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## Oregon kicks off Teen Driver Safety Week with competition

### *Students from around the state to compete for scholarships in Redmond and Albany*

Preventable motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for teens nationally and in Oregon. Studies show that a teen's likelihood of being in a crash can be dramatically reduced through quality driver education, effective laws and parent and community involvement. That's why Governor Ted Kulongoski has proclaimed Oct. 19-25, 2008 Teen Driver Safety Week in Oregon.

### **Oregon Driver Excellence Scholarship Challenge**

Teen Driver Safety Week kicks off with a fun and potentially financially rewarding competition for teen drivers – the 2008 Oregon Driver Excellence Scholarship Challenge. Over the last several weeks, eligible teens from around Oregon turned in applications and are now ready to compete for scholarships valued between \$500 and \$2,000 at two regional Challenge events. About 45 students will compete in a four-part competition in Albany on Oct. 18 or Redmond on Oct. 19.

The [competition](#) includes four parts:

- Written test – similar to Oregon driver license knowledge test.
- Perception test – a multi-media assessment asking students to determine best practices.
- Skill test – examines students' driving ability including backing, parallel parking and steering through obstacles.
- Simulator (Auto control) – evaluate students' reaction to simulated situations.

Sponsored by the Oregon Department of Transportation Safety Division, Western Oregon University, [Oregon Traffic Safety Education Association](#), Governors Highway Safety Association and funded through a grant from the Ford Motor Company's [Driving Skills for Life](#) program, the 2008 Oregon Driver Excellence Scholarship Challenge seeks to prevent crashes and recognize outstanding teen drivers through an innovative scholarship competition. Local Ford dealerships Wilson Motors of Corvallis and Robberson Ford of Bend and Prineville are providing generous support to the Challenge.

For updated information on highway work and current travel information throughout Oregon, visit [www.tripcheck.com](http://www.tripcheck.com) or call the toll-free Oregon road report at 511 or (800) 977-6368. Join us in celebrating Oregon's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, [www.oregon150.org](http://www.oregon150.org)



“We hope the Challenge will focus positive attention on successful young drivers and raise awareness about the importance of quality driver education,” said John Harvey, Driver Education program manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation.

### **Teen Driver Safety Week raises awareness**

Teen Driver Safety Week is an effort to raise awareness about the tragedy of teen crashes and to highlight the efforts that the state and local communities are making to keep teens safe on Oregon roads. [National Teen Driver Safety Week](#) was established by Congress in 2007 through the efforts of the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm Insurance Companies and is designed to raise awareness and spark communication among teenagers, their parents and communities about teen crash prevention.

A study released last fall by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that Oregon’s graduated driver license program and quality driver education have improved safety for young drivers.

“Oregon teens who take an approved ODOT driver education course have fewer crashes, traffic convictions and suspensions than those that don’t take a course,” said Harvey.

Since it started in 2000, Oregon’s graduated driver licensing program has also reduced crashes, convictions and suspensions according to the study.

“The study shows we are succeeding in making our newest drivers better and safer and dramatically reducing the potential negative impacts of teen driving,” said Harvey. “Working together with students, parents and communities we can keep this positive trend going.”

For more information about teen driver programs, visit the ODOT Transportation Safety Division Web site, [http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/drivers\\_ed.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/drivers_ed.shtml).

###ODOT###

***Editors: Members of the media are invited to observe the Driver Excellence Scholarship Challenge competitions in either Redmond or Albany. Contact Sally Ridenour, (503) 576-9577 for details.***