

Most drivers wearing seat belts — poll

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them and 5 percent were undecided or refused to answer, said Constance Soma, coalition spokeswoman.

"It's good to know that Michigan residents stand behind our efforts to minimize traffic deaths and disabling injuries," Soma said.

MICHIGAN BEGAN requiring drivers and front-seat passengers to buckle up on July 1, 1985. Officers can ticket them for not buckling up if their car is stopped for a primary traffic violation such as speeding.

Failure to comply can bring a \$25 fine.

In Farmington last year, the number of injury accidents fell 16 percent from 1985. The number of injuries was down 18 percent even though the number of accidents rose 11 percent.

"We noticed a gradual increase in total accidents and injury accidents every year until 1986," said Gary Goss, Farmington Department of Public Safety deputy director. "Then, accidents didn't stop. They continued to rise, but there was a dramatic decrease in injuries."

The number of severe injuries also has dropped. There were no fatal accidents in 1986, he added.

It's more than coincidence that these injury decreases followed passage of a mandatory seat belt use law in Michigan, Goss concluded.

IN FARMINGTON HILLS, 1986 was the first year in 10 years the number of traffic accidents reported on public streets fell.

Sixty-eight fewer traffic accidents were logged in 1986 despite booming residential and commercial development. Three people died on city

roadways, the lowest fatality rate in 15 years.

Sgt. Ray Cranston of the Farmington Hills Police Department attributed the decreases to increased ticketing and more drunk driving arrests by police and increased seat belt use and wider alcohol awareness by motorists.

"We've stepped up enforcing traffic laws at locations where accidents are most likely to occur," he said. "As a result, we're seeing not only a drop in accident rates at these areas, but a reduction in the severity of injury accidents."

Elaborating on the value of seat belts, Officer Don Fradette of the Farmington Hills Police Department said: "Use of seat belts is always going to be a factor if for no other reason than simple injuries are going to be alleviated. A very simple accident could turn into an injury accident if seat belts aren't worn."

up before seat belts became mandatory, 21 percent of those interviewed by Nordhaus said always, 17 percent most of the time, 23 percent sometimes, 17 percent seldom and 23 percent never, Soma said.

Now, 45 percent say they always buckle up, 25 percent most of the time, 9 percent sometimes, 5 percent seldom, 5 percent never and 1 percent refused to say, Soma said.

Other studies, however, have found lower rates of seat belt use in Michigan. University of Michigan transportation researchers, who observe drivers at various locations around the state every six months, found 47 percent of the drivers wearing seat belts in July 1986.

SOME OF the difference probably is because those interviewed by Nordhaus gave answers they thought were appropriate, rather than reflecting actual seat belt habits. "People on the phone will say, 'That's what I should be doing,'" Soma said.

Eighty percent of those interviewed said they believe mandatory seat belt use laws save a significant number of lives. Nine percent say the laws don't save many lives and 11 percent aren't sure or won't say, Soma said.

"The people of Michigan firmly believe that safety belt use laws are working," said Bob Van Dam, Nordhaus president.

Van Dam said results of his company's telephone survey have a 4.5 percentage point margin of error.

Associated Press contributed to this report.

Focus: expense accounts

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Brotheron, on the other hand, spent about \$1,000-\$1,500. "Frankly, it's mostly for donations, magazines,"

The Farmington Republican spent his OEF money buying tickets for fund-raising activities or as donations to the Farmington Community Center, Right to Life of Michigan and the Michigan Republican Committee, for example. Brotheron has also used his OEF to purchase books or magazines and to occasionally pay for postage.

"Actually, you can do without it," Brotheron said. "I don't use it for baseball, football tickets or the country club. But there are times when you need to take someone out to dinner and you're doing it because you are a state official."

But it (OEF spending) shouldn't be overdone," Brotheron said, adding that spending \$5,000, like many legislators have, is far too much.

LEGISLATORS SHOULD remember they have expense accounts that can cover many costs. And still other expenses are tax deductible, Brotheron said.

Secretary of State Richard Austin has ruled the funds must not be used for personal benefit unrelated to holding office. Attorney General Frank Kelley has said officials can't take leftover money when they leave office, but he hasn't ruled yet on what they legally can do with the money.

Not all lawmakers and state officials have been frugal with their OEFs.

Gov. James Blanchard's OEF bought a lot. He reported spending more than \$557,124 in privately raised money last year. Of that, more than \$53,000 was used for travel for the governor, his wife, Paula, and staff members.

Another \$76,000 was used for official receptions. A survey related to the annual State of the State mes-

sage cost \$9,000, research for the State of the State message \$4,000, and travel expenses for the Massachusetts consultant who did the work \$1,100, Blanchard's report showed.

Blanchard also used the OEF to defray Christmas costs. The governor's official holiday greeting card cost \$13,507 to print, \$1,566 to address and \$7,480 for postage. None of that came out of tax money.

STATE SEN. Phil Arthurhult, R-Whitehall, was among well-traveled legislators last year, but his disclosure report does not say where he went.

Arthurhult reported spending more than \$15,000 from his office holder fund for transportation, lodging, meals and other travel expenses. Arthurhult also used \$1,554 from his OEF to buy and install a car telephone.

Former Sen. Alan Croyce, R-DeWitt, bought \$222 worth of meals for himself and his staff.

Sen. Basil Brown, D-Highland Park, reported spending \$226 on football tickets at Michigan State University and the University of Michigan; \$500 for "campaign sup-

plies" and \$514 on "printing of campaign materials." In addition, his office holder account gave Brown loans of more than \$5,000.

House Appropriations Committee Chairman Dominic Jacobetti, D-Negaunee, used his office holder account to pay his \$15 National Rifle Association dues.

Sen. Richard Fessler, R-Union Lake, spent \$1,500 on photographic services, bought flowers for funerals and made contributions to more than a dozen candidates for office. Money for his OEF came from his campaign committee and some additional donations, including \$450 from the Tobacco Institute, \$450 from R.J. Reynolds Industries and \$450 from Philip Morris U.S.A.

THE SECRETARY of state has ruled the funds must not be used for personal benefit unrelated to holding office.

Most lawmakers who stepped down at the end of 1986 spent their OEF money before leaving office.

Associated Press contributed to this report.

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Head count to be taken

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Enumerators will also double-check information with a random contact of about 40 households in each district, comprised of 1,000-1,500 residents.

Final census results are expected to be compiled and available in June.

If the city's population has increased 15 percent — as projected — since 1980, Farmington could receive additional state money in the last three years of the decade.

A certified population increase will also increase the city's quota of population-based liquor licenses available through the state.

No-smoking signs offered

In response to Michigan's new "Clean Indoor Air Act," which took effect Jan. 1, 1987, the American Heart Association is offering limited quantities of "no smoking is prohibited" signs free to individuals and businesses.

The signs are 11-by-14 inches and state (as required by law) "Smoking is prohibited except in designated smoking areas pursuant to Part 126 of the Public Health Code, P.A. 368 of 1978." American Heart Association of Michigan is at 18310 12 Mile, Lathrup Village, call 557-5900.

Posting of such signs is required by law to establish non-smoking as the norm in public places. The law states: "An individual shall not smoke in a public place or at a meeting of a public body, except in a designated smoking area."

Areas affected by the new law include: all public places, meeting places and workplaces owned or operated by state or local government agencies, including offices, educational facilities, health facilities, auditoriums, arenas, meeting rooms and public conveyances.

If you need signs for your business, restaurant, meeting room or facility, contact any office of the American Heart Association of Michigan.

The American Heart Association and Michigan is a United Way agency.

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