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**Jesse White Announces Teen Driving Deaths Down Nearly 60 Percent as this Week Marks National Teen Driver Safety Week**

*Awards Glenbrook South High School for its outstanding driver education program*

Secretary of State Jesse White announced today that teen driving deaths are down nearly 60 percent in Illinois as the country recognizes National Teen Driver Safety Week October 20 through the 26.

Illinois' nationally heralded Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) program was cited as one of the contributing factors to the decline in fatalities. According to the Illinois Department of Transportation, there were 144 teen driving deaths in 2007. Since White's efforts to overhaul the GDL law took effect in 2008, teen driving fatalities have decreased by nearly 60 percent – with 58 teen driving deaths in 2012.

"The goal is to save lives," said White. "I am pleased that these provisions continue to work as we intended. When I first convened the Teen Driver Safety Task Force, we knew we had our work cut out for us. We knew that automobile crashes were the leading cause of death for teens, and we worked hard to strengthen our GDL program and make it one of the best in the nation. While too many teens are still dying on our roads, we can take some solace in the fact that far fewer teens have died in crashes since we greatly strengthened our GDL program."

Illinois' GDL program better prepares novice, teen drivers by giving them more time to obtain valuable driving experience while under the watchful eye of a parent or guardian, limiting in-car distractions, and requiring teens to earn their way from one stage to the next by avoiding traffic convictions. State and national traffic safety organizations have praised Illinois' stronger GDL program as one of the best in the nation.

White made the announcement during National Teen Driver Safety Week at a press conference at the James R. Thompson Center where he presented the 2013 Teen Driving Safety Award to Glenbrook South High School in Glenview for its outstanding driver education program. White emphasized the important roles that parents, high schools and driver education instructors play in preparing safe and responsible teen drivers.

"We have formed a partnership between the Secretary of State's office, parents, students, schools and driver education instructors," said White. "Working together, we are saving lives and making our roads safer."

Glenbrook South High School has an innovative driver education program that works to encourage safe and responsible teen drivers. In celebration of National Teen Driver Safety Week, Glenbrook South High School has launched various teen driver safety initiatives, including:

- Integration of video cameras and technology in driver's education
- Parking lot safety belt checks – local businesses have donated gift cards as further incentive for students to buckle up.
- Launching a pledge drive to promote safe driving
- Promoting an educational campaign to discourage texting while driving.

"As the principal of Glenbrook South High School, I am proud of the accomplishments of our teachers that have led to Glenbrook South High School's Driver Education Program being recognized by the State of Illinois as the Program of the Year," said Dr. Brian K. Wegley, principal of Glenbrook South.

To learn more about the state's Graduated Driver Licensing program, visit [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com).