

# UDOT encourages kids to walk

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Elementary school students who walk to school next month may get more for a reward than just fresh air and exercise.

The Utah Department of Transportation has launched the Walk More in Four program to encourage kids to walk to school. Participating students will be expected to keep track of the days they walk to school during the four weeks of September. Those who walk or bike to school three or more days per week during the month will be entered into a drawing for prizes, including helmets, scooters, bikes

and others.

Students not within walking distance can also participate by walking or biking in their neighborhoods, said UDOT region director Darin Duersch.

"The start of a new school year provides an opportunity for students to get in the habit of safely walking and biking to and from school," Duersch said.

Representatives from UDOT, Logan city, Bear River Health Department and the state Gold Medal Schools program visited Adams Elementary Wednesday to kick off the program. Adams was one of eight schools throughout the state where launch events were held.



Alan Murray/Herald Journal

Mayor Randy Watts speaks to students outside Adam's Elementary in Logan on Wednesday about being safe while walking home from school.

Every school in the state will have the chance to participate, said Becky Wickstrom, a UDOT representative. The idea behind the program is to encourage safety and to promote

exercise in a time when one in four children is considered obese.

Hopefully, when the students have walked for a month, they'll

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decide to keep doing it, Wickstrom said.

"We're hoping to start safe habits and get them to see walking is fun," she said.

Adams Principal Jed Grunig said he expects the program will make a difference in his school.

"As soon as they know there are prizes attached, some will walk who otherwise wouldn't," Grunig said.

The program is part of the federal Student Neighborhood Access Program (SNAP), which aims to increase the number of students walking to school by helping schools plan out safe routes to schools.