



Thousands participate in ODOT-sponsored International Walk to School Day

October 6, 2010

PR# 10-037

Elementary and middle school students at nearly 80 schools throughout Oklahoma joined children and families from across the U.S and in over 40 countries in celebrating International Walk to School Day Wednesday.

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Program, which sponsored the events in Oklahoma, estimates that over 50,000 students participated in Walk to School Day statewide.

Walk to School events aim to emphasize the importance of increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the community. The annual event also helps bring attention to the need for safe walking and biking facilities to and from schools in local communities.

"The annual event is a great way to celebrate Oklahoma's most valuable resource - our children, and to build public awareness and understanding of the benefits of making walking and biking to school safer," ODOT Safe Routes to School Program Director Ernestine Mbroh said.

This year's International Walk to School Day was expected to include participants from 5,000 schools in all 50 states, as well as groups from over 40 countries around the world.

The Walk to School Day events in Oklahoma are being sponsored by ODOT's Safe Routes to School federal grant program. By participating, schools and communities can further identify what is needed to make walking and biking to school an easier and safer alternative. Schools can then apply for infrastructure and educational grant money to address these issues through ODOT's Safe Routes to School Program.

The Safe Routes to School Program makes federal funding available for a wide variety of individual programs and projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing educational programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school.

The next grant application period for ODOT's Safe Routes to School Program is scheduled to begin in January and will make \$3 million in individual grants available. For general information on the program or for program applications, visit ODOT's Safe Routes to School Web site <http://www.okladot.state.ok.us/srts>.

- www.okladot.state.ok.us -

(Editors and News Directors: For media inquiries about the Safe Routes to School program, contact the ODOT Media and Public Relations Division at 405-521-6000.)

INFORMATION RELEASE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS DIVISION
200 N.E. 21st St. OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73105-3204 PHONE 405-521-6000



Students and parents from Jefferson Elementary School in Norman gather after walking to school as part of International Walk to School Day Wednesday. ODOT's Safe Routes to School program, which sponsored the events in Oklahoma, estimates that over 50,000 students from 80 schools participated in Walk to School Day events statewide.