



Teens in the Driver Seat®

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The Teens in the Driver Seat (TDS) website (<http://t-driver.com>) revealed a colorful updated look at the beginning of the month. Due to a rapid increase in web traffic, the TDS team has been diligently working to design and implement new features, update existing program material, and add technological web features that are common among social networking and popular websites.

Visitors to the site will be able to continue to enjoy and access powerful written and video testimonials, download program materials, view school showcase pages highlighting student group activities, and read about current legislation and news regarding teen driver issues.

A whole new look



(Above) TDS t-driver.com home page has a colorful, eye-catching new look with new features to go with it.

Enhancements to the site that visitors can expect to see and utilize are an easier and more colorful navigation menu, TDS radio and television public service announcements, a slide show featuring

students actively involved in TDS, additional information on the top five risks for teenage drivers and a variety of new graphics.

The new features are not limited to those available now. The TDS team is working to include more user-generated content, downloadable wallpaper, a teen blog and much more.

So, here is your chance to tell us what you think! The TDS team encourages visitors to send comments or ideas for new features to the [TDS Webmaster](#).

"We want teens to be the driving force behind the creative content and applications" says Richard Cole, who led the development of the new site. "Teens are who represent TDS, make a difference and define what this program is all about."

Texas Legislature takes a closer look at teen drivers

The Texas Legislature is taking a closer look at the teen driver safety problem in Texas, and the TDS program is actively involved in that process.

The House Transportation Subcommittee on Teen Driver Safety held a public hearing on the subject at the State Capitol on April 30. During that hearing, the subcommittee heard testimony from TDS Program Director Russell Henk and from Val Pezoldt, a member of the TDS team. Henk and Pezoldt outlined the extent of the problem in Texas, and shared detailed information on such topics as the Graduated Driver License Laws (GDL) and parent-taught driver education. In addition, Henk explained the nature and effectiveness of the TDS program as an important countermeasure and complement to laws and other public policy considerations.

The path to the subcommittee hearing actually began last year with discussions between TDS and Representative Larry Phillips, the chairman of the subcommittee. The TDS staff will continue to assist Representative Phillips and his staff as they prepare a report to present to the full Texas Legislature in the fall.

"Assisting legislators and their staff members is an important part of the TDS mission," said Bernie Fette, public affairs director for TDS. "Good public policy relies upon good information, and the extensive research that our team has done enables us to provide that information."



In March, Connally HS made a "Be Lucky with Your Life" board with brightly colored "safety" shamrocks on display, courtesy of the TDS student group.



Jacksboro High School

t-driver.com

Did you know that you can personalize the TDS business cards with your school's logo? We can help you set up the artwork if you can provide your logo and the printing costs.



D.A. Zapata ties green bows around trees to remind students to drive safe. Green symbolizes hope. Students at La Joya hope to stop the number-one killer of teens.

Is your school or student group currently doing something new and exciting? Call or email your TDS representative, and you could be featured in the next newsletter!

The first Teens in the Driver Seat Summit

We want to invite you to the first-ever Teens in the Driver Seat Summit! Planning is underway to host this event for the first time this fall in San Antonio, Texas. We plan to kick off the event with a lunch on Friday afternoon and end mid-day Saturday. We will have sessions just for teens and meetings for professionals. Be watching <http://t-driver.com> for more details on the dates, location, program and registration information. Also, be sure to add your email address to the listserv. We will send more details directly to your email if you are on this list. To join, email your request to the TDS webmaster at t-dswebmaster@tmail.tamu.edu. Start making plans now to attend!

TDS Star Student

When **La Joya HS** senior Domingo Arturo (D.A.) Zapata lost his friend, 19-year-old U.S. Marine Javier Solorazano, in a fatal crash last January; Zapata made the decision to find a way to both honor his friend and prevent a similar tragedy from striking La Joya for a second time.

Unsure of how he was going to execute his plan or resources available, he asked his family and friends to assist him. Who knew that while traveling to Houston with his parents, Zapata would find the tool he was looking for from an advertisement featured by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) on the Teens in the Driver Seat program.

Upon returning from his trip, Zapata and his mother Sylvia researched the TDS website and immediately made contact with Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) TDS program representatives.

Soon after, Zapata rallied friends from the high school and recruited those willing to stand and make a positive difference in teen safety to join the La Joya Teens in the Driver Seat coalition.

In only a few short months, Zapata and the coalition were

extremely successful. They were featured in numerous news stories covering their activities at the high school. They met with school board members to request a proclamation to make March, April and May official teen driving safety months for their school district. They also increased community and peer awareness of driving dangers by creating posters and talking to students one on one about dangerous driving behavior.

And they didn't stop there—after speaking with students about unsafe teen driving, they had their peers make a commitment to drive safer. Students pledged their commitment by signing a customized vinyl banner and displayed it in one of the school's hallways for students to remember their commitment.

They continue to inform their peers and their community with a custom billboard sponsored by a local company and the La Joya School District, encouraging motorists to drive smart and safe behind the wheel. The student group continues to meet weekly to plan and execute effective ways to deliver their important messages.

When it comes to safety, the La Joya coalition has no rivals. "It is important that we get this program and messages out to as many teens as we can, including our rival high schools." Zapata has met with principals from surrounding high schools urging them to take action.

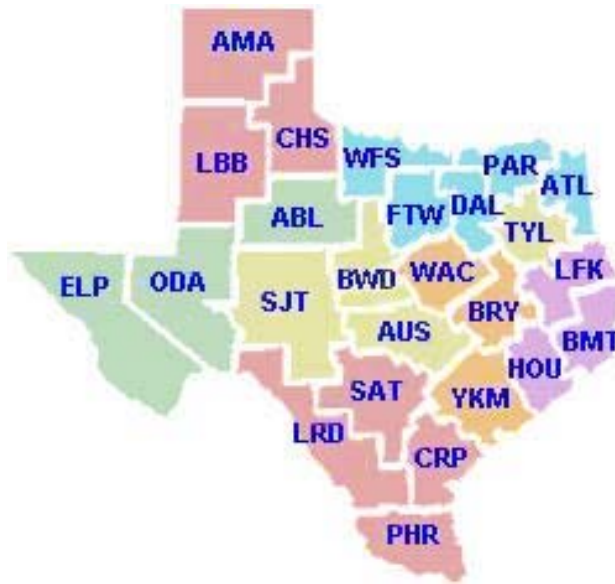
"This program is important to me because I know I'm making a positive difference in my school by having initiated it" Zapata says. "We have been fortunate to have such great support from our campus and district administration, TDS student group and our classmates."

Zapata plans to continue promoting TDS as a Texas Pan America University student spokesman by educating high school students on the dangers of teen driving

Read more about the La Joya group by visiting http://www.t-driver.com/activities/high_schools/la_joya/.



2007-2008
TDS
Regional Contacts



Teens in the Driver Seat is the nation's first peer-to-peer driving safety program. TDS promotes peer education on the top five risks associated with teen driving. To learn more about TDS, visit t-driver.com.

San Antonio - South Central & Panhandle - San Antonio (SAT), Laredo (LRD), Pharr (PHR), Corpus Christi (CRP), Amarillo (AMA), Lubbock (LBB) & Childress (CHS)

TTI San Antonio
Russell Henk, TDS Director (210) 979-9411
Kathy Montemayor R-Henk@tamu.edu
K-Montemayor@tamu.edu

Austin - Central - Austin (AUS), Brownwood (BWD), San Angelo (SJT) & Tyler (TYL)

TTI Austin (512) 467-0946
Tina Geiselbrecht T-Geiselbrecht@tamu.edu
Casey Dusza c-dusza@tamu.edu

El Paso - West - El Paso (ELP), Odessa (ODA) & Abilene (ABL)

TTI El Paso (915) 532-3759
Llubia Coreella L-Coreella@tamu.edu
Jeff Shelton J-Shelton@tamu.edu

Houston - Southeast - Houston (HOU), Beaumont (BMT) & Lufkin (LFK)

TTI Houston (713) 686-2971
Lori Gray L-Gray@tamu.edu

Dallas - North - Dallas (DAL), Fort Worth (FTW), Wichita Falls (WFS), Paris (PAR) & Atlanta (ATL)

TTI Dallas (972) 994-0433
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Chris Poe cpoe@tamu.edu

College Station - East Central - Bryan (BRY), Yoakum (YKM) & Waco (WAC)

TTI College Station (979) 845-1713
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Georgia Contact

TTI Georgia (678) 480-3801
Marsha Anderson-Bomar M-Bomar@tamu.edu
Texas Department of Transportation (512) 463-7858
Shawna Russell SRUSSE1@dot.state.tx.us

Does your TDS group need assistance, have an update or know teens who want to start their own TDS group? Find your location on the map and contact your regional coordinator. Your coordinator is available via phone or email. For out-of-Texas contacts, please contact Russell Henk or Bernie Fette.

Are you on the TDS listserv? The listserv is a great way to get the most current information on changes to the website and general announcements. To join, email your request to the TDS webmaster at tdswebmaster@ttimail.tamu.edu.



Brock HS students, (L to R) Zack Drillette, Carlingh Dollar, Rebecca Dollar and Ryan Burden wore their TDS t-shirts to promote the TDS program at their high school.



Jeff Shelton, TDS El Paso regional coordinator, at the 26th Annual Lower Valley Health Fair on April 19



Making use of the latest technology, Jacksboro HS has developed four different TDS banners



Llubia Corella, TDS El Paso Regional Coordinator, at a Socorro HS presentation on April 23

Austin/Tyler
TDS Contacts
Tina Geiselbrecht and Casey Dusza

Active Schools 2007-2008:

Jack C. Hays HS, Llano HS, Mason HS, Marble Falls HS, Burnet 4H Clubs, Elkhart HS, Lampasas HS, Granger HS, Mt. Enterprise HS, Ore City HS, Van HS and Robert E. Lee HS

Newly Interested Schools:

Spring Hill HS, Austin ISD and Clarksville HS

- **Ore City HS** handed out pens with a flyer and a note — “A Message for Teens from Teens.” They dedicated a week in April to TDS, including making windshield reminders. One teacher is giving extra credit to students that can list the top five risks at the end of the six weeks.
- **Llano HS** Organized a week of daily dress-up to promote TDS awareness, e.g., “Wear your favorite belt for seatbelt awareness.”
- **Lampasas HS** is working to increase awareness before prom and graduation.
- **Jack C. Hays HS** students have conducted field tests to see who is obeying traffic rules.
- **Marble Falls HS** is designing a wristband to hand out at graduation to remind seniors to drive safely.

Dallas/Fort Worth
TDS Contacts
Christie Madsen and Chris Poe

Active Schools for 2007-2008:

Creekview HS, Garland HS, Lakeview Centennial HS, Naaman Forest HS, North Garland HS, Rowlett HS, Sachse HS, South Garland HS, Marcus HS, Flower Mound HS, Plano West Senior HS, Forestburg HS, Lewisville HS, Pottsboro HS, Brock HS, Millsap HS, Decatur HS, Waxahachie HS, Jacksboro HS, Archer City HS, Chico HS, Aledo HS, Prairiland HS, Mt. Vernon HS, Duncanville HS, Emmett Conrad HS, Grady Spruce HS, Nimitz HS, Peaster HS, Poolville HS, MacArthur HS, Argyle HS, McKinney North HS, Lindsay HS, Harmony HS, Texans Can Academy and Weatherford HS

Newly Interested Schools:

Cedar Hill HS, Community HS, Billy Ryan HS, Centennial HS, Hebron HS, Killough Lewisville HS, The Colony

What's going on in your area?

HS, John Horn HS, Valley View HS, Coppell HS, Highland Park HS, Clark HS, Bridgeport HS, Sulphur Springs HS, Corsicana HS and Gilmer HS

- Chris Poe presented TDS at the Dallas chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers meeting.
- May 3, **Coke County** hosted a TDS event with speakers and a dance. Money raised went to a scholarship in memory of a teen that died in a car crash.
- At **Jacksboro HS**, the entire student body attended an assembly hosted by the school's TDS group the week prior to spring break where they discovered the fatal facts on teen car crashes.
- March 5, **Garland HS** hosted an informational fair for seniors and handed out information on TDS.
- **Flower Mound HS** made posters of stop signs and yield signs with different teen driving statistics prior to spring break. They also reminded their peers to take a “break” during spring break and slow down with a large banner displayed in their high school. They are also making posters to alert the students about the new law that forbids cell phone use in active school zone areas.
- **Chico HS** teens are working on scripts for a video they are making for the student body prior to prom. Reality set in for some of the students after the TDS group made a chain for the high school walls with 6,000 links representing the 6,000 teens that die each year from car crashes.
- **Millsap HS** seniors spoke with every 10th, 11th and 12th grader at both Millsap and **Brock HS**, on the top five risks for teenage drivers. A special guest appearance was made by the Grim Reaper.

El Paso
TDS Contacts
Jeff Shelton and Llubia Corella

Active Schools for 2007-2008:

Chapin HS, Irvin HS, Ysleta HS, Raymond Telles Academy, Sunset HS, Americas HS, El Dorado HS, Mission Early College HS, Montwood HS, Riverside HS, El Paso HS, Franklin HS, Jefferson HS, Socorro HS, Bethel Temple HS, KEYS Academy HS and Odessa HS

Newly Interested Schools:

Burges HS, Radford HS, Bowie HS, Coronado HS, Immanuel Christian School and Del Valle HS

- April 19, TDS participated in the 26th Annual Lower Valley Health Fair.
- April 23, TDS presented to University Communities Against Reckless Endangerment (U.C.A.R.E.), El Paso Community College's Lambda Alpha Epsilon, the Office of Student Leadership and Campus Life, and Rio Grande Safe Communities Coalition's “Town Hall Meeting on the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking.”
- April 23, TDS presented at **Socorro HS** where their Student Council and their Criminal Justice Department are working to promote TDS and work on the Shattered Dreams program in May.
- **Irvin HS** passed out Airhead candy to students during prom week with the message “Don't be an airhead, think before you get behind the wheel.” During Global Road Safety Week—April 2008—they also set aside a moment of silence each morning in honor of those who lost their lives in car accidents.
- The TDS “Driving the Message” contest and quarterly newsletter was recognized in the April 2008 issue of the Youth Initiative Program newsletter.
- **Ysleta HS** encouraged peers to sign a safety pledge before spring break “I (name) pledge to be safe during spring break for everyone's sake; and with this link, I promise to think!”

Houston
TDS Contact
Lori Gray

Active Schools 2007-2008:

Burkeville HS, Channelview HS, Angleton HS, Cypress Springs HS, North Shore Senior HS, Cypress Woods HS and Sweeny HS

Newly Interested Schools:
 Atascocita HS

- **Channelview HS** is working on a press release to alert their peers in the Houston area to dangerous driving.
- **Burkeville HS** captivated the attention of 200 people at an assembly in late February about TDS.

Continued on Next Page

Area Update Continued

Lubbock/Amarillo/San Antonio/Laredo
TDS Contacts
Russell Henk and Kathy Montemayor

Active Schools 2007-2008:

Coronado HS, Estacado HS, Lubbock HS, Pampa HS, Bandera HS, Cigarroa HS, Nixon HS, Martin HS, Early College HS, Del Rio HS, Carrizo Springs HS, Brackett HS, Eagle Pass HS, La Joya HS, Douglas MacArthur HS, Vidal M. Trevino School of Communications and Fine Arts HS, Smyer HS, John Jay HS, Monterey HS, Raymondville HS, Denver City HS, Communications Arts HS, Happy HS, Banquete HS, United HS, Cotulla HS, Springlake-Earth HS, Lyndon B. Johnson HS, C.C. Winn HS, Medina Valley HS and Crystal City HS

Newly Interested Schools:

O'Connor HS and Southwest HS

- April 21-25, **MacArthur HS** in San Antonio distributed TDS items before Fiesta during their t-driver awareness week.
- The **La Joya HS** superintendent signed off on a TDS billboard contract. The billboard company is sponsoring the monthly fee and the district is paying for the production of the vinyl. The sign has been guaranteed for six months and may extend more.
- **Pampa HS** is working on a press event to highlight their activities.
- May 1, Kathy Montemayor presented TDS to **Lyndon B. Johnson HS** seniors in Laredo.
- **Laredo ISD** announced with a formal proclamation that April 21-25 was Teens in the Driver Seat Week for their ISD.
- March 14, Russell Henk presented to 600 seniors at **United HS** in Laredo and then met one on one with the TDS student team. Representatives from Department of Public Safety, United States Department of Transportation, and FMCSA were in attendance for this meeting.

- **Banquete HS** Junior, Veronica Gonzalez, presented TDS for Career Day. Banquete also borrowed TDS banners for the month of May—the month they have dedicated to teen drivers.

BCS/Yoakum, Waco
TDS Contacts
Bernie Fette and Jen Ross

Active Schools 2007-2008:

Connally HS, Normangee HS, Robinson HS, Teague HS, West HS, Gatesville HS, Bosqueville HS and Louise HS

Newly Interested Schools:

A&M Consolidated HS, Brenham HS and Killeen HS

- April 14, **Connally HS** created a Styrofoam cup fence sign facing IH-35 that reads “Keep Your Drive Alive—Know Your Risks.”
- **West HS** English class showed a video that the students made on the top five risks. They also plan to put TDS business cards on the windshields of cars at prom.
- April 10, **Gatesville HS** planned a mock car crash to simulate the dangers of drinking and texting behind the wheel. The teen group worked with local Emergency Medical Services, fire, police, hospital and wrecker services for this big event. Students held a car wash to raise money for this event.

The Director’s Corner

It is hard to believe our third edition of the TDS newsletter is the last one for the 2007-2008 school year. It is amazing how fast the year has passed and how much has been accomplished. The third generation of our website was launched earlier this month (<http://t-driver.com>) — we hope you like it. Go take a look and let us know what you think. We are also working to wrap up the school year by determining which schools qualify for a plaque for successfully completing TDS at their school. Did your school qualify? If not, we look forward to having your school join our award-winners next year.

Finally, we are also working to identify the winners of our “Driving the Message” contest. Thanks to all of you who took the time to develop and submit an item for the contest. With over 60 entries, we are excited to see the number and quality of your ideas— nice work! Be sure to check the website over the next few weeks to see our Winner’s Circle. We owe a special thanks to the Texas Department of Transportation and State Farm of Texas for the resources and support that have helped make the TDS Program and Driving the Message contest a reality!

With summer vacation quickly coming upon us, we all need to remain aware of the top risks for teen drivers on Texas roads. With our hectic lives and schedules these days, the summer months represent a time when many families use the break from school to allow teens to get behind the wheel for the first time and start their driver training. Summer also represents a time to start thinking about your TDS team and project ideas for next year. If you have not started a TDS program at your school, we can begin helping you now to make plans for a successful project next year.

Most importantly, thank you to all of the teens and schools across Texas for all of your hard work in spreading the TDS message this school year. There is no doubt in my mind that your efforts are saving lives. We are looking forward to an even more successful 2008-2009 school year and are happy to provide you whatever support you need. Watch for our next newsletter edition in early fall when you return to school after your summer break.

Enjoy your summer and stay safe!

My best to you,
 Russell

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 TDS Director of Public Affairs
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Pictured above: Russell Henk



Pictured below: Bernie Fette

NEWSWORTHY NOTES

FEDERAL FUNDING: April 7, a press event was held at **William Howard Taft and Communication Arts Magnet High School** with former Texas Transportation Commission Chairwoman Hope Andrade and U.S. Congressman **Ciro Rodriguez** to announce the federal appropriations funding for Teens in the Driver Seat.



NEW PROMOTIONAL ITEMS: Currently, Teens in the Driver Seat promo items include T-shirts, jerseys, business cards, pens, wrist bands, key chains and air fresheners. The new student-inspired shipment of promo items will include temporary tattoos, pencils, stickers and magnets. Additional items will be available as future contest prizes. Continue checking t-driver.com for a chance to win!

SPANISH ITEMS: Did you know that some of the promotional items (like the air fresheners and key chains) are available in Spanish? Check with your regional contact on how to add these to your next supply order.

“DRIVING THE MESSAGE” CONTEST: We are excited to announce that we received over 60 contest entries. Thank you for your great ideas! Be checking the website where we will announce the winners and highlight the top contest entries.



Millsap HS students, (L to R) Wesley Downs, Kyle Benton, and Tanner Riggs wore their TDS t-shirts to promote the TDS program at their high school.



New PSAs

Have you heard the new Teens in the Driver Seat TV and radio public service announcements (PSAs) airing across Texas? Keep your eyes and ears open through June 23. Go to our website and send us an email to let us know your favorite!

Calendar

May 7-9—66th Annual U.S.-Mexico Border Health Association (USMBHA) Conference, Hermosillo, Mexico

May 14—TDS Press Event at Pampa High School, Pampa, Texas

May 22-24—Texas Driver Traffic Safety Education Association (TDTSEA) Conference, San Antonio, Texas

June 3—State Farm Annual Founders Day, Austin and Dallas, Texas

June 18—2008 Career Awareness and Youth Leadership Laboratory, Prairie View A&M University, Prairie View, Texas

June 25-28—National Association of Student Councils Conference, Fort Worth, Texas

July 14-16—Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) National Conference, Orlando, Florida

July 27-30—American Driver Traffic Safety Education Association (ADTSEA) Conference, Fort Worth, Texas

September 26-28—Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) and Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) Conference, Dallas, Texas

October—First Teens in the Driver Seat Summit, San Antonio, Texas