

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 04/01/2011

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT

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Ephrata Safe Routes to School Walking Audit, April 12, 2011

EPHRATA, WA – On **April 12, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.**, the Ephrata Safe Routes to School Planning Team will host a walking audit of the routes students use to walk and bike to school.

Safe Routes to School is a national, state and local program to increase walking and biking to school along safe routes. Community members and parents are encouraged to participate in the District wide audit on April 12, 2011. Participants will help identify the safest routes for children to walk and bike to school. “This is a great program for Ephrata, that can improve both health and safety of our community,” says Wes Crago, Ephrata City Administrator. Community involvement is a critical component of the walking audit.

The event will include a simple checklist, walking on a designated route, mapping the results, and developing recommendations to increase safe walking and biking to school. The exercise will take approximately 1-hour. “We are pleased to be involved in the improvement of walking and biking routes for Ephrata’s school children,” says Jeff Ketchel Grant County Health District Administrator. He adds, “The walking audits done by parents and staff will help inform the safe routes to school planning team on the obstacles students face walking and biking to school.”

Findings of the walking audit will be used to create a Safe Routes to School action plan. A benefit to students from Safe Routes to School is the regular physical activity they receive from safely walking or biking daily to and from school. Healthy children are more prepared to learn.

A recent national survey found that only 18% of children walk or bike to school today, down from 70% just 25-years ago. Three out of five children, age 9 to 13, don’t get any physical activity outside of school. Center for Disease Control studies show that diabetes and obesity are both increasing; the need is great. We very much appreciate the community wide effort and leadership provided by the Grant County Health District and the community planning team in helping the Ephrata School District identify our safe walking routes to schools plan,” Jerry Simon, Ephrata School District Superintendent.

Participants are asked to sign up ahead of time. Contact Theresa Fuller of the Grant County Health District; fuller@granthealth.org, you can chose which school you audit.

For more information on Ephrata Safe Routes to School, contact the Grant County Health District, City of Ephrata or Ephrata School District. Walkabout flyer is located at www.granthealth.org/walkabout.html.

Ephrata Safe Routes to School Planning Team: Central Basin Traffic Safety Task Force ● City of Ephrata – Administration, Public Works and Planning ● Ephrata Fire Department ● Ephrata Police Department ● Ephrata School District – Administration ● Ephrata School District Transportation Services ● Grant County Health District – Administration and Safe Kids Grant County ● Grant County Sheriff’s Office – Motor Traffic Unit ● Safe Routes to School Washington ● Washington State Department of Transportation

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