

## I SEE CROSSES

Just a few months ago, Gov. Kathleen Sebelius announced the 8 Wonders of Kansas. I'm a lucky person; I travel a lot of miles though this state and have had the great fortune to see or experience most of those Wonders. Those that I have not seen, I plan to see soon. This is truly a beautiful state and something Kansans should be proud of.

Unfortunately, I have seen something else that is lining our streets and highways: CROSSES. They are dotted in the wildflowers and in our prairie grasses. As I drive by them, I wonder what happened. Did someone hurt or suffer, did they experience fear or think of their loved ones in their final moments? We will never know.

One thing I do know is that someone who is alive today is hurting or thinking about that loved one. I'm sure that the hurt or loving never stops. You only have to take a close look at these crosses as you travel by them. The crosses are often decorated with a person's favorite teddy bear, book, picture, or a baby bottle. What I'm trying to say is that there is someone alive who cares.

I also wonder if this tragedy was preventable; sadly, in almost all instances the answer is YES. The difference between life and death could have been made by a slower speed, a designated driver, not talking or text messaging on the cell phone, or even something as simple as making the decision to buckle a seatbelt or restrain a child.

I ask you to do everything in your power to prevent the planting of any new crosses that dot our roadways. You can educate, you can change your habits, and law enforcement can aggressively enforce the laws. Speak up; you may be the squeaky wheel that changes attitudes and behaviors.

I leave you with this: as you travel through Kansas, enjoy the wonders of this beautiful state, but also be aware of the crosses that line our highways, and think how you can prevent new plantings.

Be Safe and Buckle Up – every trip, every time.

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