



NEWS RELEASE

Chuck Wolfe
Chuck.Wolfe@ky.gov
Erin Eggen
Erin.Eggen@ky.gov
Office of Public Affairs
502.564.3419

For Immediate Release
Aug. 5, 2013

Law enforcement officers, agencies honored for seat belt and child restraint enforcement

Ceremony salutes efforts to save lives on Kentucky roadways

FRANKFORT, Ky. — The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety (KOHS) today honored 140 law enforcement officers from 123 agencies across the Commonwealth for their efforts to increase the use of seat belts and child restraints in motor vehicles.

The third annual Governor's Occupant Protection Awards ceremony was held at the Marriott Downtown Louisville. Awards were presented to officers with the most occupant protection citations in each agency and division. There are six divisions, broken down by number of officers within the agency, plus a division for Kentucky State Police.

“Despite a wealth of data showing that seat belts and child restraints save lives, each year hundreds of unrestrained motorists lose their lives on Kentucky roadways,” said KOHS Director Bill Bell, who presented the awards. “These officers, their departments and agencies render a great service for public safety by enforcing our occupant protection laws.”

There were 746 total highway fatalities in Kentucky in 2012, with 592 killed in motor vehicles. Sixty-two percent of those killed in motor vehicles were not wearing a seat belt.

“Our law enforcement is making a difference, as Kentucky's seat belt usage rate increased by 1.5 percentage points in 2012 – to 83.7 percent from 82.2 percent in 2011,” said Bell. “However, there is still a great deal of work to be done. One fatality is too many.”

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), seat belts, when worn correctly, are proven to reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat occupants by 45 percent – and by 60 percent in pickup trucks, SUVs and minivans. Also according to NHTSA, child restraints reduce the risk of fatal injury by 71 percent for infants and by 54 percent for toddlers in passenger cars and by 58 percent and 59 percent, respectively, in light trucks.



###

NOTE TO EDITORS: Attached spreadsheets identify individual and division award recipients. Photos of award recipients can be viewed on [Governor Beshear's Flickr page](#) by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 6.