

The logo for the 'CRASH' project, featuring the word 'CRASH' in a bold, white, sans-serif font against a black rectangular background.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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TEENS, CARS, CRASHES
LOCAL DOCUMENTARY AIMS TO HELP KEEP TEENS SAFE.
VIDEO FOCUSES ON THE DISTRACTIONS THAT CAUSE CRASHES.

BROADCAST: Aug.29, 7pm KOB-TV4 / Sept. 4, 8pm KRWG 22

Teenage drivers are 4 times more likely to die on the road than older drivers.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 2003

ALBUQUERQUE —

Crash rates are highest for teens during the first 6 months and 1,000 miles after they get their license, according to SafeTeen President, Thom Turbett. But teens are not the only people at greater risk on the road today. “Technology has created a situation that is causing much greater risk to everyone who drives”, says Turbett. “Cell phones, hands free or not, cause everyone who uses them when they drive to be four times more likely to crash.” Other distractive behaviors include eating, fatigue, DWI, and just having extra teens in the car. “Given today’s environment, we have to help teens and their parents understand just how dangerous any distracting activity can be when you’re behind the wheel,” says Chris Schueler, Executive Director of SafeTeen and the program’s producer. The “CRASH” project includes a half hour documentary that highlights the dangers associated with distracted driving of all kinds, a discussion guide with extra information for teens, parents and educators, and a special “Empower” packet that can be used by youth to help organize local meetings around this issue to create local solutions. The project is presented by SafeTeen New Mexico, New Mexico Mutual, Bernalillo County DWI, Dona Ana County DWI, New Mexico Traffic Safety Bureau, State Farm Insurance, Independent Insurance Agents of New Mexico, The Albuquerque Journal, KOB-TV, KRWG-TV and Cooperative Educational Services; in association with AAA New Mexico Harding County DWI, New Mexico Coalition of School Administrators and New Mexico PTA.

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The 30 minute documentary includes some startling scientific information. “We’ve finished a study about a year and a half ago,” says Dr. David Strayer, a neuro-psychologist from the University of Utah, “that directly compared a drunk driver with someone who’s talking on a cell phone and found that the cell phone driver was in fact more impaired than that same person when they were drunk at a .08 level.” The reason, according to Andrew Mayer, PhD with The Mind Institute in Albuquerque, “is that the harder your brain is working, the less capacity it has to allocate to different things, which can lead to lessened response time in emergency situations.”

According to Dr. John Doggett from the New Mexico Sleep Center, “If you're deprived of sleep by about four hours in a night, it’s equivalent to a blood alcohol level of about .06. If you're completely deprived of sleep for a night, then it’s equivalent to a BAC of about .10.” The legal intoxication limit in New Mexico is .08. The program includes stories from teens that have been affected by accidents caused by DWI, fatigue and, of course, cell phone usage.

The documentary will be followed by a live discussion program that will include web casts from local schools as well as text message comments from the viewing audience. “We hope this film and the follow-up discussion generates conversations across the state about ways we can work together to help keep our kids safe,” says Lanny Leyba, Director of New Mexico Youth Alliance. “This is something that our SafeTeen board and our New Mexico Youth Alliance advisors believe needs to be addressed,” agrees Turbett. “If we can help parents and kids understand how serious and dangerous this is, maybe we can make a difference and save lives,” said KOB TV Station Manager, Susan Connor.

For information on obtaining a copy of the documentary please visit www.SafeTeen.net or www.ChristopherProductions.org. You can also see the documentary during the television broadcast on KOB TV 4 August 29 at 7pm. It will also be shown on KRWG 22 in Las Cruces September 4th at 8 pm.

The night of the KOB broadcast August 29, you can text message your thoughts on the program and potential solutions to the problem in your community. These messages will be displayed during the live program. The texting number is 505-918-0683 and will only be operating during the telecast.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

www.SafeTeen.net

SafeTeen New Mexico has assembled information and resources on it's website including a free, downloadable discussion guide to be used with the program and a tape order form.

THE FOLLOWING PROJECT PARTICIPANTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INTERVIEWS:

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