

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Local Student Wins UGA Statewide Safety Contest

(Student's name) of (school name) in (county/city) has been announced as a winner in a statewide seat belt safety poster, public service announcement and essay contest. (Student's name) won the (poster / PSA / essay) contest at the (school / county / state) level. (S/he) is the (daughter / son) of (name of parents), and a (level of grade) grade student in (teacher's name, if appropriate) class.

In February each year, The University of Georgia's Georgia Traffic Injury Prevention Institute (GTIPI) conducts a statewide contest on "Why You Should Wear Seat Belts and/or Use Child Safety Seats." Students in grades K-12 in all public, private and home schools statewide are encouraged to participate. State-level winners receive a monetary prize contributed this year by Georgia Power Company.

This is the 22<sup>nd</sup> year GTIPI has held the contest. More than 60,000 students from over 200 schools competed in this year's event. The first-place winners at the school level compete at the county level, and those winners move on to compete at the state level. The winners for this year will be featured in the 2010 calendar distributed statewide. The contest was coordinated locally by (name of school and appropriate volunteers).

GTIPI's goal in sponsoring the contest is to increase awareness about the importance of wearing seat belts and using child safety seats properly. "Vehicle crashes are the number one killer of people between the ages of 3 and 33," says Frankie Jones, GTIPI Director. A seat belt is your best protection in a crash, saving more than 12,000 lives each year according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). "The single most important decision you can make about your personal safety is to wear a seat belt," Jones said.

Georgia law requires adults riding in the front seat to wear seat belts, and all occupants under age 18 in a vehicle to be secured by proper restraint devices. NHTSA recommends all children less than 4' 9" in height be secured in child restraint systems approved for their age, weight, and height, installed according to manufacturer's instructions.

GTIPI is a part of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. Supported by a grant from the Governor's Office of Highway Safety, GTIPI is the largest traffic safety education outreach program in Georgia.

For more information about traffic safety, seat belt use, or child safety seats, call (800) 342-9819 or visit GTIPI online at [www.ridesafegeorgia.org](http://www.ridesafegeorgia.org)