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**WEST HENNEPIN PUBLIC SAFETY HONORS CRASH SURVIVORS**  
*Seat Belts and Child Restraint Seats Save a Family's Lives*

Independence, Minn. — West Hennepin Public Safety (WHPS) presented the Lehne family of Watertown, MN with *Saved by the Belt* awards on April 8, 2008 during the Independence City Council meeting.

On March 22, 2008, at approximately 5:05 p.m. Robert Lehne, his wife Nichole, and their three small children Madilyn (age 6), Colin (age 5), and Dylan (age 2) were involved in a horrific rollover car crash but survived because they were properly buckled up. Robert and Nichole were wearing their seat belts and their children were properly buckled into appropriate child safety restraint seats.

The details of the crash involved Robert Lehne driving the vehicle westbound County Road 6 and he attempted to make a right turn to go northbound on Wright county Road 17. Their vehicle had almost come to a complete stop when it was rear-ended by a full size F-150 pickup truck that was also westbound on County Road 6. The collision caused the Lehne's vehicle to skid off the roadway and roll at least two times before coming to a final rest in the ditch.

Robert stated that he and his family were extremely shaken over the incident but everyone was safe because they'd all been buckled in. He believed that if they hadn't been wearing their seatbelts they would have been ejected from the vehicle while it was rolling over. The only injury due to the crash was sustained by Nichole, who had a small cut on her right hand that later required her to see a doctor.

'I can't stress enough the importance of wearing seat belts and properly restraining your children in their safety seats. Robert and Nichole made a great decision to wear their seat belts that day and are a great example to their children as they'd properly buckled them in safety seats, which did save their lives.'

The Lehne family is a living example that seat belts save lives,” says WHPS Sgt. Kroells. “Hopefully their story will persuade others to buckle up because you never know when you may be involved in a traffic crash.”

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) says that using a safety restraint reduces the risk of death or serious injury by 40 to 60 percent. For more information on seat belt and child passenger restraints, visit the OTS Web site at [www.dps.state.mn.us/ots](http://www.dps.state.mn.us/ots).

West Hennepin Public Safety’s *Saved by the Belt* program honors crash survivors for realizing the importance of wearing a seat belt.

Buckle Up. Or Pay the Price.