

Safe Routes to School Announces Funding Awards

PIERRE, SD – The South Dakota Department of Transportation has awarded \$714,991.14 to the cities of Parker, Hartford, Sioux Falls, Brookings, Harrisburg and De Smet to implement Safe Routes to School programs.

Eighteen schools within the six communities will benefit from the second round of federal funding. Applicants had to create a unique Safe Routes to School program to address specific safety issues for their schoolchildren. The programs include activities that encourage walking and biking, as well as small-scale infrastructure projects that fill gaps in existing bicycle and pedestrian routes.

Infrastructure projects include sign and crosswalk improvements, pedestrian countdown timers, driver feedback signs, pedestrian and bicycle connective paths, pedestrian bridges and bicycle racks.

Non-infrastructure projects include incentive programs, safety and health education, law enforcement assistance, safety campaigns, bicycle rodeo activities, bicycle physical education programs, in-street yield signs, walking school buses and bicycle trains.

Safe Routes to School was created by Congress to combat the growing epidemic of childhood obesity and diabetes. One cause of this epidemic is the decrease in children's physical activity. To this end, Safe Routes has three goals:

- To enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school

- To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age

- To facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption and air pollution near schools.

Round three of Safe Route to School is now open for applications until March 24, 2010.

More information about the Safe Routes to School program can be found at www.sddot.com/srts. For an application or more information about the program, contact Angela Olson, Safe Routes to School Coordinator, at (605) 773-2402 or angela.olson@state.sd.us.