

PRINT FORMAT
SPONSORED BY

SmartDrive promotes safe driving for students

By MOLLY MacMILLAN, Delaware Wave

Posted Thursday, November 29, 2007

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, car accidents are the leading cause of death for teens in this country.

In 2005, teens accounted for 10 percent of the population, but 12 percent of the motor vehicle fatalities.

Driving is a privilege where ignorance can have deadly consequences. That's one reason why Sussex Technical High School has joined other schools across the area in a program called SmartDrive, driver's education instructor Merrill Moore said.

"We like to say it reinforces the content we provide in drivers education," he said.

SmartDrive is similar to defensive driving-- complete with the 10 percent discount on car insurance -- but students complete the program online in their spare time, Moore said.

SmartDrive also offers the opportunity for students to compete against their peers for prom money and scholarships.

The high school's public relations coordinator, Carolyn M. O'Neal, said 33 Delaware high schools offered the program last year and Sussex Technical High School won prom money by finishing first place among schools in Kent and Sussex County.

"There is a lot of interest and school pride in the competitive spirit of the program," she said.

O'Neal said SmartDrive was conceived after a string of fatal car accidents involving Delaware high school students in 2004 made a need for the comprehensive driver's safety program apparent.

"They are doing it in a very convenient format," she said.

Now the program has grown to involve 45 high schools in Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania and includes driver's safety tests after educational segments produced in Sussex Tech's media broadcast class.

"It's like a 30-second [public service announcement] because they are giving car tips and general information to the public," instructor Gary Conaway said of the segments produced in his class. "In this instance, most of the public will be young drivers."

Junior Paul Sisson plans to complete SmartDrive before he turns 17 and receives his full Class D license. It "will help make sure all our skills are sharp and up-to-date and we know the latest defensive skills."

Copyright © 2007, The News Journal. Users of this site agree to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy/Your California Privacy Rights](#) (Terms updated March 2007). [Questions?](#)