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Manitoba Public Insurance demonstrates the power of choice through virtual reality

DRIVR-X: Choose Your Reality Ignites a New Conversation

With the help of leading edge technology, Manitoba Public Insurance is launching a new virtual reality (VR) experience to tackle three critical road safety issues facing young drivers in Manitoba, the Minister of Crown Services and the Corporation announced today.

Through the use of VR headsets, simulated vehicles and intricate sensor systems, DRIVR-X allows participants to explore a three-dimensional VR environment with multiple story lines that require them to make important, life-changing decisions about distracted driving, impaired driving, and speeding.

“There’s no better way to reach young drivers than through the mediums they relate to the most,” Crown Services Minister Ron Schuler said today. “The VR experience created by Manitoba Public Insurance is one such technology that will give our young people the power of choice when it comes to making safe driving decisions.”

Introduced today to students from a Winnipeg high school at the Corporation’s Physical Damage Centre, the new virtual reality experience immerses users in a virtual environment that mimics realistic experiences and temptations facing new young drivers today. Students at today’s event were also given a guided tour of the Corporation’s vehicle damage compound where they saw first-hand the real life consequences of crashes involving speed, distracted and impaired drivers.

“This new state-of-the-art technology will be made available in high schools and at community events throughout Manitoba starting immediately,” said Ward Keith, vice-president, Loss Prevention and Communications, Manitoba Public Insurance.

“Our hope is that these realistic experiences will bring the dangers and consequences of unsafe driving to life for new young drivers. In doing so, we hope to spark important conversations about the importance of making safe driving decisions that can literally protect them for a lifetime.”

Participants in the live interactive experience will also receive portable VR viewers, making it possible to share their experiences with friends and family through mobile devices. Additionally, an exciting online contest will offer people the chance to win their very own HTC VIVE VR system.

“For us, the key is to get young drivers talking to each other about the dangers of driving while impaired or distracted, or driving over the speed limit or too fast for road conditions,” added Keith.

“Our goal is for our newest drivers to learn from each other and in doing so, create a stronger road safety culture among a driving population that continues to be over-represented in collisions, fatalities and serious injuries.”

For more information about the program, or to request a booking for the virtual reality experience, visit www.chooseyourreality.ca.

Facts on Dangerous Driving Behaviours:

- Distracted driving is a leading contributing factor in total collisions in Manitoba. Nearly 30 people are killed on Manitoba roads each year due to distracted driving.
- Approximately one in every five fatal collisions in Manitoba is linked to impaired driving.
- Speed is a contributing factor in nearly 20 per cent of all people killed in collisions in Manitoba annually.

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