Seat belt safety enforcement blitz slated in Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook Counties

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Law Enforcement agencies from the Tri-County area are joining the State of Oregon in a 14-day â€œPassenger Restraint Enforcement Blitzâ€• from February 4 - 17, police announced.

Local agencies participating will include Deschutes, Jefferson, and Crook County Sheriffâ€™s Offices; Bend, Madras and Prineville Police Departments; and Oregon State Police.

Participating agencies will provide regular and overtime enforcement of child restraint, safety belt and other moving violations.

Oregonâ€™s new child seat laws established the following requirements:

- A child weighing less than 40 lbs. must be restrained in a child safety seat

- A child under one year of age or weighing less than twenty pounds must be restrained in a child seat, rear facing

- A child over forty pounds but under age eight or less than 4â€™9â€• tall must be restrained in a booster seat that elevates them so the lap/shoulder belts fit correctly.

In addition, Oregonâ€™s safety belt law no longer exempts commercial vehicles â€œdesigned or used to transport property.â€• Drivers and passengers in this category are now required to use proper safety restraints, this includes all types of trucks, vans, and passengers cars, including those used for bulk transport, specialized delivery services, or movement of materials in conjunction with various projects or activities.

The enforcement is funded by overtime funds through the Oregon Department of Transportation, Bend Police Sgt. Kurt Koester said.

In 2007, the child restraint and seatbelt usage rate for children under one year of age in Oregon was about 96%, leaving an estimated 4% of infants unprotected. Safety belt usage statewide was 97% overall.

Prior to, and after the â€œblitzâ€•, surveys will be conducted to determine pre- and post-enforcement levels, Koester said.

Seat belt safety enforcement blitz slated in Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook Counties by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources