



Department of Public Health and Environment

Phone: 970-400-6410

1555 North 17th Avenue, Greeley, CO 80632

NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Kelly Martinez, 970-400-2325

DRIVE SMART WELD COUNTY HAS POSITIVE IMPACT ON THOUSANDS OF YOUNG DRIVERS

WELD COUNTY, CO — For years, the DRIVE SMART Weld County program, which was created to reduce vehicle injuries and deaths among teens, has worked to make positive changes in young drivers. Those changes, according to the 2022 Weld County Community Health Survey, are resulting in less risky behaviors, which translates to safer roads.



“According to the 2022 health survey, more than 92% of Weld County drivers reported always wearing their seatbelt,” said Weld County Health Department Director Jason Chessher. “That number is up from 89.9% in 2019. That’s certainly good news for everyone!”

The survey also revealed **fewer** Weld County drivers reported they participated in risky driving behaviors such as texting, emailing, or talking on the phone while driving compared to 2019 (the time of the last survey).

“Changing behaviors in people can take time,” said Kelly Martinez, Weld County’s Coordinator for the DRIVE SMART

Weld County Program. “This program has a long and consistent tradition – over 20 years – of working with high schools countywide to educate young drivers on safe driving.”

In fact, in 2022 alone, the program reached approximately 16,500 Weld County students through educational programming that addresses the dangers of unsafe driving. “This program works with first responders, law enforcement officers, semitrailer drivers and others to talk honestly and frankly about the perils of unsafe driving,” said Martinez.

State Farm, a longtime supporter of the program, recently awarded the DRIVE SMART program a \$10,000 grant in the form of their “2023 Good Neighbor Citizenship Award.” Funds from this grant will help ensure the program continues into the next year and further helps teach teens about safe driving.

“State Farm has awarded this grant to Weld County for the past 20 years,” said Martinez. “They are a great partner that has donated more than \$165,000 to the DRIVE SMART programs over that time. We truly appreciate their commitment to this cause.”

To learn more about the DRIVE SMART Weld County program and how your teen driver can participate, please visit drivesmartweldcounty.org or call (970) 400-2325.

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