Every thirteen minutes...

someone in America dies in a motor vehicle crash.

Why is it reported that traffic crashes have become a "public health" issue? Does the average citizen know that there is a greater risk to their life on the road than anywhere else they can be? We are killing an average of 115 people a day on American roads.

In 2001 there were just over six million crashes in the United States, producing three million injuries and 42,116 fatalities. In Nevada we had over 42,000 crashes, claiming 312 lives and injuring over twenty thousand.

Traffic Crashes are the leading cause of death for children and teenagers. Only cancer and heart disease kill more adults on a yearly basis.

The costs associated with vehicle crashes are just as astounding. In 2001 the total cost to Americans for vehicle crashes was 230.6 billion dollars. The pain and suffering carry a far larger price tag.

In the Great Southwest, the car is King. We rarely put aside our vehicles in favor or alternate modes of transportation, and it appears that we prefer our own company to others. We drive everywhere we go and we are raising new generations of children who have never known the freedom of walking to school.

The result is that in addition to the price we accept in human pain, suffering and death to operate our precious vehicles, Americans are more unhealthy than ever before.

There is no easy solution. However, as activists, elected officials, and citizens it is imperative that we begin to look at some of the ways we can help the situation. Some of the ideas are not popular, some of them are not cheap, but the dividends are great!

It is estimated that in 2001, the State of Nevada’s economic impact for crashes was close to 1.9 billion dollars.

Further, Nevadans spent 3.1 percent of their personal income to defray these costs.

Source: The economic cost of crashes in America (NHTSA, August, 2002)

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Throughout this guide you will find topics the Safe Community Partnership is passionate about. In reality there are others, but we are only including those we hope will be brought before the legislature in the coming session.

We will continue researching these topics and will be providing the results on our web site: www.scpnv.org. Please do not forget us when you want information. In many cases we can breakdown crash data to individual voting boundaries. When you vote on a primary seat belt law, wouldn’t it be helpful to know how many injuries and fatalities were recorded in your district last year that were the result of not being belted?

How many citizens in your district lost their lives last year at the hands of 16 and 17-year-old drivers? Do you know what the cost per mile driven by a drinking driver is in Nevada?

Finally, when you are passionate about a cause too, don’t forget that we will provide you with all the data we can find, start an e-mail and telephone campaign to your bill and cheer you on!