



U.S. Department of
Transportation

News:

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
MICHAEL JACKSON WHITE HOUSE EVENT
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MAY 14, 1984

Good morning, fellow music lovers. What a great day we have to celebrate a very special event. The young man we are honoring today is clearly America's reigning king of rock and soul. You can imagine what a thrill this is for me -- in a few moments I'll be sharing the stage with three show business stars.

This morning is indeed a festive occasion. But it's also a serious reminder. For there are other festivities this spring, other happy times in this season of new beginnings that all too often have tragic endings. This is graduation time in America, a time of pride and hope and the sense of unlimited tomorrows. Yet all those dreams can be snuffed out when a single drunk driver crosses the path of an oncoming vehicle.

The evidence of this is as undeniable as it is sad. Each year, more young people age 16 to 24 die in alcohol-related crashes than fall victim to any disease or other sudden accident. These young people make up one-fifth of America's licensed drivers, yet they account for 42 percent of all alcohol-related fatalities. In our own area of metropolitan Washington, 22 teenagers died in 1982 -- lives surrendered before their promise could be realized, joys as innocent as a rock tune or spring prom ended with shattering finality. And, almost sixty percent of fatally injured teenage drivers are found to have alcohol in their blood systems. There has already been a tremendous citizen response to this tragedy -- groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Students Against Driving Drunk. One effort which is especially close to my heart is Project Graduation, a movement which began in Maine and is rapidly spreading across the country. We at DOT are doing everything we can to promote this voluntary effort to offer high school seniors graduation events and activities that are alcohol free.

And, I am proud to say, the Department of Transportation is a partner with the Advertising Council in the campaign we are inaugurating today. The President's Commission on Drunk Driving, itself a volunteer effort, asked us to join forces to educate young Americans to the fact that drunken driving is no joyride. Experts tell me that young people are the most difficult audience to reach with an advertising message -- but I think you'll agree that the Ad Council and Leber Katz, the agency which

produced this campaign, have found a unique solution to that problem. We have a common message -- but only an uncommon talent could do it justice. Michael Jackson is such a talent. His musical gifts are matched by his generous spirit. He's a leader in the fight against drug and alcohol abuse, and he has donated his number one song, "Beat It," to the Ad Council Campaign.

The chilling slogan of this campaign is "Drinking and Driving Can Kill A Friendship." It's a powerful message, made more persuasive still because Michael is our spokesman. And we hope it reaches adults as well as teenagers, because one of every two Americans can expect to be involved at some time in their lives in an alcohol-related traffic accident.

Long ago, a wise man of letters said that music "expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent." Starting today, music will carry our message. We are trying to rescue this nation's youth, a subject on which it is impossible to be silent. And we will owe a great debt of gratitude to one of the authentic legends of popular entertainment -- a young man who is literally a lifesaver. It is not only Michael Jackson's records that are golden.

But now, Michael and two of his biggest fans are waiting to join us.

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