

## Prineville Police plan Seat Belt Blitz

*by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources*

The Prineville Police Department will be conducting a Seat Belt Safety Operation in the Prineville area during daylight hours from May 21 through June 3.

The Three Flags Campaign is an international selective traffic enforcement program (STEP) involves hundreds of law enforcement agencies in Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. Since October 1993, the campaign has sought to reduce the number of motor vehicle-related deaths and injuries by increasing public awareness of laws regarding safety belt use and other traffic issues including DUII and speed. The campaign provides federal overtime funding, which allows police officers statewide to join together for two-week period.

Today most Oregon traffic enforcement agencies promote safety belt use within their jurisdictions.

Oregon's crash fatality and injury rates have each dropped 43% since passage of the adult belt law in 1990. The law, combined with active enforcement, has resulted in 2006 Oregon belt use rates of 94% (front seat occupants) and 97% (all seating), making Oregon one of the top five belt-use states in the U.S. This compares to a nationwide belt use average of 83% for front seat occupants.

During the 2006 grant year, 24,935 enforcement contacts were made for safety belt and child restraint violations using \$889,975 of federal highway traffic safety overtime funding. To put this expenditure in prospective, consider that safety belts are 45-65% effective in preventing fatalities/ injuries and that the average combined societal costs of one traffic death is estimated to be \$1,090,000 (National Safety Council, 2002.) Additional enforcement contacts made during safety belt overtime for other violations included: 15,235 speeding, 523 DUII, 2,420 suspensions, 558 felonies, and 27,215 all other.

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