



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH – GOVERNOR

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Governor Blagojevich welcomes NASCAR to Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet

Governor and NASCAR driver Carl Edwards urge race fans to take the pledge to “BUCKLE UP, Every Trip, Every Time”

CHICAGO – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich today officially welcomed NASCAR to the Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet. The Governor is being joined by NASCAR driver Carl Edwards in urging race fans to participate in the state’s first of its kind traffic safety partnership with NASCAR, in which race fans can take a pledge to “BUCKLE UP, Every Trip, Every Time” and designate a sober driver before the festivities.

“It’s going to be a great weekend of racing at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, and this year we are especially excited to team up with NASCAR to make safety on our roadways the top priority for all of the fans,” said Governor Blagojevich. “I urge everyone who attends to take the pledge to buckle up on every trip, and to make sure that if they are drinking, they have a safe ride home.”

This year’s races in Joliet feature a groundbreaking traffic safety partnership between NASCAR, the Chicagoland Speedway and the Illinois Department of Transportation’s (IDOT) Division of Traffic Safety. Illinois is the first state to formally pilot such a program with NASCAR.

“Every NASCAR driver knows that safety is the greatest priority. I want to make sure my fans know it too,” said Edwards, Roush Fenway Racing driver of the No.99 Office Depot Ford Fusion. “Reminding fans to ‘Buckle up, Every Trip, Every Time’ is a message I’m proud to support.”

“We are very happy to be able to partner with NASCAR and the Chicagoland Speedway on this traffic safety outreach effort to racing fans,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “Our goal is to encourage these fans to think of traffic safety every time they get behind the wheel, so that they buckle up for every car trip and do not drive while impaired.”

Race fans are invited to visit any one of the four IDOT display booths: at Champions’ Park (next to the Richard Petty Driving Experience), in the Midway, and two locations on the Concourse

level. At any of these booths, they can sign the BUCKLE UP AMERICA pledge to “Buckle Up, Every Trip, Every Time.” Fans age 21 and older are invited to sign the Friends pledge: “I will Plan Ahead; and Designate a sober driver BEFORE I celebrate.”

Participants at the Champions Park booth will be given a commemorative photo, free of charge. Participants at all booths will be entered into a random drawing to win a VIP prize package, including a Chicagoland Track Pack.

“The pilot program with IDOT builds on NASCAR’s partnership with NHTSA and represents the kind of relationship we are excited to build,” said Marcus Jadotte, NASCAR managing director of public affairs. “We will reach millions of NASCAR fans with life saving messages, while enhancing the NASCAR fan experience. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

“Teaming up with a state partner to become the first NASCAR venue to officially embrace a high profile designated driver message is something we are very proud of,” said Matthew Alexander, President of Chicagoland Speedway. “Reminding our fans to put safety first during our NASCAR race weekend is just another way of helping us achieve a goal we set for our facility every year: consistently providing our fans with a very exciting and safe experience all weekend long.”

The Buckle Up America Challenge kicked off the weekend of activities in Illinois at an Office Depot Foundation backpack giveaway event at the local Office Depot in Frankfort. Edwards assisted The Foundation in donating 3,000 backpacks to local organizations in the greater Chicagoland area. Traffic safety materials were included in the backpacks and hundreds of Edwards’ fans joined him in signing the Buckle Up America pledge.

Along with Edwards, several other NASCAR drivers have supported the Buckle Up America Challenge, including: Cale Gale, Kevin Harvick Inc., No.33 RoadLoans.com/Camping World Chevrolet; Clint Bowyer, Richard Childress Racing, No. 7 Jack Daniel's Chevrolet; Colin Braun, Roush Fenway Racing, No. 16 CitiFinancial Ford; David Ragan, Roush Fenway Racing, No. 6 AAA Ford; Erik Darnell, Roush Fenway Racing, No.99 Northern Tool Ford; Johnny Benson, Bill Davis Racing, No.23 Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Toyota; Kurt Busch, Penske Racing, No. 2 Miller Lite Dodge; Reed Sorenson, Chip Ganassi Racing, No. 41 Target Dodge; Travis Kvapil, Yates Racing, No. 28 Ford.

Also supporting the traffic safety effort is Gavin DeGraw, the J Records recording artist, who will be singing the national anthem on Saturday at the LifeLock.com 400 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series Race.

Buckle Up America is a campaign to encourage proper safety belt and child safety seat use in the United States, coordinated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The partnership to promote the national Buckle Up America Challenge was facilitated by BLU MOON Foundation, a non-profit that serves the public interest through creating, managing and collaborating on cause-related educational programs and national campaigns. For more information, go to: www.myspace.com/BuckleUpAmerica or www.myspace.com/FriendsChallenge.