

## Nebraska Department of Roads awards Safe Routes to School federal funding

LINCOLN, Neb. (Feb. 12, 2008) – The Nebraska Department of Roads has awarded approximately \$1 million in federal Safe Routes to School program funds to communities for 9 statewide projects to encourage and better enable children to walk and bike safely to school.

The program is focused on promoting physical activity and improving health, making routes to school safer and reducing traffic congestion around schools by encouraging children to walk or ride bicycles.

The program is 100 percent funded by the federal government and requires no matching funds by local entities. The funds benefit elementary and middle school children and are divided into two categories: infrastructure (sidewalk and street-crossing improvements, traffic diversion and bicycle facilities) and non-infrastructure (promotional materials, student bicycle and pedestrian safety education sessions, and encouragement programs).

Through the 2005 passage of the “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy of Users,” Congress designated \$612 million toward developing the National Safe Routes to School Program. Money is distributed to states to fund education, planning and implementation of Safe Routes to School plans and programs.

For more information about the projects listed here or the Safe Routes Nebraska program, visit [www.SafeRoutesNE.com](http://www.SafeRoutesNE.com).

-- More --

## **Funding was awarded to the following agencies:**

### **Non-infrastructure projects:**

#### **PAPILLION CARRIAGE HILL SCHOOL PROJECT**

---

The City of Papillion was awarded \$12,205 to implement a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program at Carriage Hill Elementary. The project will be designed using the 5E's of a comprehensive SRTS program (Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement, and Evaluation) to increase the knowledge and practice of safe walking and bicycling. Information and safety tips will go home with students to parents via newsletters. Other information will be integrated into the school's physical education and health curriculum. There will be opportunities for students to participate in half or full day interactive safety sessions, such as International Walk to School Day. Neighborhood walking school buses, walking clubs, as well as an incentive program will be developed. Volunteers will be recruited from the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), area churches, the Safe Kids Sarpy Cass County Chapter, businesses, civic leagues, and retirees, etc. In addition, a designated school staff member will attend the National Safe Routes to School Conference, and will be responsible for sharing learned information with the Carriage Hill Safe Routes planning committee.

#### **"NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE" WALK/BIKE TO SCHOOL PROGRAM (CRETE)**

---

Public Health Solutions District Health Department was awarded \$33,922 for a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program for the City of Crete. The program, "No Child Left Inside" is a bi-lingual community awareness project involving a grass roots obesity prevention partnership, both elementary schools (one public and one parochial), local police and city government. Collaborative partners will assist in program planning, implementation and identify a priority strategy at each school.

Bi-lingual media awareness messages focusing on safety and healthy lifestyle education will occur bi-monthly during the school year, targeting families and the community. Emphasis on cultural sensitivity and relevance will be assessed by project partners of Hispanic origin. A fall kick off event and spring physical activity/bike safety event targeting K through 6 students and their families will demonstrate and promote walking/biking challenges.

Students who complete and submit backpack mail, church bulletin activity inserts and/or attend challenge events will receive punches on their backpack clip punch card toward incentives. A customized walking/biking map will feature highlighted safe routes to school and provide walking and biking safety information.

**OMAHA McMILLAN MAGNET MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT**

---

McMillan Magnet Middle School, located in the City of Omaha, was awarded \$15,925 to implement sustainable non-infrastructure projects which include the formation of a walking club, safe walk to school days/week, educational sessions for students on walking/biking safety, and traffic enforcement by the Omaha Police Department. These funds will be leveraged with commitments from the following organizations: the City of Omaha, the Omaha Police Department, Douglas County Health Department, Activate Omaha, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

**"NO CHILD LEFT ON THEIR BEHIND" RURAL COMMUNITY PROJECT**

---

Public Health Solutions District Health Department was awarded \$62,863 for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs in five surrounding communities. The goal of the "No Child Left on Their Behind" project is to get more students walking and biking to school in the following communities: Exeter (pop. 712), Deshler (879), Diller (287), Wilber (1,799), and Wymore/Blue Springs (2,038). This project will provide messages and activities that promote more walking and less sitting. Parents and students will receive consistent health and safety messages in elementary classrooms, churches, public buildings, and businesses in each community. A pocket-sized walking map will highlight safe routes to school in addition to providing walking/biking safety and health benefit information. The students will strive for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendation of walking 10,000 steps per day. This walking challenge is planned for the beginning of the school year and to be repeated again in spring to promote sustained behavior change.

During project implementation, local community collaborators will use the SRTS Parent Survey data to identify specific walking/biking issues, explore possible solutions, and develop a plan with short and long term goals. Each community will have funding set aside for a priority activity.

**Infrastructure projects:**

**LOUP CITY RED RAIDER ROUTE TO SCHOOL**

The City of Loup City, in partnership with the Loup City Schools and many community organizations, was awarded \$249,777 for design and construction of 16 blocks of main school routes where most of the school age children reside. The project also includes construction of 61 handicap ramps making intersections ADA accessible and easily accessed by bicyclists and the placement of two digital speed readers within the vicinity of the school; one north of the Middle/High School on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, which leads to Nebraska Highway 58 and the City Cemetery, and the other placed at the south side of the Middle/High School.

**ELWOOD – WOOD YOU WALK TO SCHOOL IN ELWOOD PROJECT**

The Village of Elwood was awarded \$159,761 for design and construction of approximately 16 blocks of school routes. The school route will create a safe walkway from both the north and south neighborhoods toward the Village center and the centrally located school building. The Village will provide a safe crosswalk across three railroad tracks (light rail line privately owned by Omnitrix of Denver). A small drainage structure will be constructed to allow for safer waterway crossing. The project will also consist of installing new signage and clearly marking existing and new crosswalks with tape.

**FRIEND SAFE SCHOOL ROUTES**

The City of Friend was awarded \$164,023 for design and construction of approximately 17 blocks of school routes along major streets established as the Safe Routes to School. Street crossings will include curb cuts and ramps for accessibility. Vinyl pavement markings will be installed at the four highest volume crosswalks around the school. The school will also establish a bicycle parking area and install bicycle racks.

**LAUREL SAFE ROUTES PROJECT**

The City of Laurel was awarded \$89,731 for design and construction of 1,700 linear feet of school routes along Third Street and Wakefield Street in the central part of the community. The new routes will extend 1,400 linear feet along the south side of Third Streets from U.S. Highway 20 to Cedar Street. New ADA curb ramps will be installed on both sides of Highway 20 at Second and Third Streets, and at the intersections along Third Street. Approximately 350 linear feet of deteriorated and narrow sidewalk along the west side of Wakefield will be replaced from Third Street to Fourth Street, and also include new ADA curb ramps. A deteriorated pedestrian bridge and approaches on Wakefield at Fourth Street will be replaced with a new prefabricated bridge with concrete abutments, a timber deck, and handrails. New pavement markings will be installed

at four high-volume school crossings on Nebraska Highway 15 at Alma Street, Highway 20 at Second and Third Streets, and at the school on Wakefield at Fifth Street.

**OMAHA McMILLAN MAGNET MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT**

---

McMillan Magnet Middle School, in partnership with the City of Omaha and Activate Omaha, was awarded \$130,572 for design and construction of the following: 1) Installation of a mid-block pedestrian signal on Martin Avenue between the intersections of Redick Avenue and Newport Avenue and expansion of the school speed zone, 2) Consolidation of crosswalks across Redick Avenue in front of the school and construction of a speed table to reduce speeds and move pedestrian activity to a single, more visible location, 3) Establishment of a pick-up/drop-off area to enable the designation of a Metro Area Transit (MAT) bus lane, prohibition of parking along Redick Avenue, and separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic along Redick Avenue, and 4) Sidewalk and curb ramp construction along Redick Avenue, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Newport Avenue to provide a safe off-street walking environment.

#NDOR#