

*Significant Community Program*

## **“Mock Crash” helps students tell the story behind preventable accidents**



*By Deb Brunett, Operations Manager  
Merrill Productions*

The show and event, Mock Crash, is a cooperative community effort that raises awareness about preventable car accidents. The target audience is young drivers. The production crew is high school students. Merrill Productions, the City of Merrill’s PEG cable access station housed in Merrill Area High School, has produced this show every other year since 2003.

We begin planning meetings early in the school year. These include the students working on the show and members of the Merrill Fire Department, Merrill Police Department, Lincoln County Sheriff’s Department, and staff from the school district. This year we chose the topic “responsible choices behind the wheel” and the program featured a guest speaker, Roger White from Oregon, Wisconsin. Roger’s son was killed in a horrible car accident; he had made the choice to ride with a known bad driver and compounded that bad decision with another – he didn’t put on his seatbelt.

The group discussed various scenarios that could illustrate the consequences of poor decision-making. As planning continued we solicited input from the student and adult actors we had chosen. Several more community agencies became involved to tell the story including Ministry Good Samaritan Health Center, Spirit of Marshfield Airflight, Waid Funeral Home, Lincoln County Coroner, and the Merrill EMT Services.

Merrill’s mock crash production events have brought to the forefront the consequences of drinking and driving, speeding/racing, inattentive driving, and texting and driving. The lessons

learned here by the students who wrestle with how to tell an effective story to their peers is a great example of the power of community programming. Over the years, we hope that Mock Crash has changed the lives of at least a few.