



MEDIA KIT

RUSS BURRIS AND REST

Recognize Exhaustion for Safer Travel

Approved background information, program descriptions, interview topics, credentials, photographs, and brand assets for media use.



REAL PEOPLE. REAL IMPACT. SAFER ROADS.

ABOUT RUSS BURRIS

Award-Winning, Nationally Recognized Drowsy Driving and Injury Prevention Speaker

SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Russ Burris is the founder of REST - Recognize Exhaustion for Safer Travel - and an award-winning drowsy-driving and injury-prevention speaker. On June 3, 1990, he fell asleep at the wheel just 90 seconds from home. The crash left him paralyzed from the chest down and changed the course of his life. Since 1992, Russ has shared his story with hundreds of schools, businesses, organizations, communities, and conferences, connecting practical safety education with the lasting human consequences of one fatigued-driving decision.

FULL BIOGRAPHY

On June 3, 1990, two weeks after graduating from high school, Russ Burris fell asleep at the wheel just 90 seconds from home. The resulting crash left him paralyzed from the chest down and dependent on a wheelchair for life. Rather than allowing that moment to define what his life could become, Russ turned his experience into a mission of education, prevention, and hope.

Russ began speaking with ThinkFirst Missouri in 1992. During more than three decades of injury-prevention work, he has spoken to hundreds of schools, businesses, organizations, communities, and conferences. His presentations combine credible drowsy-driving information with an honest account of the crash, rehabilitation, spinal-cord injury, and the everyday consequences of a choice that seemed harmless at the time.

Russ has served as a guest speaker for the National Sleep Foundation, National Road Safety Foundation, Missouri Department of Transportation, and ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation. In 2019, ThinkFirst honored him as its National VIP of the Year. VIP stands for Voices for Injury Prevention.

His story and advocacy have received national attention through The Washington Post, Ladies' Home Journal, Parade, TODAY, Extra!, The New York Times Wheels blog, The Huffington Post, and the National Road Safety Foundation film Almost Home. In 2026, Russ founded REST - Recognize Exhaustion for Safer Travel - to expand his drowsy-driving education and help people recognize fatigue, make the safe choice, and arrive alive.

Preferred identification

Russ Burris

Founder and Program Specialist, REST - Recognize Exhaustion for Safer Travel
Award-Winning, Nationally Recognized Drowsy Driving and Injury Prevention Speaker

ABOUT REST AND 90 SECONDS

REST PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

REST - Recognize Exhaustion for Safer Travel - is a drowsy-driving prevention initiative founded by Russ Burris. REST helps people recognize the warning signs of fatigue, understand how exhaustion affects driving, and act immediately before tiredness becomes a crash. The program combines practical education with lived experience, giving audiences both the information and the personal reason to make safer choices.

REST is not a sleep campaign. Its central message is alertness and immediate action: recognize the signs, speak up, pull over, and arrive alive. Missouri school presentations are offered at no cost through a Missouri Department of Transportation grant. Programs for businesses, organizations, conferences, and communities are available nationwide.

90 SECONDS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

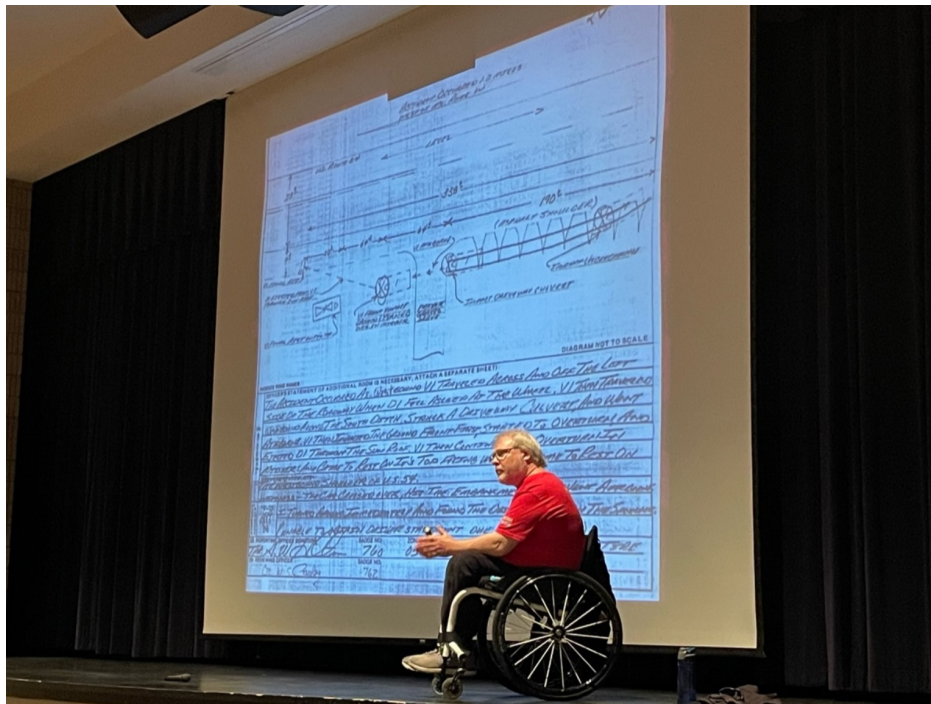
90 Seconds is REST's signature presentation. Russ explains how falling asleep at the wheel just 90 seconds from home changed his life forever. The presentation connects drowsy-driving facts, risk factors, warning signs, and prevention strategies with Russ's personal story - including the crash, intensive care, rehabilitation, spinal-cord injury, wheelchair dependence, and the choices audiences can make before tragedy occurs.

Programs are typically 45 to 60 minutes and can be adapted to the schedule and audience. Presentations are delivered in person and include time for audience questions within the program.

Missouri schools	Students age 15 and older; driver education, health classes, classrooms, small groups, or school-wide assemblies. No cost through the MoDOT grant.
Workplaces and organizations	Customized programs addressing commuting, shift work, long workdays, fleets, business travel, fatigue-related risk, and safer workplace decisions. Available nationwide.
Conferences and safety events	Keynotes and educational sessions for professional groups, safety meetings, conventions, and community events.
Media and interviews	Personal-story interviews, drowsy-driving awareness segments, injury-prevention discussions, and expert-by-experience commentary.

“You don’t simply hear what can happen. You meet someone who lives with the consequences every day.”

EXPERIENCE AND RECOGNITION



Russ presenting with his original crash report displayed behind him.

SELECTED CREDENTIALS

- Injury-prevention speaker since 1992
- Founder of REST - Recognize Exhaustion for Safer Travel
- 2019 ThinkFirst National VIP of the Year
- Guest speaker for the National Sleep Foundation, National Road Safety Foundation, Missouri Department of Transportation, and ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation
- Participant in National Sleep Awareness Week 2001 and the 2002 National Summit to Prevent Drowsy Driving, broadcast on C-SPAN

SELECTED MEDIA AND FEATURES

The Washington Post • Ladies' Home Journal • Parade • TODAY • Extra! • The New York Times
Wheels blog • The Huffington Post • National Road Safety Foundation's Almost Home

INTERVIEW AND MEDIA INFORMATION

SUGGESTED INTERVIEW TOPICS

The 90 seconds that changed a life

Russ's crash, recovery, and the permanent consequences of falling asleep close to home.

Warning signs drivers ignore

Heavy eyelids, frequent yawning, lane drifting, memory gaps, missing signs or exits, head nodding, and trouble focusing.

Why almost home can be dangerous

How familiarity, confidence, and the belief that a destination is close can encourage drivers to push through fatigue.

Fatigue beyond the highway

How exhaustion affects commuting, shift work, workplace decisions, fleets, business travel, and public safety.

Turning lived experience into prevention

Why personal testimony can make safety information immediate, memorable, and difficult to dismiss.

Teen drivers and speaking up

Helping young people recognize fatigue in themselves and friends and make the safe choice before driving.

APPROVED BOILERPLATE

REST - Recognize Exhaustion for Safer Travel - is a drowsy-driving prevention initiative founded by Russ Burris in 2026. Through education, lived experience, and immediate-action messaging, REST helps drivers recognize fatigue, make safer choices, and prevent life-changing crashes. Missouri school programs are provided at no cost through a MoDOT grant, and customized presentations are available to businesses, organizations, conferences, and communities nationwide.

MEDIA CONTACT

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Social	@RESTFORSAFETY on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok

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