



North Central Texas
Council of Governments



PRESS RELEASE

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North Texans Must Look Out for Students Heading Back to School

State Farm videos highlight how to keep area roads safe for bicycling, walking

Aug. 30, 2016 (Arlington, Texas) – With the start of the new school year and the return of cooler weather, North Texans will soon see students bicycling and walking to and from school. Look Out Texans, a regional public education and outreach campaign, is sharing 21 tips to encourage communities to help make the region's roads safer for everyone, especially students.

The campaign is highlighting the tips in a new series of videos and public service announcements in time for the new school year. The videos feature North Texans and were made possible with a grant from State Farm.

"Safety is a top priority for State Farm," said Lori Manning, State Farm director of philanthropy. "We have thousands of employees and agents living and working in North Texas who understand the importance of education and outreach. Pedestrian safety is more than a mobility issue, it is a quality of life issue we're committed to addressing through support of campaigns like Look Out Texans."

In addition to the videos, Look Out Texans is using billboards, transit ads, radio ads, online and print advertising, social media and newsletters to reach students, parents, teachers and their neighbors across multiple platforms this fall in advance of Walk to School Day on Oct. 5.

These efforts complement outreach to local school districts to promote bicycle and pedestrian safety education for elementary and middle school students. In the coming year, several North Texas school districts will begin using Look Out Texans materials to help educators and parents teach safe bicycling and walking behaviors.

Parents and caregivers can begin by modeling behavior for children, who must be taught to stay alert and visible when they are near the road. Both children and adults should always cross streets at crosswalks and intersections where they can gauge traffic and be seen. Before crossing, people bicycling and walking should make eye contact with drivers. Crossing at unmarked areas, between parked cars or between vehicles stopped at a traffic signal is not safe.

For children to get to school safely, everyone must observe traffic laws, including the speed limit. School zone speed limits are especially important since children's small size and unpredictable movements can make them difficult to spot. Drivers should be aware of all children on or near the street regardless of whether they have adult supervision. Parents should

supervise their children and teach them street safety, but it is up to everyone to help make our communities safe by looking out for children playing near or crossing the street.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is coordinating Look Out Texans for cities and transportation partners across the region. The campaign was selected for funding by the Regional Transportation Council as part of the Texas Department of Transportation Enhancement Program. It comes at a time when motor vehicle crashes that involve people bicycling and walking are increasing in North Texas. Between 2010 and 2014, there were more than 8,200 such crashes reported, resulting in more than 500 fatalities, according to TxDOT. Consequently, the Federal Highway Administration has designated both Dallas and Fort Worth as two of its 35 Pedestrian-Bicycle Focus Cities, which are selected based on high rates of crash fatalities.

Look Out Texans prominently features 21 safety tips to help people bicycling, walking and driving understand how they should interact together to improve safety on area roads. Campaign efforts enhance the work of local, state and federal transportation partners who are focused on improving safety for all road users through roadway design solutions and greater awareness of how people can bike, walk and drive safely.

To see the videos and learn more about the Look Out Texans campaign, visit www.LookOutTexans.org. Follow the campaign on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using #LookOutTexans.

About the North Central Texas Council of Governments:

NCTCOG is a voluntary association of local governments established in 1966 to assist local governments in planning for common needs, cooperating for mutual benefit and coordinating for sound regional development. NCTCOG's purpose is to strengthen both the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, eliminate unnecessary duplication and make joint decisions.

NCTCOG serves a 16-county region of North Central Texas, which is centered on the two urban centers of Dallas and Fort Worth. Currently, NCTCOG has 238 member governments including 16 counties, 169 cities, 22 school districts and 31 special districts. For more information on the NCTCOG Transportation Department, visit www.nctcog.org/trans.

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