

Traffic enforcement campaign to begin Monday

Editors note: the following release was submitted by the Hiawatha Police Department

Beginning Monday, November 25, through Sunday, Dec 1, 2019 The Hiawatha Police Department will join many other police agencies across the state, including the Kansas Highway Patrol, in the Kansas Thanksgiving Safe Arrival traffic enforcement campaign. This Campaign is an effort that is specifically aimed at removing impaired drivers from our roads and ticketing vehicle occupants who are unrestrained or whose child passengers are unrestrained.

According to KDOT, which tracks all crashes in the state, the day before Thanksgiving sees more impairment-related crashes than any other day of the year. Those driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs endanger not only themselves, but also others they share the road with – such as their passengers, other motorists and their passengers, bicyclists and pedestrians. On average, across Kansas, three persons are injured every day, and one person is killed every four days in alcohol/drug-related crashes. And the crashes tend to be more severe. Vehicle occupants in alcohol- or other drug-related crashes are over 2 ½ times more likely to be injured or killed than those involved in crashes where alcohol or other drugs were not a factor.

Each week across Kansas, over 250 drivers are arrested for DUI (Driving Under the Influence). A DUI conviction will result in jail time, the suspension or revocation of driver's license, a fine of \$500 to \$2,500, participation in an alcohol or other drug treatment program and, where alcohol is cited as a contributing factor, the purchase and installation of an ignition interlock device by the offender. This device requires the offender to blow into a device that measures blood alcohol concentration prior to starting the car. It's embarrassing and a hassle.

Also responsible for needless death and maiming is the failure by many teens and adults to simply buckle up themselves, or to properly buckle up child passengers. Twice as many Kansans who die from a crash are unrestrained as are restrained. Even worse is the fact that injuries suffered by those who are unbuckled are likely to be much more severe and disabling than injuries suffered by those who are buckled in. This applies regardless of speed, and whether the occurrence is on a city street, a county road, or a highway.

According to Chief John Defore, “Keep in mind that if you are going to be drinking – any amount at all– don't even consider driving home. Arrange to ride with a non-drinking acquaintance. Don't let pride or concerns for your convenience endanger your life and the lives of innocent others. Drivers always

wear your seatbelt and don't move the vehicle until each person riding with you is buckled in. This is your best defense against death and injury, it is their best defense, and it is the law. You will live with the consequences – good or bad – the rest of your life. By always following these simple rules, you can preserve life – maybe your life – and certainly your cash. You can safely arrive.”

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