’s mainly affecting you. I think it’s your choice; the seatbelt will help you if you put it on, that’s good for you. If you don’t, the cops have wasted, I mean it’s your fault.

Most were adamant the law should not be any different for teens than for adults. Several felt that “it shouldn’t be different” because if “you drivin’, you drivin,’” as a male in Kansas City explained. The issue of different laws for different age groups seemed silly “because anyone can be in a car accident. And anyone can die from a car accident, whether they’re young or old. So seatbelts should be – everyone should be made to wear a seatbelt.” Others disagreed and said the law should be tougher for teens because “there more teens getting killed.” Some cited evidence of law enforcement targeting teens as illustrated by this female in St. Louis City:

In my neighborhood, they definitely try and make the younger – like the younger kids that are driving – make sure that they had their seatbelts on, more than they do the adults.

Lax Enforcement of the “Law”

In some respects, the confusion regarding the “click-it-or-ticket” campaign and Missouri’s secondary enforcement law is noticeable to teens. The difference between how media indicates a person will get a ticket for not wearing a seatbelt and the number of tickets given for not wearing a seatbelt is viewed as lax enforcement of the law. As a result, even people who agree with a seatbelt law feel it lacks the power to get more people to wear a seatbelt. As a male in St. Louis City pointed out “you might see a cop on the side of the road. But if you’re not wearing your seatbelt, they’re still like hey.” Even those who may not entirely agree with a seatbelt law felt “they should enforce the law.”

In a subtle way, the secondary enforcement law reinforces the concept of seatbelt use not being important. Most teens felt the law was not enforced because police officers see a seatbelt offense as a waste of time because “they don’t want to wade through the paperwork.” One teen described an incident with his mom that made him realize seatbelt laws were unimportant:

I got pulled over with my mom when she was driving, and I didn’t have my seatbelt on, and they said since I was 18 the cop didn’t waste his time writing me out a ticket. They gave my mom a ticket though for not having her seatbelt on, but he said I was like not part of her ticket so he said he didn’t want to waste his time writing out another ticket; I swear. I was like, man, so that really made me think it wasn’t that big of a deal.

Teens living near state borders or who had lived in other states previously felt Missouri did not have strong seatbelt laws. A male in Mexico said “In Oregon they will pull you over and give the passenger a ticket for not wearing a seatbelt, but here they really aren’t big on it unless you get pulled over and they see you aren’t wearing your seatbelt.” In Kennett, teens described Arkansas police as being “strict” about seatbelt laws.

A male in Independence felt people didn’t “pay too much attention to it” because the tickets are issued so infrequently. As he explained “like if the police pull somebody over every time they didn’t see them with their seatbelt on, I think people would start clicking their seatbelts; I would.” Teens pointed out that stronger law enforcement would also lead to better seatbelt habits, “if they were enforced when they were teenagers they’d still wear their seatbelt when they got older.”

Teens were also quick to offer suggestions on how seatbelt use could become more common. In Independence and Poplar Bluff, teens mentioned having police officers “just pull everybody [over] kind of like the sobriety checkpoints. In St. Louis City and in Hannibal, teens discussed putting “law enforcement more near high schools.” These suggestions could be negated, however, by the teens who talked about putting on a seatbelt only when they see a police officer.

Campaign Components

After discussing how teens make decisions to wear or not wear a seatbelt, the topic moved to how more teens could be influenced to wear a seatbelt. An unfortunate number of teens in all locations felt there was little that could be done to influence a teen to wear a seatbelt. Many teens suggested “start them off younger” because if outreach efforts focus on “12, 13, 14 year-olds” seatbelt use would “be something repetitive ... [and] natural.” Teens felt if the habit of seat belt use was not ingrained in a teen’s mind by driving age, media and outreach efforts would be fruitless. Despite this negative frame of mind, teens did have suggestions for improving campaign efforts for teens. These suggestions focused on providing more realism in media efforts, giving teens the statistics on the number or deaths or injuries that result from a lack of seatbelt use, and encouraging seatbelt use through positive reinforcement.

Providing more realism in media efforts was a strong theme in the focus groups. This realism can be divided into the distinct subgroups of seeing the damage to a human body, hearing the

stories of people who are hurt or disfigured, and understanding how a death hurts the people left behind. As a teen in Independence explained “scare tactics work more ... because here’s one of the strongest human emotions that can really make people change.” For media efforts, the teens wanted the messages to be “more realistic” to see “a body in one of the cars” or a “white sheet over a body” or “blood on the window.” As a female in St. Louis City stated, “put me in a car accident.” While it is hopeful an actual accident is not necessary, it may be possible to increase the level of realism in outreach efforts so teens can “feel” a car accident in a visual or emotional sense.

These visuals should also include people who have been injured in a vehicle accident. The teens wanted to see somebody “in a wheelchair,” “her whole face and glass eye” or “somebody who you can see a picture of, who has some sort of disfigurement, you’re gonna remember that.” Teens wanted to see “a car that was actually wrecked with someone that was saved by a seatbelt.” Part of this desire was a result of teens wanting “to know that if I don’t wear it, something bad’s gonna happen.” As a male in St. Louis City explained, “if they had firsthand knowledge of somebody that was affected by it helps more than just like the radio commercials that say, ‘Click it or ticket.’” Without these visuals, teens felt the outreach messages did not have enough of an impact to change behavior.

Hearing the story of a person who was hurt or “a relative of somebody who died” in a vehicle accident due to a lack of seatbelt use was another suggested method of reaching the teens. While school assemblies and presentations on safety were generally derided as being “boring,” teens tended to remember the speakers with first-hand knowledge of an issue.

Like when he was talking I was like man, that could have been, that could be me like, because he was popular, he was playing basketball for some big, he was like getting ready to go to college and play basketball and then all of a sudden he was just in a wheelchair.

Hearing someone talk about the death of a friend or relative was also seen as being more credible.

Like if somebody lost a – like I know I could do it, because my friend was hit. He was hit. And he flew out of the window because he didn’t have his seatbelt on. Like it would be more effective me going and talking to a group of teenagers, telling them how he died, and how he was only 23, than just somebody going and saying, “Hey, put your seatbelt on.”

Even with these suggestions, teens felt messages had to be consistent and frequently repeated in order to be effective. Media efforts have little lasting influence as described by a female in Poplar Bluff who stated “some person on TV saying something about wearing a seatbelt, yeah, you’re gonna remember it for 30 seconds after the commercial’s off” Others agreed that “you’re scared for a little while but then you just kind of forget about it.” Even the male who was impacted by the basketball player in a wheelchair indicated his seatbelt use went on “for like two weeks.” Even so, he also explained “that was the longest I ever went doing it every single day.”

Besides realism, teens were interested in having more specific information on seatbelt use. For example, teens wanted to know the exact percentage of lives that could be saved with seatbelts, not a general phrase like “most”. A teen in Hannibal described statistics as scary and discouraged outreach efforts with tactics such as “saying like ‘you should wear your seat belt’” and instead say “here is what the stats are.” In Kennett, a teen emphasized efforts should focus on “the dangers of not wearing seatbelts, kind of people have died and what’s the severity of not wearing seat belts” A female in Independence summed it up nicely by saying “I think if you give them facts people will” wear their seatbelts.

Celebrity endorsements received little support from the teens. While teens could list a number of celebrities (actors, singers, athletes) who could serve as a celebrity endorser for seatbelts, few viewed the celebrity as having the credibility necessary to send the message. A few celebrities who had a history of vehicle accidents (Lindsey Lohan) or had recently survived a major accident (Kayne West and Ben Roethlisberger) were viewed as slightly better candidates for the endorsement. One male in Poplar Bluff described the problem with celebrity endorsements in this manner:

I think most people – not that you’d have to have some kind of famous person tell you to buckle up than someone that’s actually got the experience. I think that would actually work more than a star trying to tell you to buckle up. ‘Cause to that, he just got paid just to tell someone to buckle up.

No matter how teens are reached – radio, billboards, or presentations – the key is to provide a level of realism that connects to the teens. Driver’s education videos were boring according to a participant in Kennett who “slept through over half of them.” School assemblies were also boring because a person can “just stand up there and talk the whole time.” Outreach efforts have “to be able to motivate” teens and provide the teens with credible information from trusted sources. A teen in Rolla also suggested radio and television media should be mindful of the target demographics schedule because “on week nights during that primetime slot there’s all kinds of school stuff going on.” The teens who participated in these focus groups were savvy media consumers and were not likely to react positively to commands or outreach efforts that underestimate their intelligence. As one teen in Rolla explained about public service announcements, “they try to be creative and funny but just come across completely stupid.”

A surprising number of teens wanted positive reinforcement for seatbelt use. Several teens suggest that “you could pay me for wearing my seatbelt” or provide a “get out of jail free” card for other offenses if the individual is wearing a seatbelt. In Hannibal, teens were pleased with a recent enforcement effort where each teen wearing a seatbelt received a LifeSavers candy. These teens felt that positive reinforcement for wearing a seatbelt could go a long way toward increasing seatbelt use.

Views on Billboard and Public Service Announcements

At each of the focus groups, the facilitator showed a color copy of two billboard designs and played radio ads used by MoDOT to encourage seatbelt use. Copies of the billboards are in Appendix C, and radio scripts are in Appendix F. Table 8 provides an overview of the general

reactions to each billboard and radio spot. In most locations, at least some of the teens recognized either a billboard or a radio ad, but for most teens the materials were generally new. As a result, many of the comments were largely based on first impressions.

Table 8: Overall Billboard and Radio Ad Assessment

Item	Comments
Arrive Alive Billboard	Confusion over image (bullet hole, spider web), but made you think
Truck Billboard	Better in rural areas, less so in urban areas
“Graduation”	Too narrow of appeal and graduation too late
“Everything But You”	Voice too perky or irritating
“Habit”	The most liked, but many thought she was an actress and it would work better if they knew she was “real”

Arrive Alive Billboard

The Arrive Alive billboard is an extreme close-up of a broken windshield with a hole. The billboard features the phrase “What’s stopping you” and the web address www.saveMOLives.com. In most locations, the billboard received a lukewarm response. Initially, teens thought the image was something other than a windshield. In Kennett, one teen echoed the feelings of other teens with his statement “It could have been a gunshot.” Other common misinterpretations described by the teens included a spider web or some kind of ball through the glass.

After closer examination, the teens determined the intention of the billboard (a head going through a windshield as a result of not buckling up). This lag in determining the message was deemed a serious flaw in the overall design of the billboard. Several teens pointed out that paying enough attention to the billboard to determine its meaning could result in an accident. Suggested improvements for the billboard included the addition of blood to the broken window or showing a body moving through the hole. Other teens suggested the image would be more quickly put into context if the picture included a larger portion of the windshield. A few also suggested different colors could improve immediate comprehension as the black background added to confusion. There is no clear recommendation, but the confusion should be noted.

Interestingly, despite the initial confusion, many teens admitted that once they understood the image the billboard was thought provoking. As a male in Independence explained, “My head going through a window, I’ll think about clicking.” The savemolives.com URL was also listed as a positive aspect of the billboard. Several participants suggested more could be made of the “Save MO lives” concept.

Truck Billboard

The Truck billboard features a photo of an upside down truck and the phrase “Pickups rock. They also roll.” Responses to this billboard varied by focus group with teens in urban areas less likely to react positively. In other areas of the state, the responses to the billboard were dependent on how teens identified with the vehicle. A male in Poplar Bluff liked the billboard because “I have a truck” while a teen in Rolla felt it was a wasted effort because “You’ve got to think about the kind of people who think pickups rock – Rednecks!”

While not all teens appreciated the billboard, many liked the slogan. The photo of the truck, however, was viewed as too stylized. The condition of the truck was also called into question in several locations as an accident a person “could have walked away from” rather than sustaining a serious injury. Teens suggested changing the blue background so the truck appeared “real” or as a teen in St. Louis City commented “They ought to put a dead body on here and then people would think about it.” Other teens suggested similar levels of realism in the billboard by including a body under a white sheet next to the truck or a truck with more damage. A few teens also felt it would be “cool” or more “eye-catching” if the billboards were 3-D with an actual car or body sticking out of the billboard. As one teen described, it is “more of seeing the body ejected from a vehicle.” It is difficult to gauge how much of an impact it would have relative to the cost, but it is innovative.

Impressions of Billboards

Overall, teens felt billboards could impact seatbelt use decisions. Several teens stated a billboard would remind them to latch a seatbelt if they had forgotten. Others referenced “billboards about young people who have had wrecks and died” as memorable. However, maintaining visibility with a billboard among teens would be difficult. As this male in St. Louis City explained he looks at a billboard “the first couple of times ... then I just ignore it every other time.”

In the discussion of billboards, some teens mentioned the variable message boards used near construction zones. These variable message boards attract the attention of many teens because the information may be related to road closings or construction. The safety messages displayed on some variable message boards, such as “Buckle Up” or “Click It or Ticket” are noticed by teen drivers. As one participant explained, “Every time I see those, I slow down to read ‘em, just because it might be something more important.” MoDOT owns and uses variable message boards on a regular basis. Including more safety messages on these boards may be a low cost method of increasing safety messages on seatbelt use. While these boards are not likely to influence hard-core non-users, the messages may be useful reminders to teens who simply forget or who are situational users.

Public Service Announcements

At each of the locations, the facilitator played two or three radio ads produced by MoDOT in the past year. The radio spots were played more than once if focus group participants indicated the audio was difficult to understand. The play order of each radio spot was varied by location so no ad was disadvantaged, and the number varied based on time available. Familiarity with the radio

spots varied by location, but for the majority of focus groups and individual participants, the radio spots were unknown.

Graduation

The *Graduation* radio spot is narrated by a female who describes how life can be cut short by a vehicle accident. The narrator asks the audience to wear a seatbelt because “saying good-bye at graduation is much easier than saying good-bye forever.” The graduation theme is emphasized with the use of a “Pomp and Circumstance” musical arrangement. After playing this radio spot, many teens laughed or groaned because of the narrator’s voice. The teens complained the tone of the voice was “too perky” for the serious nature of the message. Others felt the music alone would cause an immediate change to a different radio station.

The graduation theme also caused consternation for the teens. The theme appealed “more to seniors in high school than it would anybody else,” and was deemed too narrow an interest for teens in other grades. Recent seniors pointed out a graduation theme was inappropriate because “you hear a lot of stuff like that around graduation time and you just - it just goes in and runs together.” Others felt that a focus on seniors was wasted because “If you ain’t buckled your seatbelt since you was a freshman, why would you buckle it up now, now that you’re a senior?” Another participant in St. Louis added to this line of reasoning with this statement: “Well you think - and I’ve never gotten in an accident, never got pulled over. Then it hit me like – why start now, essentially?” A teen in Poplar Bluff summed up the sentiments of many by stating “I think it would be better to start younger.”

Everything But You

The *Everything But You* radio spot is narrated by the same female voice as the *Graduation* radio ad described above. In this public service announcement, the narrator describes how items typically placed in a car have individual locations. For example, a soda is placed in a cup holder. The question posed by the narrator is what is stopping you from flying forward in an accident?

While generally better received than the *Graduation* radio spot, teens continued to be irritated by the female narrator’s voice. As a participant in Rolla described, “it just sounded too cute. Like high pitch or something that’s not pleasing.” The message presented in this radio spot had more appeal to most teens. Many were intrigued by the concept of individuals worrying more about securing personal objects than about securing their own body. A male in Kansas City stated he particularly liked the phrase “things go flying.”

Habit

Unlike the two previously discussed radio spots, the *Habit* public service announcement features a teen who survived a car accident. In the audio, the teen describes herself as a volleyball player who was on the way home from practice when she was hit by a drunk driver. After this accident, the teen has a “habit” of hooking her seatbelt each time she gets in the car.

The *Habit* radio spot was the most universally liked public service announcement for focus group participants. While the voice was deemed undesirable by some, most felt the radio spot succeed due to the realism of the story. In Farmington, where teens were familiar with the story portrayed in the audio, the positive reactions were strong. Although some teens initially doubted the narrator was a “real” teen, the actions described in the radio spot were familiar and could be related to a teen’s every day activities. As a female in Poplar Bluff explained:

I think that touches more on a range of people. It’s not just graduating seniors. It’s – and I think you could apply it towards any activity that you do regularly, whether it be sports or just different things ... things you do in general. You know? She probably drove to her own sporting events daily, just like we would drive to a grocery store or gas station. It’s like more of a daily thing. It’s regular, not graduating. - Poplar Bluff

For teens who did not immediately understand that the narrator was not a paid actor, learning the teen actually lives in Missouri and was in a vehicle accident vastly improved their perception of the radio spot. These teens suggested the ad would be more appealing if the narrator provided her name, grade level, and school at the beginning of the public service announcement so the realism could be increased.

Radio Outreach Methods

Of the three radio spots played in the focus groups, teens preferred the *Habit* public service announcement. The connection to every day events and the use of a “real” teen were important elements in the success of this radio spot. The content of the *Everything But You* radio spot was thought provoking, but the *Graduation* radio spot was disliked by a majority of teens.

The voices of the narrators in the public service announcement were commonly disliked. While some female respondents were more favorable to the voices, the general consensus of the focus group participants was the voices seemed too “perky,” too “high-pitched,” and “not serious enough.” Teens willingly provided ideas for improving the narrators. A few participants proposed using an individual with a British accent while others felt a “gangsta” voice would be more likely to catch their attention. A female in St. Louis City declared, “they should have like a scary voice, or like a more demanding – something bad will happen.” A stronger voice was desired for the narrator, but most teens felt having “someone like them” narrate the commercial (based on an actual experience) would have the most impact.

Despite offering many ideas for improving the radio spots, teen comments suggest few listen to commercial radio. Many teens rely on MP3 players, satellite radio, or direct-feed audio over the internet. Radios were also judged as a poor outreach strategy when compared to television as conveyed in the following comment: “Put it on TV. I mean, everybody watches TV.” If a teen listens to the radio, many change to another station as soon as a commercial is aired. The few times teens do listen to public service announcements, the presentation is considered “corny” and dry. The radio spots presented to the teens during the focus groups did not change this image of public service announcements. In the future, MoDOT may want to reconsider the heavy reliance on radio campaigns when attempting to reach teens.

Incentives

Each of the incentive items was passed around the focus group so all participants could have a chance to review the item. The order of the incentive items varied by location so no one item would be disadvantaged by placement. After reviewing one item, the focus group participants were asked for reactions, the level of appeal for the item, and suggestions for improvement. Each incentive item was received with varying degrees of satisfaction. Table 9 provides a summary of the overall satisfaction with each item. The paragraphs following the table provide comments on the reaction and appeal of the incentives.

Table 9: Overall incentive satisfaction

Item	Yes	No	Depends	Notes
Bracelet			✓	Mixed reactions, but many kept one
CD case		✓		Item is dated, message mixed and too long
Sunglass clip		✓		Not for this age bracket, hard to read
Mirror	✓			Humor appreciated; females more likely to use than males
T-shirt	✓✓✓			It looks alright or cool; Like both sides; Buckle Up slogan especially noted; Free t-shirts always welcome

Bracelet

Reactions to the blue rubber bracelet engraved with the “Arrive Alive” slogan were decidedly mixed. Teens in all locations were familiar with the concept of campaign bracelets and many owned a *Live Strong* cancer awareness bracelet. In Kansas City, St. Louis City, and Kennett the teens were enthusiastic about the bracelets. In other locations, the bracelets were viewed as being out-of-style, especially by the older teens. Several teens mentioned the bracelets remain popular with younger siblings or relatives. This view was supported by the 10- to 14-year-old focus group participants in Springfield who were eager to have the bracelet. While the bracelet may not reach the intended demographic in all locations, a teen in St. Louis described the value of distributing the bracelet to children in a younger age bracket:

But that counts with like the younger kids – getting them to buckle when they’re a passenger, and then continue when they’re a driver. Because it would make them think about buckling up when they’re just driving with their parents, and their friends’ parents. And then they’re gonna think about that more when they start driving themselves. - St Louis, male

Overall, the bracelet was not a favorite incentive item for the focus group participants, but the potential value to younger audience means the item should not be completely discounted.

CD Case

The navy blue CD case imprinted with the slogan “What if everyone drove like you?” received negative reviews from most focus group participants. Teens were not fond of the CD case as an item to be marketed to teens as most viewed it as an item for old people to use. Many teens mentioned CD cases are dated due to the high use of MP3 players, such as iPods, that plug directly into car stereos. Several teens advocated a “lighter color than dark gray or brighter writing cause nobody’s gonna be able to read it from a couple feet away.”

The message imprinted on the CD case created varied reactions. Some teens felt the message was overly complicated and confusing. Most were fond of the concept behind the imprinted message but felt it was lost by the number of words on the CD case. As a male in St. Louis City explained, “It makes you wonder a little bit [but] I don’t see who’d have time to read it.” A participant in Kennett felt the CD case made you think about your own driving, “So if you’re driving horribly then just think about everybody driving like you, have a lot of accidents.” But, the participant in Kennett continued, “If you ask me, [it] suggests nothing about seatbelts.” The lack of a seatbelt message was viewed as negative by a female in St. Louis City as well as described in her comments: “But that only appeals to people who drive. And I don’t drive. So that wouldn’t mean nothing to me. Because I don’t have to worry about it.”

One possibility that occurred in several locations was offering a CD case that attaches to the visor of a vehicle. Several participants mentioned that a sun visor CD case would actually be safer than a zippered case because a person could cause an accident while trying to remove an item. Even if a teen would use such an item, which many stated they would not, the CD case still lacked strong appeal.

Sunglasses Clip

Of the five incentive items, the sunglasses clip was the least liked. Teens in most locations did not know what the item was without examining the pictures on the outside of the box. Teens seemed surprised that a sunglasses clip would be marketed to their age bracket. A male in Independence explained “It’s for the older – Not the older but the more aged people. Because I – I’d give it to my grandma.” A female in St. Louis flatly stated “Ain’t nobody gonna like that” while a male in Rolla simply said “Not in this age bracket.”

The design of the sunglasses clip also lacked appeal. The color was boring and the lettering was difficult to read. Several teens expressed a preference for the zebra striped sunglasses clip shown on the box over the dark blue one in the box.

One possible explanation for this lack of appeal is the type of sunglasses teens typically wear. Teens who wear sunglasses tend to wear inexpensive ones and have multiple styles. Teens who wear prescription eyewear use “transition” lens and have no need for a sunglasses clip. Also, many teenage girls are now wearing large glasses that would not fit in the clip. When it came to incentive items, teens agreed “Pretty much everything except for the sunglasses clip thing.” Should MODOT decide to continue the distribution of these items to teens, the sunglasses clip would need to be a brighter color with clearer lettering.

Mirror

The mirror was received positively by each group around the state with comments suggesting that the balance between humor and seriousness was attractive. Commonly, when the teens saw it, they laughed, mentioned it was insulting in a funny way, and stated they would use it. One person in Poplar Bluff said, “It’s a joke, but they still have you looking at yourself, and it’s making it personal. It’s not anybody else.” Someone else commented that it was “catchy,” and another said it is “like an inside joke or something. Like now I’m just gonna tell her randomly, ‘save your ugly face’.”

Boys generally would use it as a joke in their locker and girls would use it for the humor value and as a mirror. Several teens mentioned that other teens would see it in their locker and think it was funny. For example, one teen said “so they’re always – like people always walk around. And they’re like, ‘oh look at all the pictures.’ And then they see like I had a mirror there too ... and I’d be like, ‘Read what that says’.” One teen in St Louis mentioned she would emphasize the message about the importance of seat belts to her friends because of the mirror.

Many suggested limitations of the item. For example, the mirror would not be particularly effective for anyone out of high school. Also, they thought it was less effective because it was too removed from driving activity. As one Independence female commented, “Well, you don’t need to buckle up when you go to your locker, okay?” Some also expressed that there was no easy way to use it in the car (such as attaching it to a visor) or to take it in a purse (like a compact). Overall, most of the teens took a mirror with them at the end of the session.

T-Shirt

The t-shirt was the single most popular item by far, and it extended to all groups and both genders. Everyone expressed enthusiasm about a free shirt, and some immediately put it on while others said they would wear it the next day. Some even asked for an extra for a sibling or friend. They liked the design and the message. Some teens mentioned that they liked the “Buckle Up” slogan on the back of the shirt calling it “catchy.” As one male in St. Louis City said, “It looks alright – especially the little buckle up part.” They all agreed that most teens would welcome such a shirt. A male in Rolla said, “Yeah, free t-shirts are appreciated. Yeah.”

They also offered some suggestions for improvement or for distribution of the shirts. A common theme was that it could be in different colors, especially bright colors. One female in St. Louis said “Like if you go around the schools like – don’t give like – if there’s like two schools that are by each other, don’t give them the same thing. Give ‘em different things.” Others wanted different colors available at the same time in one location.

Many of the teens liked the double meaning of the phrase “Save MO lives,” and they thought it could be used on the shirts too. One male in St. Louis argued, “Can you get the savemorelives.com on it? Like if they know the website, they probably go to it.” Another male in Rolla had a more comprehensive plan that also used the slogan.

Yeah. Just have a random - they could make it like decide on ten different designs that they want to produce and just, you know, throw out a bunch of just

little random things but tie them all together somehow, you know, like Save Mo Lives, put that on every single one of them. On the back, lower part, you know, just so everybody knows it's all – because whenever you have a big campaign that's being swamped, you know, like a bunch of stuff that's all related but not – like the shirts all look different but it's all for the same cause. - Rolla, male

Clearly, the t-shirts were popular, and distribution of the shirts in a mass quantity at a school would result in walking advertisements for the slogans. The designer of the current shirt was able to get the look right, and additional designs with other slogans and the Save Mo Lives slogan or website address appear to have considerable potential. Almost all participants suggested handing out the t-shirts at various school or community events, and it could be done at any time for low cost relative to many advertising methods.

Overall thoughts on incentive items

The media savvy of these teens was evident in their desire to maintain consistency across the messages on the incentive items. The teens encouraged branding of outreach efforts on seatbelt use and suggested the use of consistent colors. The teens also stated the “Arrive Alive” and “Click-it-or-ticket” campaigns are easily identifiable and memorable. Many of the participants noted that they had seen or heard these slogans in multiple places, including school, radio, road signs, t-shirts, bracelets, etc. As one female in St. Louis City clarified, “once you read something, it sticks in your mind. And you’ll think about it like every once in a while or something.” Several participants suggested including the “Save MO lives” internet address on more incentive items including the t-shirts. Overall, the more that MoDOT can do to keep the message consistent and commonplace, the better the message is received by Missouri teens.

Conclusions

The purpose of this report is to identify patterns that emerged from a series of focus groups with teenagers from around the state of Missouri and to draw implications for state efforts to enhance traffic safety. Twelve focus groups were held, and the vast majority of the more than 100 participants were in the 15 to 19 year old age range, and most had at least a driving permit. Generally speaking, three distinct groups of teens of basically equal size (with some variations by location) emerged in the analysis of the focus group data. The first group includes regular users of seatbelts who have heard safety messages and incorporated these messages into their beliefs and actions. These teens wear seatbelts on most occasions, often encourage others to do so, and are reasonably well informed on traffic safety. Unfortunately, a similarly sized group of teens are quite resistant to the use of seatbelts and tend to either disregard or even refute basic public safety arguments about seatbelts. This group is clearly the most difficult to reach with media or other outreach campaigns. The remaining group is somewhere in the middle and could be viewed as situational users of seatbelts. These teens tend to accept the message that seatbelts enhance safety, but they choose not to use seatbelts under a variety of conditions. Clearly, outreach efforts have the greatest potential for affecting change within this final group.

A number of trends emerged in the discussions with the teens. First, seatbelt habits are formed much earlier than driving age so efforts to change behavior need to be directed to children and young teens. Most of the participants remembered using seatbelts or booster seats as children (or observed infant seat use by younger siblings) so there is clearly a foundation upon which to build, but at some point (typically reported to be in the 10- to 14-year-old range) substantial numbers change that behavior. Many of the focus group participants stated outreach efforts to teens were already a lost cause because seatbelt habits are set at a younger age. Clearly, some of this belief relates to teen rebellion and peer pressure, but much of the belief is rooted in a lack of information and understanding about seatbelt use that can be countered with effective outreach campaigns.

A second related observation is that parents matter in a number of ways. First, the parents can be pivotal in maintaining seatbelt use during the danger zone of the pre-teens and young teens. Second, parental seatbelt use sets an important example that children notice. Parental use is not always emulated by teens, but non-use certainly appears to be more closely imitated. This trend holds for other public health areas such as smoking, and it certainly supports the use of outreach campaigns that remind parents about who is watching their actions.

The discussions also suggested that urban legends about seatbelts are firmly rooted in Missouri culture and that these beliefs may contribute to low seatbelt usage rates. At nearly every location, the facilitators heard stories about how seatbelts could kill someone, such as tearing someone in half, damaging major organs, trapping the occupant in water or a fire, and other such calamities. Further, many teens have a fundamental misunderstanding of how basic physics work in an accident. For example, some believe a vehicle with more people would be too heavy to flip over so seatbelts are not needed, and others think they would have enough reaction time in an accident to protect themselves. To make matters worse, many teens have little sense of the proportions involved in accidents. As a result, one story on the Weather Channel about someone trapped in a car has equal weight with the thousands of lives saved by seatbelts. Reminders to wear seatbelts and stories attempting to scare them straight will work for some situational users, but outreach efforts will have to more directly confront these misunderstandings to have much effect with those teens (and likely some adults) who persist in these beliefs. The mistaken notions may be no more than rationalizations of behavior for some, but for many these views are more central to their decision-making. Outreach efforts that counter these beliefs have the potential for greater impact.

The teens also expressed some clear views on how media campaigns promoting traffic safety should be conducted. First, realism is vital in any outreach effort. At every location, teens expressed several related themes on realism. Many stated that they want to know the facts, and that a number or two would be good to make a point rather than just saying “most” or “many.” In addition, they prefer real people in their age group who have relevant experiences to talk about traffic safety in ads or school programs, and celebrities are less meaningful unless they have some relevant experience. Finally, they want less stylized ads or billboards, and they want edgier, more realistic ads that show actual accidents and the full consequences.

Teens’ use of radio also suggests another important issue related to outreach efforts. Teens are using MP3 players, satellite radio, and the Internet to tailor their own music listening, and are

increasingly eschewing local radio stations. Clearly, technology is more readily available to teens from wealthier families in urban or suburban areas, but teens from all areas of the state and a variety of backgrounds indicated preferences for these technologies over local radio. Further, they indicated a strong tendency to flip the channel whenever advertisements are aired on local radio. This behavior suggests that radio may not be the best medium for influencing teens and young adults.

The teens suggested a variety of alternative mechanisms for reaching their age group. Some suggestions were more expensive, such as greater use of TV or special events with major celebrities, but many were reasonably priced local alternatives. For example, many teens indicated that school assemblies can be “boring” or “lame,” but they also remembered particular sessions involving someone who related a personal experience with crime, drugs, or traffic safety. Many stressed the need for interactive presentations or demonstrations. Some talked about crash reenactments at school, the possible use of simulators, and other hands-on learning activities. A major criticism was that often these events were aimed at high school seniors and that they should be directed at younger students.

A majority of the teens regularly use the Internet, and they suggested some potential for outreach efforts on the web. For example, some schools have their own web page for school activities, calendars, and announcements, and many students use Facebook or MySpace web pages and IM software to communicate with each other. Further, many use various web sites that allow downloads of music or games, and they saw potential there. School principals may be able to help district managers to identify web opportunities. One major concern is to avoid the use of pop-ups because these teens regularly use software to block this form of advertising. Even teens who do not use this software were universal in their distaste for pop-up marketing efforts.

One other affordable suggestion prevalent in local media markets are the ads shown prior to movies. Most teens go to movies, and they are essentially a captive audience for a few minutes. The teens suggested more active ads rather than silent billboard types, but most who mentioned this medium admitted to watching the static advertising.

Unfortunately, even the best outreach efforts will not change attitudes or behaviors for some non-users. One Independence male said “If I was reminded all the time I probably would click my seatbelt on the ride home because we’ve been talking about it all day. But like tomorrow when I wake up, I’ll probably forget.” A Kennett female pushed it even further when she said that “I think for me to wear my seatbelt all the time I’d probably have to get in an accident.” Clearly, personal experience will be the only decisive factor for her.

For many of the hard core non-users, outreach efforts do not matter so stronger law enforcement is the key to behavioral change. Many participants expressed a concern with getting a ticket or a desire to avoid being “hassled by cops,” but they also do not believe law enforcement cares much about the issue. Part of the problem is the perception that police officers do not want to take time to do “all of the paperwork” and that it is “not a big thing” to officers. Perhaps more of a problem is the contradiction between the tough enforcement implied by a “Click It or Ticket” campaign and the limitations on enforcement associated with secondary enforcement of the seatbelt law. Teens know they have driven by law officers and not received tickets so they may

perceive indifference rather than understanding that the officer is limited by secondary enforcement.

Finally, few teens know of anyone who has received a seatbelt ticket. The confusion over the law that contributes to their inflated sense of the fine may increase seatbelt use, but their perception of lax enforcement clearly reduces their seatbelt use. To increase seatbelt use, law enforcement officers should be encouraged to issue citations when appropriate, but passage of a primary enforcement seatbelt law appears to be a more important component in changing perceptions that wearing a seatbelt is the law in Missouri.

Appendix A: Focus Group Discussion Guide⁴

I. INTRODUCTION

- ◆ Explain the purpose and process of the focus groups.

My name is [MODERATOR], and I'm here today on behalf of the University of Missouri. We have been asked to talk with you about how teens make driving decisions. We are very glad you were able to come, because your opinions and experiences are very important in helping us and others in the state understand what type of information is most helpful to teens when making driving decisions. Your participation in this discussion is voluntary, and if, at any time you do not feel comfortable, you are free to leave. There are no personal risks to you for participating in this discussion.

The note taker [INSERT NAME] is passing out a consent document with my contact information and the contact information for the MU IRB office. Please feel to contact me or the IRB office if you have any questions about your participation. This document is for you to take with you.

I hope we will be able to have an informal discussion, and that everyone will speak up and say what they think. We want to hear your honest opinions about these topics. There is no right or wrong answer. Because we want to hear what you really think, please feel free to agree or disagree with what other participants have said. Sometimes you may want to tell us about the experiences of other people that you know.

Please speak loudly and clearly so that everyone in the group can hear you. Also, because everything you say is important, I ask that you speak one-at-a-time and avoid side conversations. As you can see, we will be taping this discussion to make sure that we know exactly what everyone has said. We will do a written transcription from these tapes, but the transcription will not include your name. We will assign everyone a number, and that number will be used in the transcription so that everything you say is confidential, and can not be matched to you.

We have refreshments for you, so please just get up when you need something. We will talk together for about two hours and then we'll ask you to fill out a very short, anonymous form so that we know a little bit about the people in the audience when we are reviewing the tapes.

If you have any questions or suggestions regarding the study, please feel free to contact Lilliard Richardson by phone at 573-884-3381 or by e-mail at ipp@missouri.edu. For additional information regarding human participation in research, contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board Office at 573-882-9585.

⁴ Adapted from: a.) Nitzburg, Marsha and Knoblauch, Richard, *Rural Pickup Truck Drivers and Safety Belt Use: Focus Group Report*, U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT HS 809 711 May 2004 and b.) Panlener, Juanita C. and Lisboa-Farrow, Elizabeth, *Program Strategies for Increasing Safety Belt Usage in Rural Areas*, U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, DOT HS 808 505, July 1996.

Do you have any questions before we start?

As I said earlier, my name is [MODERATOR]. Let's go around the room now and have everyone introduce themselves by telling us your first name and your age.

◆ Respondents introduce themselves by providing:

- Name
- Age

II. ATTITUDES TOWARDS SAFETY MEASURES

◆ Are you concerned about safety?

◆ What are some safety issues you think about? Why do you think about those safety issues?

- What are examples of things you do to promote safety in these areas?
- How did you learn about these things?

◆ Are there any safety measures you know about but just don't do? What/Why not?

◆ How do you feel about seat belts?

(Stress that this part of conversation has nothing to do with whether they use seat belts or not, just attitudes)

- Do you feel seat belts are important to safety? Why/Why not?
- Who needs them?

◆ What are the laws regarding seat belts? (PROBE: Adults versus teens)

◆ How do you feel about these laws? (PROBE: Adults versus teens)

- What should the laws be? Why?

III. SAFETY BELT UTILIZATION

◆ How often do you use seat belts?

◆ We know everyone doesn't always wear a seatbelt. When was the last time you didn't? Why?

- When was the last time you didn't wear your seatbelt when you were driving?

◆ What kind of things impact whether or not you use seat belts?

(PROBE: children, other passengers, distance, highway, city, policemen, State laws, fines, and likelihood of being stopped)

- ◆ Are you any more or less likely to use seat belts if you are in a vehicle with your parents?
 - With other adults?
 - With your friends?
 - By yourself?
- ◆ What are some things that keep you from wearing a seat belt?
 - Did you wear seat belts as a child?
- ◆ What are some of the reasons why you use seat belts?
(Safer if in a crash, bad weather, parents make me, reminder of passenger, set good example for others, don't want a ticket, it's the law)
- ◆ How would you describe a person who typically uses a seat belt?
- ◆ How would you describe a person who typically DOES NOT use a seat belt?

IV. CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS

- ◆ What kind of things need to be, or could be, done to get you to wear seat belts more often?
- ◆ If it were your job, how would you get people to use seat belts more often?
 - What would be the theme, message, motivation?
 - How would you get the word out? (i.e. TV, print, radio, schools, church, special events) (one or many ways?)
- ◆ What aspects of an effort to get people like you to use a seat belt more often has the potential to motivate your friends to use seatbelts?
- ◆ Are there any strategies or methods that really turn you off, or should be avoided, in an effort to get you to use seat belts more often?
- ◆ Should the seat belt effort be different for teenagers vs. adults?

V. CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

DISPLAY THE ARTWORK FROM ONE OF THE CAMPAIGNS

- ◆ Several seatbelt campaigns have been developed to promote the use of seatbelts for teens. I am going to present them to you one-at-a-time and ask about your reaction to each. Have you heard or seen this message?

- What do you picture or imagine when you see this slogan?
 - Does this slogan appeal to you? If so, how?
 - What problems might be associated with using this slogan?
 - How would you improve this slogan?
- ◆ After seeing these messages, which appeals most to you? What makes it appealing?
- Which would be your second choice? Why?
 - Which would be your third choice? Why?
- ◆ Use your imagination again. What are some other ways to present the message about the importance of using seatbelts that would be appealing to you?
- How would you get the word out?

VI. SPOKESPERSON FOR PSAs

Moderator displays a sheet with the letters PSA in large print.

Does anyone know what this means? (If no or yes, continue) You have all probably at one time heard or seen a public service announcement (PSA). A PSA is intended to get your attention and provide you with information about an important issue. Typically, a person who is well-known, well-liked, popular and respected by the audience is chosen to deliver the message in the PSA. If you were to select people to talk about the importance of always using a seat belt, whom would you recommend? Remember, the people chosen have to “connect” with the audience, who in this situation are teens between the ages of 15 and 19 years old.

VI. CAMPAIGN INCENTIVE ITEMS

DISPLAY ONE OF THE INCENTIVE ITEMS

- ◆ Several incentive items have been developed to promote the use of seatbelts for teens. I am going to present them to you one-at-a-time and ask about your reaction to each. Have you heard or seen this incentive item?
- What do you picture or imagine when you see this incentive item?
 - Does this incentive item appeal to you? If so, how?
 - What problems might be associated with using this incentive item?
- ◆ After seeing these incentive items, which appeals most to you? Why?
- ◆ Use your imagination again. What are some other incentive items about the importance of using seatbelts would be the most appealing to you?

- How would you distribute these items?

VII. FINAL THOUGHTS

You have seen a lot of different materials and discussed some ways we might be able to encourage teenagers to wear seatbelts. What final thoughts do you have about what is needed for an effective program to encourage you to wear your seatbelt?

VII. CLOSING

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with us today. Before closing, do you have any additional comments that you would like to offer about the topics we discussed? (If not, conclude the session; if so, briefly allow further discussion.) Again, thank you for your assistance.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form For Participants



Institute of Public Policy
Truman School of Public Affairs
University of Missouri-Columbia

137 Middlebush Hall
Columbia, MO 65211-6100
PHONE (573) 884-3381
FAX (573) 884-4872
E-MAIL truman@missouri.edu

Informed Consent

Overview

We are visiting 12 locations around Missouri to conduct focus groups with 15-19 year olds regarding teen attitudes and behaviors regarding traffic safety. We are working with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT) on this project.

Focus Group Participant Information

- Participating in this focus group is your choice
- You do not have to answer all questions
- Your answers will not identify you
- No identifying characteristics will be asked of the participants. For conversational purposes we will go by the name the participant provides.
- The results from this project will be used to help teens make good driving choices.

Benefits and Risks

Results from this study will be used by MODOT staff to help them design effective public service announcements. There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact Dr. Lilliard Richardson at 573-884-3381. For additional information regarding human participation in research, contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review Board Office at 573-882-9585.

Appendix C: Billboards



**Pickups rock.
They also roll.
Buckle up!**

www.saveMOLives.com **ARRIVE ALIVE**

**What's
stopping
you?**



Buckle up!

www.saveMOLives.com **ARRIVE ALIVE**

Appendix D: Incentives

Bracelet



T-shirt front



T-shirt back



Mirror



Sunglass clip



CD case



Appendix E: Teen Driving Survey

Teen Driving Survey

1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Seat belts are just as likely to harm you as help you.	1	2	3	4	5
Police in my community generally will not bother to write tickets for seat belt violations.	1	2	3	4	5
If I were in an accident, I would want to have my seat belt on.	1	2	3	4	5
Police in my community are writing more seat belt tickets now than they were a few months ago.	1	2	3	4	5
Missouri Highway Patrol strictly enforces the seat belt law.	1	2	3	4	5
Local police departments strictly enforce the seat belt law.	1	2	3	4	5
Work zones make driving more hazardous.	1	2	3	4	5
I drive more slowly when workers are present at a work zone.	1	2	3	4	5
Police strictly enforce traffic laws in work zones.	1	2	3	4	5

2. In the past 6 months, has your use of seat belts increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

- Decreased significantly
- Decreased
- Stayed the same
- Increased
- Increased significantly

3. When was the last time you did NOT wear your seat belt when driving?

- Today
- In the past week
- In the past two weeks
- In the past month
- In the past year
- I always wear my seat belt
- New driver

4. When was the last time you did NOT wear your seat belt when you were riding with someone else?

- Today
- In the past week
- In the past two weeks
- In the past month
- In the past year
- I always wear my seat belt

5. What do you think the chances are of getting a ticket if you don't wear your seat belt?

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

Continued on other side



6. Now, assume that you do not wear your seat belt AT ALL while driving over the next six months. How likely do you think you will be to receive a ticket for not wearing a seat belt?

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

7. According to state law, can police stop a vehicle driven by a teenager if they observe a seat belt violation when no other traffic laws are being broken?

- Yes
- No

8. Have you ever received a ticket for not wearing your seat belt?

- Yes
- No

9. How many people do you know who have received a ticket for not wearing their seat belt?

- None
- One
- A few
- Many

10. How likely are you to see law enforcement while driving through a work zone?

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely

11. When driving how often do you talk on a cell phone?

- Often
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never
- New driver

12. Have you recently read, seen or heard anything about the enforcement of seat belts in Missouri?

- Yes
- No

If yes, where did you see or hear about it.

Please check all that apply.

- Newspaper
- Radio
- TV
- Poster/Brochure
- Other _____

13. Do you know the name of any seat belt enforcement program(s) in Missouri?

Please check all that apply.

- No Excuses, Buckle Up
- Buckle Up Missouri
- Operation Safe Teen
- Seat Belts, Do or Die
- Arrive Alive
- Teens with Class Buckle Up

14. What is your current age?

- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18

15. In what 5 digit zip code do you live?

16. Are you...

- Female
- Male

17. What is the primary vehicle you are driving or plan on driving?

- Car
- Motorcycle
- Pickup truck
- SUV
- Van
- Other _____

18. Which ethnic category best describes you?

- White
- Black
- Asian
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Hispanic
- Other _____

Appendix F: Radio Scripts

Prom/ Graduation Accessory

(Graduation Music)

Announcer: Want to know the coolest thing you can wear to graduation this year?

- *(Click sound effect)* Your seatbelt.
- You've just finished 4 grueling years in high school and it could all be for nothing *(Sound effect of a crash)* if you don't wear that belt.
- Graduation is a time to say goodbye for awhile...not forever.
- Remember...buckle up *(Sound effect of a seat belt click)* and ARRIVE ALIVE.
- A message from the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety. Learn more at [savemolives dot com](http://savemolives.com).

Youth – Everything but you

(Sound effects of the interior of the car, music playing, etc)

Announcer 1: So, the cup holder stops your 44-ounce big slurp from spilling all over the front seat. You've got that visor thingy to keep your CDs from getting scratched and your cell phone is in a cubby hole on the dash. But in a crash, everything goes flying, including you.

If you're not buckled up...

(Crash sound effect)

...what's stopping you?

Announcer 2: Arrive Alive. A message from the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety.

I have a habit

(Establish volleyball game sound effects)

Announcer 1: Hi, I'm Rachel, 16, setter for the varsity volley ball team, and I have a habit.

- *(Crash sound effect)*

Announcer 1: On October 17 my car was struck broadside, inches from where I sat with my seatbelt on. You see, that's my habit. Whether I'm riding or driving I always buckle up. My volleyball season was cut short, but my life wasn't. I'll play again next season because I took an extra moment to click.

- *(Click sound effect)*

Announcer 1: Buckle up and arrive alive.

Announcer 2: A message from the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety.