

# All American Buckle Up Week, Nov.24-30

Endorsing a nationwide challenge for all Americans to buckle up, Governor Sheffield issued a proclamation declaring November 24-30, 1985, as "All American Buckle Up" week in Alaska.

Using the theme "Start A Habit For Life," this first national "All American Buckle Up" is scheduled to coincide with the Thanksgiving holiday, traditionally a time when many people are on the roads as they head for family gatherings.

Over the 1984 Thanksgiving season, 603 people lost their lives in traffic accidents nationwide. However, it is the belief of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), that if everyone in the country were to accept the challenge offered by this year's buckle up, it could save hundreds of holiday gatherings from having tragic endings.

Present day lap and shoulder belts are 45 percent to 55 percent effective in reducing moderate to serious injuries and 40 percent to 50 percent effective in eliminating motor vehicle occupant fatalities, according to statistics provided by NHTSA. However, a study being conducted by the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) this year is finding that most Alaskans do not buckle up when traveling in motor vehicles.

This study by UAA's School of

Nursing is a five wave vehicle restraint use observance survey being conducted at the entrances to Anchorage malls. The first wave was completed in June 1985, just prior to the time when Alaska's child restraint law first went into effect. Results showed that only 30 percent of the drivers and 21 percent of their passengers were buckled up.

The fourth wave was conducted in October. It showed an increase in belt usage with 48 percent of the drivers and 38 percent of their passengers buckled up. The final wave has yet to be executed.

Although there is a child restraint law for children under 7 years of age, there is presently no law requiring adults to use seat belts in Alaska. Last May, Rep. Mike Miller (Juneau), introduced House Bill 224 to the First Session of the 14th Legislature which calls for the mandatory use of vehicle restraints for all passengers in motor vehicles.

The idea for the "All American Buckle Up" originated with Sgt. John Mull of the Indiana State Police in 1983. Inspired by the success of the "Great American Smoke Out," he thought it would be a good idea to challenge people to give safety belts a try. Mull believed that many people would be willing to use their safety belts for just on week.