



News Release

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National Safety Council designates Sullivan County, TN, a Safe Community

Itasca, IL – The National Safety Council is to designate Sullivan County, TN, as a Safe Community through its Safe Communities America program. Sullivan County is the first in Tennessee and the 19th in the United States to be recognized as an international Safe Community.

Melissa Hamilton, Holston Valley Medical Center's injury prevention outreach and disaster management coordinator, initiated the process with help from the Kingsport Area Safety Council. "The Safe Community label doesn't mean that people never get injured here," Hamilton explains. "It means we recognize there are opportunities for improvement and do something to make our county safer."

Through the Safe Community designation process, a coalition – made up of local businesses, the fire protection district, park district, law enforcement, public health organizations and schools – is formed to create and improve programs to cover identified risk areas that specifically address community-specific injury data. For Sullivan County, a three year process began when the Tennessee Governors Commission Council for Injury Prevention recognized local agencies for their efforts in teen driving education. Because of this recognition, a grant was received to work on pursuing a Safe Communities America designation.

The application process was completed last October, when site visitors from Safe Communities America visited Sullivan County for a two-day tour. They reviewed Sullivan County for injury prevention efforts, including efforts by local businesses to keep employees safe while working. The application also included analysis of how Sullivan County's emergency medical services provide prompt medical attention to any casualties that occur in the area. According to the Safe Community application, the highest-occurring injuries in Sullivan County are motor vehicle collisions, falls and poisonings.

The international Safe Community designation is based on six criteria:

- A cross-sectional partnership responsible for the promotion of community safety
- Long-term sustainable programs for all genders, ages, environments and situations
- Programs targeting high-risk groups and environments
- Programs documenting the frequency and causes of injuries
- Evaluation measures to assess programs and the effects of change
- Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities networks

"We have been very impressed with the way organizations and businesses in Sullivan County are working together to protect residents. They are better positioned to prevent injuries and deaths through this collaborative approach," said Donna Stein-Harris, senior director of Safe Communities America for the National Safety Council.

NSC is the International Certifying Center for the U.S. through the Safe Communities America program, guiding community stakeholders to reduce injuries and promote safety for the residents of their communities. NSC will present the Safe Community designation to Sullivan County on March 20.

For more information, please visit safecommunitiesamerica.org.

About the National Safety Council

Founded in 1913 and chartered by Congress, the National Safety Council (nsc.org) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to save lives by preventing injuries and deaths at work, in homes and communities, and on the road through leadership, research, education and advocacy. NSC advances this mission by partnering with businesses, government agencies, elected officials and the public in areas where we can make the most impact -- distracted driving, teen driving, workplace safety and safety beyond the workplace.

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