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UGA Traffic Injury Prevention Institute awarded \$948,400 grant

Athens, Ga. – The University of Georgia’s Traffic Injury Prevention Institute was recently awarded a \$948,400 grant from the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety to continue its education and training programs in the use of safety belts, child safety seats and teen driving. This year, GTIPI will also explore a new program for mature drivers called CarFit.

GTIPI was established in 1986 to provide education to help reduce traffic-related injuries and fatalities statewide. The grant will allow GTIPI to enhance its educational impact in the areas of passenger safety, young and senior driver education and community programming.

Onsite training will be conducted at GTIPI’s facilities in Conyers, as well as regional locations across the state. Programs related to young children will include the 32-hour Child Passenger Safety Technician advanced class, continuing education units for technicians and specialized training for Georgia’s child-care providers. Programs offered by GTIPI related to parents and teens include, “Georgia Teens Ride with PRIDE,” which stands for Parents Reducing Incidents of Driver Error. The program includes a certification course for volunteer instructors, as well as two-hour courses across the state for parents and teens to learn what is required to earn and keep a driver’s license.

Law enforcement, emergency medical services, health department and fire department personnel across the state directly benefit from these trainings. By becoming certified, these professionals are an important local resource in their communities. Parents and their children will then be able to receive free life-saving information from these trained technicians. And training is just the beginning.

GTIPI’s Resource Center continues to be the primary source statewide for print and electronic traffic safety resources for consumers, educators and professionals. Materials are available online through a joint project between the Governor’s Office on Highway Safety and GTIPI, “The Online Safety Store.” GTIPI manages distribution of materials from the GOHS website, www.georgiahighwaysafety.org

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“This program is the primary resource in the state for public information and professional training on the use of safety belts, child safety seats, and safer teen driving” according to Don Bower, a UGA Cooperative Extension human development specialist and professor in the UGA College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Bower serves as project director for GTIPI.

The program reaches virtually every Georgian with media information encouraging the correct and consistent use of these safety devices. In 2007, educators in the program conducted 281 child safety seat checks and provided more than 18,000 hours of training, helping to increase child safety seat use by Georgians to 89 percent.

Vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 1 to 34-year-olds, and cost society more than \$150 billion annually.

For more information, see GTIPI’s website at www.ridesafegeorgia.org or call GTIPI at 678/413-4281, or toll free at 800/342-9819.

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