



Source: <http://www.lakecountypublichealth.org/index.php/buckle-up-montana/>



POLSON – Officer Brian Kunz of the Polson Police Department honored Polson area citizen Doreen Trusler with the Saved By the Belt Award.

This is the third presentation of the award in 2010. Sponsored by Buckle Up Montana, a program of Lake County Public Health, the award is given to persons who were using a safety belt at the time of a crash, thereby preventing fatal injuries. The police officer on the scene of an accident can nominate a qualifying individual. He must then submit the recommendation to Diane Ward of the Lake County Public Health Department.

“It’s just a really nice way of showing how important seat-belts are and showing people in a positive way that seat-belts save lives,” she said. “This is an award that raises public awareness about using vehicle restraints and how important it is to be buckled up.”

According to Kunz, Trusler’s accident was “proof-positive” that seat-belts work. Traveling at 35 miles-per-hour, or 51 feet-per-second, her vehicle hit another head-on.

“It was like running into a brick wall,” he said. “The truck pulled out right in front of her and she had no time to react. Normally, in town, you don’t see wrecks that serious, but that one could have been fatal if she wasn’t wearing her seat-belt.”

The collision caused a broken wind-shield and some compromise of the cabin, but even at 81-years-old, Trusler was fine, walking about and talking to officers on scene.

“It’s uncommon for people in that generation to wear seat-belts,” Kunz said. “To go from 35 to nothing, crashing into a steering wheel can really do some damage, but there she was, completely 100-percent OK.”



Trusler said that while 35 miles-per-hour doesn’t seem like a very high speed, her situation was so instantaneous that there was no way to avoid a head-on collision.

"I advocate wearing your seat-belt to anybody and every body from the minute they get into their car," Trusler said.

"If the award goes on to inspire somebody, then that's a good thing."

-Ali Bronsdon (Lake County Leader)