



## NEWS RELEASE February 6, 2012

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

### **Safe Routes to School Program News**

Since 2007, the Lewiston School District, the City of Lewiston Public Works Department, and the City of Lewiston Police Department have been partnering together to develop a Safe Routes to School Program in Lewiston. The program focuses on encouraging students to walk and bike to school as a healthy lifestyle choice and also recognizes the need to provide infrastructure. The focus of our program this year has been on crosswalk safety. The City and School District have a 50/50 funding partnership for the adult crossing guard program. In addition to the adult program, the School District also uses student crossing patrols.

The School District, Public Works Department, and Police Department are working together to create visibility and consistency among the 14 adult crossing guards at the 11 school zone locations throughout Lewiston. All the adult crossing guards have been given MUTCD (Manual on Uniform Traffic Devices) approved vests and STOP paddles to assist in their duties and are trained for compliance with public right-of-way regulations. The goal is for the adult crossing guards to be more consistent and visible throughout the city.

In addition, the Program has been working with elementary schools and their student patrol members to keep them safe while performing their job as a patrol member. Student patrol members are taught not to stop traffic, but to look LEFT-RIGHT-LEFT while waiting for a safe gap in traffic or for traffic to voluntarily stop. Student guards are instructed to do this while making eye contact with drivers. Drivers can help by yielding to pedestrians in a crosswalk, avoid distractions, and don't stop in the street or on a crosswalk to park, load or unload children in to and out of the vehicle.

Student patrol members are taught not to walk or stand in the street while letting pedestrians cross the street. They are to start on the curb in the "neutral" flag position, then proceed to a "gate" flag position, holding pedestrians back with their SCHOOL flag until it is determined eye contact with drivers is made and cars are stopped. At this time the flag is placed in "flags out" position and the patrol member steps to the edge of the street, without ever entering the street, and the second patrol member on the opposite side of the crosswalk follows the same pattern, working in unison to cross students and pedestrians.

Safe Routes to School will consistently train student patrol members on site and is working on a training video for refreshers and student patrol member participant turn-over throughout the year. With signed parent permission, a fifth or sixth grade student may choose to be part of a participating school's student patrol program. Safe Routes to School is also making sure that each patrol member has a new retro-reflective ANSI Class II vest and new SCHOOL flag that is consistent from school to school.

Many of our school zone crosswalks are mid-block and not located at a stop light or signed intersection with a pedestrian activated button, so Safe Routes to School would like to remind drivers from age 14 to 114 that yielding for a pedestrian, student, adult, student patrol member, and adult crossing guards in any crosswalk is the LAW. If a pedestrian is in any part of the crosswalk, your vehicle can not cross the crosswalk, even if they have passed by your side of the travel lane. Student patrol members and adult crossing guards report a lot of impatient drivers either trying to be speed up to avoid being stopped at the crosswalk or not waiting until the crosswalk is completely clear before proceeding forward during the busiest pedestrian travel times; between 8:00-9:00 am and 3:00-4:00 pm. It is also important to review the Idaho driver's manual that says you can not park within 20 feet of a crosswalk. The Police Department will continue to monitor and strictly enforce all traffic laws in and around our school zones.

As a community, we can all impact the safety at crosswalks, in school zones, and ensure that our student patrol members and adult crossing guards are being kept safe.

Be alert around schools, follow the laws, and be ready to yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk.