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### ***Santa Rosa First County to Receive “Safe Communities” Designation***

Santa Rosa County is the first county in the nation to earn the “Safe Communities America” designation through the National Safety Council. The board of county commissioners will receive the designation at their 9 a.m. Jan. 23 regular meeting. According to the National Safety Council, communities with a safe community designation experience a decrease in injuries, an average of 10 percent less for both intentional and unintentional injuries.

Safe Communities America, a program of the National Safety Council, is an approach to community injury reduction structured around a broad coalition of community partners - involving business, civic organizations, local government, non-profits, and local residents. Becoming a safe community is a collaborative and inclusive process that can take from nine to 12 months to complete and includes an application and site visit. Communities seeking national designation must meet the following four areas of competency: sustained collaboration, understanding of their community data, offering of programs that address the intentional and unintentional injury patterns in their community, and demonstrate an understanding of evaluation.

Assessors from the National Safety Council visited Santa Rosa County on December 11, 2012. The team toured several locations including the sheriff’s office, Bennett Russell Elementary, the United Way, Gulf Breeze City Hall, Lifeguard Ambulance and met with county and city leaders, both elected and from the community. Santa Rosa is the first county in the U.S. to receive the Safe Communities America designation.

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