



Staff photos by Michael Ein

Buck, 'the Buckle-Up Dog,' greets first-grader Bryan Maddocks, 7, during an appearance with Gov. Jon S. Corzine at Rieck Avenue Elementary School in Millville to help present an interactive Web site dedicated to educating and entertaining kindergartners through third-graders on various aspects of traffic safety, including wearing seat belts.

# Corzine joins dog in Millville to emphasize using seat belts

By EDWARD VAN EMBDEN  
Staff Writer, 856-649-2072

**MILLVILLE** — The children sat, looking forward with their eyes fixed on a dog described by its handler as big for a

Doberman, unaware of the governor standing nearby, perusing a stack of elementary reading material dedicated to traffic safety.

Buck "the Buckle-Up Dog" playfully chewed on his lead for a moment before stretching out and lying down at the feet of his master, Bill Garrison, the traffic safety coordinator with the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office.

"That's a big dog," Gov. Jon S. Corzine exclaimed before introducing himself to a first-grade class

in the library at Rieck Avenue Elementary School. "I should have met Buck last year."

Corzine and Buck made an appearance at the Millville school to help present an



Corzine tells first-graders that if he met Buck last year, he might have been wearing a seat belt when he got into an accident.



Gov. Jon S. Corzine inspects a plush version of Buck before a group of students.

interactive Web site dedicated to educating and entertaining kindergartners through third-graders on various aspects of traffic safety, including wearing seat belts.

A self-deprecating Corzine acknowl-

edged that the serious injuries he suffered in April 2007, when the vehicle he was riding in crashed on the Garden State

See Buck, Page C5

# Buck

(Continued from Page C1)

Parkway, might not have happened had he been wearing his seat belt.

It's a lesson he learned the hard way.

"When you don't wear seat belts, bad things happen, I know," he told the children. "I broke 15 bones and it really hurt. If I had done my homework as well as you guys have, I might have known better."

Buck, a 115-pound Doberman pinscher, whose hobbies include eating and chasing squirrels, has been part of the Cumberland County-based traffic safety initiative for three years, Garrison said. But it was only a few months ago that Buck Committee decided to put all of its resources online.

According to a release, the Division of Highway Traffic Safety-funded project uses Buck to engage young students

in activities that emphasize the importance of proper car, booster seat and seat belt use, as well as bicycle and pedestrian safety.

For the past three years, Buck has been making the rounds to area elementary schools, and along with Garrison, has provided traffic safety tips and kisses, courtesy of Buck only.

Pam Fisher, the director of the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety, said Buck and his program is the kind of grass-roots effort that really reaches young children. The new Web site, she said, is a great resource at expanding grass-roots efforts to communities statewide.

"Through Buck's visits to elementary schools and community events, young people meet Buck, hear his safety message, and carry what they learn home where it can be reinforced through a visit to his Web site," she said. "Youngsters today are Web-savvy, and they need interac-

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The new Web site, [www.buckthebuckleupdog.org](http://www.buckthebuckleupdog.org), includes all program materials as well as games and contests for children, which can be downloaded. A special section for parents offers a variety of traffic safety resources, including programs and materials designed to help families learn more about staying safe on New Jersey roadways.

tive programs like this one that are not only fun but educational, too."

Garrison said he believes Corzine's accident has made the governor an advocate of seatbelt wearing and that his presence in Millville, and his desire to expand the influence of this county's traffic safety program throughout the state, shows how important it's become to him.

Corzine said he believes the Web site can help spread awareness.

"Cumberland County has been very proactive in doing this," Corzine said. "I think this is something that can go beyond Millville, beyond the state, and really capture people's imagination.

Corzine commended the county's efforts in traffic safety education and warned the children, before heading out, that one of the things that threatens children the most is not wearing a seat belt.

It's something, he said, everyone should do.