



TEACHER EXCELLENCE AWARD GIVEN TO THREE AT DRIVER ED TEACHERS' NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Driver ed teachers from Minnesota, Missouri, Vermont get top national honor

WICHITA, Kansas, July 18, 2014 -- Three driver education teachers have been selected by their peers to receive recognition for teaching excellence at the annual national conference of the American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association here on July 16. The Teacher Excellence Awards are given by The National Road Safety Foundation, a non-profit group that creates driver safety education materials and makes them available at no cost to teachers and schools, police, traffic safety advocates and youth organizations.

Chosen by their peers to receive the 2014 Teacher Excellence Award, which carries with it a cash stipend, are Beatrice Kehr of Duluth, Minn., Carol Hoormann of St. Louis, Mo., and John Viau of Essex Junction, VT.

"Driving instructors are a dedicated group who truly care about saving lives and preventing needless tragedy by helping young people learn how to drive safely and responsibly," said David Reich, public relations director of The National Road Safety Foundation. "The three teachers we are honoring are the best of the best. They have consistently shown creativity and enthusiasm in the important work they do."

Winner Beatrice Kehr has been teaching driver education for 25 years, mostly in the Duluth public schools. She has also been an advisor to driver education student teachers at St. Cloud State University. She has held leadership roles including as president of the Minnesota Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association and serves on a taskforce pushing for the state to adapt to the driver education curriculum to follow the new National Standards for Driver Education and Teacher Preparation. Kehr credits her love of driver education to her father, who taught her to drive a tractor on his dairy farm when she was six. "Dad was always teaching driving strategies when driving, long before it was time to get my license, and I've always felt driving is an important life skill," she said.

Carol Hoormann has been teaching driver education for 16 years, mostly at Lindbergh High School in St. Louis, where she still teaches and chairs the Driver & Traffic Safety Education Department. For the past eight years, she has been active in the Missouri Driver Safety Education Association, where she serves as executive director. She also serves on the Missouri Dept. of Transportation's Blueprint Committee, which works to reduce highway fatalities and increase traffic safety education in the St. Louis area. Hoormann said she grew up in an environment where safety was emphasized, since her father was manager of safety and health at Union Electric and taught safety at Washington University. "I attended Central Missouri State to pursue a teaching degree because it was a top-ranked school for safety with an outstanding driver education program," she said. "I knew I had a passion for safety education."

John Viau, the third Teacher Excellence Award recipient, has been teaching driver education for ten years, most recently at Fairfax High School in Vermont. He has been active in the Vermont Driver Traffic Safety Education Association, where he served as president in 2012 - 2013. Earlier this year, he was named Vermont Driver Education Teacher of the Year. He feels there is a critical need to recruit new trainees to driver education. "I think traffic safety might take a turn for the worse if we can't find, educate and place quality educators to train our new drivers in the years to come," said Viau.

The American Driver and Traffic Safety Education is the professional association that represents traffic safety educators throughout the United States. As a national advocate for quality traffic safety education, the group creates and publishes policies and guidelines for driver ed and conducts conferences and workshops for teachers. It was instrumental in creating the new driver education curriculum standard issued recently by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

For more than 50 years, The National Road Safety Foundation (NRSF), a non-profit organization, has created driver education programs for free distribution to schools, police, traffic safety agencies, youth advocacy groups and others. NRSF has programs on speed and aggression, drinking and driving, and drowsy driving. Its newest programs, "Road Buzzed: A Look at Impaired Driving," "Generation tXt" and "Stay in the Picture", address impaired and distracted driving and prom and summer driving safety aimed at young people. NRSF also sponsors contests for teens in partnership with SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and Scholastic. To view free programs and for more information, visit www.nrsf.org or www.teenlane.org