

September 27, 2006

Children *Walk the Talk* to highlight the importance of traffic safety

Calgary... Students from two Calgary-area schools joined police officers and government officials to highlight the importance of traffic safety and learn how to stay safe on Alberta's roads.

Grade 2 students from Briar Hill Elementary School and St. Thomas More School took part in this year's *Walk the Talk Day* at Prairie Winds Park, an annual event which educates Alberta families on child traffic safety practices.

"Children are our most precious resource and it is important to teach them the skills that keep them safe on our roads, said Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, taking part in this year's Walk the Talk Day event. "Every year, more than 450 child cyclist and pedestrian injuries and deaths occur in Alberta. The Walk the Talk program works with schools in an effort to prevent these road-related injuries."

Lund was joined at the event by representatives from the Edmonton and Calgary police services and the RCMP.

Walk the Talk provides children with the necessary tools to meet the traffic safety challenges they may encounter on their way to and from school. It encourages practices, such as the Point, Pause and Proceed pedestrian crossing system for use at marked crosswalks and corners. The program also reminds motorists to drive with special care throughout the school year and to be on the lookout for children and school buses.

A tool kit was produced and includes a teacher's resource guide and three activity books for children ages five to 12. Last year, approximately 185,000 Alberta children received the books that feature the Kinetic Kids and their safety sidekicks.

The program brings together the Alberta Motor Association's School Patrol, Calgary's Chapter of Think First, and Southland Transportation to teach children about safe ways to walk to and from school. These groups also offer traffic safety tips for bicycle, skateboard, and in-line skating, as well as school bus safety and crossing railway tracks.

For information about traffic safety, please contact the Traffic Safety Initiative at (780) 422-8839 or visit www.saferoads.com.

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Media enquiries may be directed to:

Jeanette Espie
Office of Traffic Safety
(780) 427-6588
e-mail: jeanette.espie@gov.ab.ca

Eileen McDonald
Communications
(780) 422-0842
(780) 913-4609 (Cell)
e-mail: eileen.mcdonald@gov.ab.ca

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

Backgrounder

Alberta's Walk the Talk Program

History of Walk the Talk

- Launched in 1997 by the provincial government to help prevent the more than 450 child cyclist and pedestrian injuries and deaths that occur in Alberta each year.
- Designed to give children and their parents the tools necessary to increase their personal safety on Alberta's roads.
- Consists of traffic safety tips such as the POINT, PAUSE and PROCEED pedestrian crossing safety system. Also includes safety practices for bicycling, skateboarding, in-line skating, railway crossing and bus safety.
- Alberta educators played a critical role in the development of the program.

Walk the Talk Day

- Wednesday, September 27, 2006 is Walk the Talk Day.
- It encourages families to walk through their children's routes to-and-from-school and to provide safety tips to help avoid any potential dangers along the way.
- It highlights the importance of traffic safety, year-round.
- Alberta educators, parents, caregivers, motorists, school bus drivers, decision-makers and media are all part of the Walk the Talk team and can help spread the importance of traffic safety.
- Partners include: Alberta Motor Association's School Patrol, Calgary's Chapter of Think First, and Southland Transportation to teach children about safe ways to walk to and from school.

Program Activity Books

- The tool kit consists of a teacher resource guide and three activity books for children 5 - 12 years of age.
- The Kinetic Kids are five fun characters who appear in the Walk the Talk activity books along with their safety sidekicks. The Kinetic Kids promote traffic safety through the Walk the Talk program, year-round.

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Media enquiries may be directed to:

Jeanette Espie
Office of Traffic Safety
(780) 427-6588 Cell: (780) 914-1092

Eileen McDonald
Communications
(780) 422-0842 Cell: (780) 913-4609

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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