



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION OPERATION TEEN SAFE DRIVING PROGRAM NATIONALLY HONORED**

(Washington, DC) -- The Roadway Safety Foundation (RSF) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today recognized the Illinois Department of Transportation's (IDOT) "Operation Teen Safe Driving" program for its efforts to reduce teen driving-related deaths by implementing innovative peer-to-peer programs.

"Keeping teen drivers safe on the road is an obligation that we should all take seriously," said Greg Cohen, Executive Director of the Roadway Safety Foundation. "As the most inexperienced drivers on our highways, continuing driver education programs for teens are absolutely essential. By talking to teens where they listen, Illinois has set a great example for every state to follow."

Illinois' peer-to-peer teen driving program, in partnership with the Allstate Foundation and the Ford Motor Company Fund's Driving Skills for Life program, challenged teens to develop a school-wide program that would have a positive impact on teen drivers. The program, which was conducted completely by teens, was met with huge success, with a forty percent reduction in teen driving deaths from 2007-2008.

"We are honored to be recognized for our Operation Teen Safe Driving program," said IDOT's Division of Traffic Safety Director Michael Stout. "We strive each day to reduce fatalities in Illinois and we are proud to say this program has helped significantly with our mission. "We could not do this without the dedication and commitment from our sponsors and the teens who have participated in the program."

"Ford Driving Skills for Life is very pleased to continue our successful partnership with the Illinois Department of Transportation and the Allstate Foundation. It is evident by the enormous success of Operation Teen Safe Driving that partnerships are the way to successfully address the alarming teen driving statistics our country faces. Ford Motor Company Fund is committed to providing education and training to drivers of all ages, including teens. It is unacceptable that vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens, and we will continue to provide support to combat this problem" said Jim Graham, Manager Community Relations, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services.

“The Allstate Foundation is committed to helping young people address the teen driving issue in their own voices with genuine messages respected by their peers,” said Shaundra Turner, senior field corporate relations manager, Allstate Midwest Region. “This important recognition demonstrates how much impact teens can have in reducing the epidemic of teen crash fatalities.”

Roadway Safety Award recipients were evaluated on three criteria – innovation, effectiveness, and efficient use of resources. Program categories included infrastructure improvements, operational improvements and program planning, development and evaluation. The award recipients were selected from 113 entries received.

Blue Ribbon Panel Judges included: Philip Caruso, Deputy Executive Director for Technical Programs, Institute of Transportation Engineers; Cathy Gillen, Managing Director of the Roadway Safety Foundation; Anthony Giancola, Executive Director of the National Association of County Engineers; James McDonnell, Deputy Program Director of Engineering, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, and J. Peter Kissinger, President and CEO of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.

Roadway safety programs are a critical part of the nation’s solutions to saving lives and preventing injuries on our nation’s highways. Of the 37,261 people killed in traffic crashes on U.S. roads in 2008, nearly 59 percent of the fatalities involved a departure from the roadway and 21 percent were at an intersection or intersection-related (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 2008 Annual Assessment of Motor Vehicle Crashes).

The Federal Highway Administration and the Roadway Safety Foundation present the bi-annual Roadway Safety Awards to programs and projects across the nation exhibiting excellence in roadway design, operations and planning. The RSF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable and educational organization solely dedicated to reducing the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes by improving the safety of America's roadways. For additional information on RSF please visit [www.roadwaysafety.org](http://www.roadwaysafety.org). For additional information on FHWA safety programs please visit <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>.

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**ATTENTION EDITORS** – Digital photographs of the award winners at the luncheon in Washington, DC are available by calling (202) 857-1203. Detailed information on the award winning programs can be found at [www.roadwaysafetyawards.org](http://www.roadwaysafetyawards.org).