



# Teens in the Driver Seat®

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

DECEMBER 2007

## Teen drivers in the dark about greatest risk, survey shows

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**AUSTIN, Texas** – Just days before turning back clocks for the annual end of Daylight Saving Time, the Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) Center of the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) released its findings highlighting Texas teen knowledge and behavior of dangerous driving factors. The most comprehensive teen driving study to date in Texas reveals that young drivers aren't even aware of the dangers.

TDS spokespersons, Tabitha Zant and Krizia Martinez, gathered at the State Capitol in Austin, Texas, to bring new insight to the number-one cause of death for teenagers in the United States.

TTI researchers surveyed more than 4,400 teens at 17 Texas high schools over the past year. Snapshots of the results include:

- Fewer than 1 percent of Texas teens understand that driving at night is unsafe, while more than half say they routinely drive after 10 p.m.
- Only a third of teens recognize that it's dangerous to talk or text on a cell phone while they drive, and roughly half of them admit to doing so frequently.
- 72 percent of teens cite alcohol or drug use more often than any other risk factor, even though those factors rank fifth on the list of crash causes.

Car crashes kill about 6,000 teens nationwide each year, with Texas accounting for some 500 of that total, in what has been increasingly



**Pictured from Left to Right:**  
State Senator Kirk Watson, TxDOT  
Commissioner Hope Andrade,  
Tabitha Zant, and Krizia Martinez.

described as an "epidemic" in recent years.

Researchers say the crashes are caused primarily by inexperience combined with one or more of the five risk factors, in this order of frequency:

- 1) driving at night,
- 2) distractions (cell phones/texting and other teen passengers),
- 3) speeding,
- 4) low seat belt use, and
- 5) alcohol.

Fewer than 40 percent of the students surveyed could name three of the risks correctly, 10 percent were able to name four, and fewer than 1 percent could name all five.

"Nighttime driving is at the top of the danger list, but it's at the bottom of the awareness list," says Martinez. "We're working to change that, because if we can help other young drivers really understand the dangers

they face, we can help them drive more safely." TDS involves young drivers directly in the development and in the delivery of safety messages.

State Senator Kirk Watson, TxDOT Commissioner Hope Andrade and TTI Director Dennis Christiansen, added remarks on importance of teen driving safety, and the role of teens in "peer-to-peer education."

"Most of the time, teens don't listen to adults, but we will listen to each other," quoted Zant, a teen at Mason High School's TDS program.

Funding from the Texas Department of Transportation and State Farm Insurance of Texas makes the program available to all Texas high school teens at no cost.



**"Nighttime driving is at the top of the danger list," says Martinez.**

# Crossing State Lines



Duluth High School students hosting press conference

**DULUTH, Georgia** – Students at Duluth High School held a press conference to highlight their school's lack of awareness on the top five teen driving risks and driving behavior. Here are just a few of the points:

- Fewer than 1 percent of the teens surveyed understand that driving at night is unsafe, while almost a fourth of them say they routinely drive after 10 p.m.
- Roughly one-fourth of teens recognize that it's dangerous to talk or text on a cell phone while they

drive, and the same percentage admits to doing so frequently.

- Only one-fourth of young drivers say they are very familiar with the Georgia Graduated Licensing Law, and more than half say that the law has had no impact on their driving habits.

The study findings come from the 1,100 student surveys administered at the high school.

Duluth High School is the first in Georgia to launch the TDS program, and officials say they hope other schools will soon

follow their lead.

The story received coverage in the Gwinnett Daily Post, Gwinnett Herald Tribune, CBS 46 News and WXIA – TV Evening News.

TDS reps in Georgia will be mailing information on TDS to local schools, including materials from the press conference, the press release and survey findings from Duluth High School.

*“Drowsy Driving Kills”  
Teens need around 9.5  
hours of sleep, but the  
majority aren’t getting it  
- according to the  
National Sleep  
Foundation*

# Making Headlines

**AUSTIN, Texas** – State Farm Insurance of Texas announced its support in sponsoring TDS at the statewide press conference. State Farm, a leader in the insurance industry, takes great pride in promoting safety to all of its consumers and the community.

State Farm has made a commitment to sponsor TDS for the next five years.

*Pictured (from left to right): Director of TTI Dennis Christiansen, TDS team member Krizia Martinez, TxDOT Commissioner Hope Andrade, Mason H.S. student Tabitha Zant and State Farm Director of Marketing Ronnie Lee Vandiver.*



TDS Team Award Luncheon honoring the team for Annual TTI Team Award



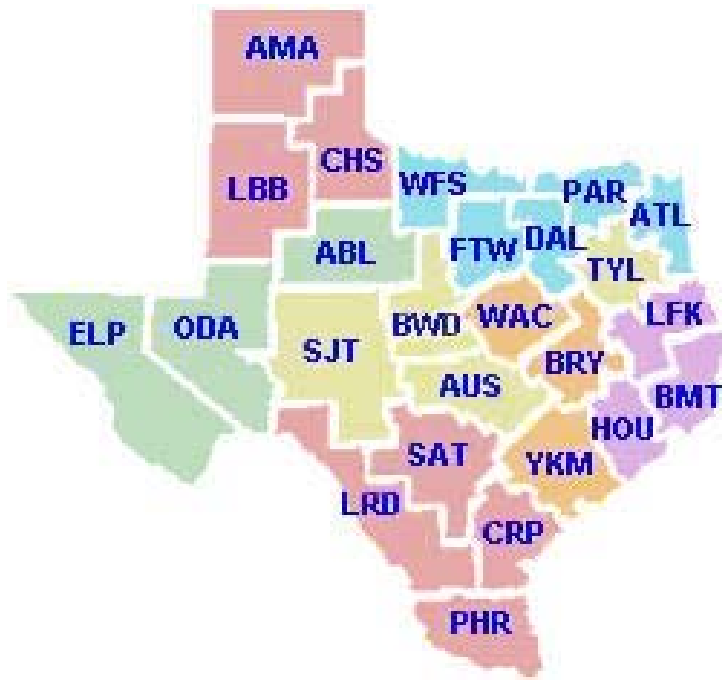
# Newsworthy Notes

TDS staff have been active in attending numerous conferences, conventions and meetings around the nation. In case you missed it, here is a brief summary:

- 8/30/07** TDS Team Award luncheon honoring the team for winning the Annual TTI/Trinity Herbert H. Richardson Team Award
- 9/23-25/07** National Organizations of Youth Safety National Meeting in Virginia
- 9/27-29/07** National AASHTO meeting in Milwaukee, Wis
- 9/28-30/07** TASB meeting in Dallas, Texas

- 10/15/07** TxDOT Short Course in College Station, Texas
- 10/18/07** HGAC Regional Safety Forum in Houston, Texas
- 10/30/07** Statewide press event at State Capitol Building. Partnered with State Farm Insurance of Texas
- 11/2-4/07** Multi-State Regional Teen Safety Workshop in Fairfax, Va
- 11/7/07** Meeting to kick-off collaborative activities with Executive Director for Future Career & Community Leaders (FCCLA)-Texas in Austin, Texas
- 11/15/07** Teen Safety Summit in Dallas, Texas
- 11/15/07** TDS press event in Atlanta, Ga

2007-2008  
TDS  
Regional Contacts



*Teens in the Driver Seat is the nation's first peer-to-peer driving safety program. TDS promotes peer education on the top five risks associated with teen driving. To learn more about TDS, visit [www.t-driver.com](http://www.t-driver.com)*

**San Antonio** - South Central & Panhandle - San Antonio (SAT), Laredo (LRD), Pharr (PHR), Corpus Christi (CRP), Amarillo (AMA), Lubbock (LBB) & Childress (CHS)

TTI San Antonio (210) 979-9411  
Russell Henk, TDS Director R-Henk@tamu.edu  
Kathy Montemayor K-Montemayor@tamu.edu

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**Houston - Southeast** - Houston (HOU), Beaumont (BMT) & Lufkin (LFK)

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Lori Gray L-Gray@tamu.edu

**Dallas - North** - Dallas (DAL), Fort Worth (FTW), Wichita Falls (WFS), Paris (PAR) & Atlanta (ATL)

TTI Dallas (972) 994-0433  
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**College Station** - East Central - Bryan (BRY), Yoakum (YKM) & Waco (WAC)

TTI College Station (979) 845-1713  
Jen Bordeaux J-Bordeaux@tamu.edu  
Bernie Fette, TDS Director of Public Affairs B-Fette@tamu.edu

**Georgia Contact**

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**Texas Department of Transportation**

Shawna Russell (512) 463-7858 SRUSSE1@dot.state.tx.us

Does your TDS group need assistance, have an update or know teens who want to start their own TDS group? Find your location on the map and contact your regional coordinator. Your coordinator is available via phone or email. For out of Texas contacts, please contact Russell Henk or Bernie Fette.

Are you on the TDS listserv? The listserv is a great way to get the most current information on changes to the website and general announcements. To join, email your request to the TDS Webmaster at [tdswebmaster@tmail.tamu.edu](mailto:tdswebmaster@tmail.tamu.edu).

# What's going on in your area?

## Austin/Tyler TDS Contact Rep. Tina Geiselbrecht

### Active Schools 2007-2008:

Jack C. Hays H.S., Llano H.S., Mason H.S., Marble Falls H.S., Elkhart H.S., Mt. Enterprise H.S., Robert E. Lee H.S. and Van H.S.

### Newly Interested Schools:

Fredericksburg H.S., Athens H.S., Lapoynor H.S., Lampasas H.S., Mineola H.S., San Marcos H.S. and Spring Hill H.S.

- An informational meeting on TDS was held on November 7 in Buda. For a list of attendees, please contact the Austin region coordinator, Tina Geiselbrecht.
- A presentation on TDS was made to the Public Health Information directors from across the state on November 16. Directors present at the meeting received a copy of the schools that are currently active with TDS, providing them with valuable information on which school districts to contact.
- On November 1, The East Texas Community Health Needs Assessment, which is a group of several state agencies, heard a presentation on TDS from Tina Geiselbrecht.

## Dallas/Fort Worth TDS Contact Reps. Christie Madsen and Chris Poe

### Active Schools for 2007-2008:

Creekview H.S., Garland H.S., Lakeview Centennial H.S., Naaman Forest H.S., North Garland H.S., Rowlett H.S., Sachse H.S., South Garland H.S., Marcus H.S., Flower Mound H.S., Plano West Senior H.S., Forestburg H.S., Lewisville H.S., Pottsboro H.S., Brock H.S., Millsap H.S. and Decatur H.S.

### Newly Interested Schools:

Cedar Hill H.S., Community H.S., Billy Ryan H.S., Centennial H.S., Hebron H.S., Killough Lewisville H.S., The Colony H.S., John Horn H.S., Valley View H.S., Coppell H.S., Highland Park H.S., Waxahachie H.S., Aledo H.S., Jacksboro H.S., Chico H.S., Bridgeport H.S. and Clark H.S.

- The Injury Prevention Summit on Teen Driving, which took

place in Dallas late November, featured two TDS team members Russell Henk and Vall Pezoldt.

- TDS team members Chris Poe and Christie Madsen presented to the Dallas Area Safety Engineering Group. One important attendee included a member of the National Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts of America will be hearing more on TDS in the coming weeks.
- Chris Poe will be speaking to the Keller Rotary Club about TDS on December 11.
- **Garland ISD schools– Naaman Forest H.S. and Lakeview Centennial H.S.** completed a joint video on TDS.
- Ilse Quijano, 17, a senior at **Sachse H.S.** and Stucco President was on Channel 11 Dallas news. She talked about teen driving and the top five risks associated with teenage driving. She promoted TDS by wearing her TDS 6000 shirt.

## El Paso TDS Contact Reps. Jeff Shelton and Llubia Corella

### Active Schools for 2007-2008:

Chapin H.S., Irvin H.S., Ramon Telles Academy, Sunset H.S., Americas H.S., El Dorado H.S., Mission Early College H.S., Montwood H.S., Socorro H.S. and Odessa H.S.

### Newly Interested Schools:

Burges H.S., Radford H.S., KEYS Academy H.S., Del Valle H.S., Riverside H.S. and Ysleta H.S.

- Stucco and TDS students at **Montwood H.S.** organized a Halloween carnival at their campus to help decrease the number of families that trick-or-treat in neighboring areas.
- The Pan American Health Organization and TTI have joined forces to bring the TDS program to Juarez, MX. Both organizations will host a stakeholder meeting before the year is over and meet with Juarez officials. The main goal is to engage local officials and create community interest in TDS.
- **Ramon Telles Academy** held a career fair on November 30. TDS leaders had a booth and provided information to their peers.

## Houston TDS Contact Rep. Lori Gray

### Active Schools 2007-2008:

Burkeville H.S., North Shore Senior H.S. and Sweeny H.S.

### Newly Interested Schools:

Cypress Woods H.S.

- **Burkeville H.S.** is making a video of wrecks involving different driving distractions. They will have a large TDS push in February, a week prior to prom.
- **Sweeny H.S.** is implementing TDS the first week of December in combination with Shattered Dreams.

## Lubbock/Amarillo/San Antonio/Laredo TDS Contact Reps. Russell Henk and Kathy Montemayor

### Active Schools 2007-2008:

Coronado H.S., Estacado H.S., Lubbock H.S., Monterey H.S., V.M. Trevino Magnet H.S., Carrizo Springs H.S. and Crystal City H.S.

### Newly Interested Schools:

Douglas MacArthur H.S., O'Connor H.S., Eagle Pass H.S., Cotulla H.S., Brackett H.S., Student Guidance Learning Center, Lyndon B. Johnson H.S., Alexander H.S., United South H.S., Martin H.S., Bandera H.S. and United H.S.

- **MacArthur H.S.** video class developed several PSAs about TDS and provided them to TTI.
- The San Antonio Project Celebration Meeting took place at the beginning of November. Information about TDS was presented at the meeting hoping for new interest from San Antonio high schools.
- Three informational meetings are being held in the TxDOT Laredo District area during the first week of December.

## BCS/ Yoakum/Waco TDS Contact Reps. Bernie Fette and Jen Bordeaux

### Active Schools 2007-2008:

Connally H.S., West H.S. and Louise H.S.

### Newly Interested Schools:

Robinson H.S., A&M Consolidated H.S., Brenham H.S., Gatesville H.S. and Normangee H.S.



- **A&M Consolidated H.S.**  
Driver Education classes heard a presentation on the top five risks and how TDS works to raise awareness and change behavior. BCS coordinator Jen Bordeaux met with the Principal, Ron Fox, to provide him with information on the TDS program. The students also assisted TDS staff with discussion on future PSAs and commercial ideas.
- Waco schools, **Connally H.S.** and **West H.S.** will be hosting a TDS press conference on December 20. They plan to challenge each other to see what high school can increase awareness levels and change behavior the most. Both schools have completed surveys. Both schools meet every other week to complete action plan items. **Connally H.S.** hosted a bike rodeo and borrowed TxDOT's roll-over machine. **Connally H.S.** also handed out safety messages to the community at the Halloween Fall Festival.

**Georgia**  
**TDS Contact Rep.**  
**Marsha Anderson-Bomar**

**Active Schools 2007-2008:**  
Duluth H.S.

**Newly Interested Schools:**  
Cartersville H.S., South Forsyth H.S., Alpharetta H.S., Centennial H.S., North Gwinnett H.S. and Peachtree Ridge H.S.

- **Duluth H.S.** is the first "out-of-state" TDS high school who has held a press conference. The press conference on TDS took place at Duluth H.S. on November 14.

**Is your school or student group currently doing something new and exciting for TDS? Call or email your TDS representative, and be featured in the next TDS Newsletter!**

**TDS Exhibit Board features high school student groups from participating high schools. TDS is free to all Texas High Schools through funding by the Texas Department of Transportation and State Farm Insurance of Texas.**



**Do you know of a school or student group that would be interested in joining forces with Teens in the Driver Seat? Email or call the local representative for a presentation or more information on TDS.**

## The Director's Corner

We are excited to share with you this first edition of the Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) newsletter. We are enjoying major growth in the TDS Program, thanks to individuals like you. This fall semester has been very exciting with our statewide press conference held at our State Capitol in Austin, Texas, in October. Texas has been quick to respond to the call for action in working to put a stop to the number one killer of our teens. We are also expanding into other states, to help us curb this nationwide epidemic.

We love to highlight the efforts of our TDS teen teams. We have such talented young people actively working to make our roads safer for everyone. We'd like to encourage teens to participate in our new statewide contests, with cash prizes provided by our newest partner -- State Farm of Texas. We are excited about State Farm's support, and very grateful for the years of support provided by the Texas Department of Transportation that have allowed us to expand the program, now having reached over 100 high schools and 155,000+ teens in Texas.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and welcome your feedback regarding how we can improve it as a resource for you as we move forward. We plan to distribute this newsletter quarterly, so be watching for the next edition before the dangerous Spring Break timeframe.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me or our PR Director, Bernie Fette. Thanks again for your interest and support as we work to stop the number one killer of our teens in Texas and our nation.

My best to you,  
Russell

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Pictured above: Russell Henk



Pictured below: Bernie Fette



# TDS Creativity Contest

Do you love to write, make short story films or play in a band?  
If you do, you could have the chance to win \$1000!  
TDS is hosting a Statewide Contest in the following categories:

- Video
- Music
- Posters
- "Your School's TDS Program"

Create an entry about the top driving risks and have a chance to win up to 3 CASH prizes in each of the four categories:

- 1st prize - \$1,000
- 2nd prize - \$500
- 3rd prize - \$250

Contest is sponsored by  
State Farm Insurance of Texas

Contest submittals will be due in the spring of 2008.

Check back later at [www.t-driver.com](http://www.t-driver.com) for more details on how to submit an entry!



## Got Banner?

Thanks to State Farm (see page 2), we now have vinyl TDS banners available for high schools to use for their TDS projects.



### Schedule of Events

- } December 3, 2007 LAREDO — TDS Informational Meeting, presented by Russell Henk
- } December 6, 2007 DEL RIO — TDS Informational Meeting, presented by Russell Henk
- } December 7, 2007 CARRIZO SPRINGS — TDS Informational Meeting, presented by Russell Henk
- } December 11, 2007 DALLAS — Chris Poe spoke at Keller Rotary Club meeting about TDS
- } December 18, 2007 DALLAS — Chris Poe and Christie Madsen to speak at National Boy Scouts of America meeting about TDS
- } December 20, 2007 WACO — TDS Press Conference for Connally and West high schools, hosted at Connally High School
- } January 24, 2008 AUSTIN — Tina Geiselbrecht to make presentation to Travis County Attorney's Drinking Prevention Program at the Travis County Attorney's Office

DECEMBER 2007						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2	3	4	5	6	7	1/8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

