

# News Release

For Immediate Release

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## **Teens offered dynamic safe driving class in Columbia this Saturday**

(Columbia, SC) With the goal of reducing automobile accidents that are the leading cause of death for teens, Lt. Governor André Bauer has partnered with NHRA Top Fuel drag racer Doug Herbert to bring a unique safe driving class to Columbia on Saturday, August 8, 2009.

The B.R.A.K.E.S Teen Pro-Active Driving school is designed to give young drivers the dynamic experience of handling a vehicle in adverse driving conditions and a controlled environment. The course will educate the students on the proper way to handle skids, panic stops, accident avoidance, and driving with distractions, said Herbert. Professional driving instructors will encourage students to push the car and themselves to gain a better understanding of what a car can do, and in the process will improve their skills and confidence behind the wheel.

B.R.A.K.E.S. -- which stands for Be Responsible and Keep Everyone Safe -- is a non-profit organization founded by Herbert in memory of his two sons who were killed in a car accident. By training and educating teenage drivers and their parents, the foundation aims to promote safe driving in an attempt to prevent injuries and save lives. For more information, visit [www.putonthebrakes.org](http://www.putonthebrakes.org).

“I have a lot of respect for Doug, and I saw how one wrong move affected his life forever and ended two young, promising lives,” said Lt. Governor Bauer. “Despite the consequence of a terrible decision having a devastating impact upon Doug and his family, he is determined to turn personal tragedy into saving grace for other parents and children, and I will gladly do all I can to support him.”

The driving school combines classroom instruction with supervised behind-the-wheel experience. The morning session runs from 8 a.m. to 12:00 noon and the afternoon session from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. This will be second time the course has been offered in South Carolina. All spots for Saturday’s driving school have been filled, but there are plans to sponsor other sessions in the future due to the positive response.

Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for teens (16 to 20) in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2006, 4,144 teens died in motor vehicle crashes. Nearly 400,000 teens were treated in hospital emergency rooms for crash-related injuries.

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## **South Carolina Traffic Crashes Crashes Involving Teenage Drivers (Age 15 -19)**

**NOTE: The following statistics include data from 2006 which is not complete as of the time of this writing. As such, all figures are subject to revision.**

During the five-year period between 2002 and 2006, there were 119,293 traffic collisions in South Carolina involving teens (age 15 to 19).

There were 717 fatal crashes involving young drivers.

A total of 130,012 drivers age 15-19 were involved in these crashes. Of these, 70,698 (54.4%) were males, and 59,314 (45.6%) were females.

Based on 2005 statistics, approximately one out of every 11 teen drivers is involved in a traffic crash each year (1 in 10 for young males); one in every 1,487 young males is involved in a fatal crash. These rates are much higher than for the general driving population (1 in 18 for all crashes; 1 in 2,526 for fatal crashes).

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the fatality rate for the youngest drivers (age 15 and 16), based on the number vehicle miles driven, is second only to the rate for oldest drivers (age 85 and older).

The leading probable causes for traffic crashes involving young drivers between 2002 and 2006 include: Too Fast for Conditions/Speeding (35,715); Driver Failed to Yield Right of Way (28,417); and Driver Inattention (12,311).

For fatal crashes, the leading crash causes are: Too Fast for Conditions/Speeding (233); Failure to Yield Right of Way (102); and Driving under the Influence (81).

Most fatal traffic crashes (55.2%) involving teen drivers occurred during dark, dawn or dusk lighting conditions.

A total of 85,020 of the 130,012 teen drivers, or 65.4%, contributed to the cause of the crash. For fatal crashes, 567 (76.7%) of the 739 young drivers contributed.

The number of teen drivers involved in traffic crashes was highest in 2002 with 26,345. The fewest young drivers involved in crashes were in 2004 with 25,649.

*For more information, contact the SCDOT Safety Office at (803) 737-1161. 7/9/07*

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