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Press Release

ACPD to participate in Thanksgiving traffic enforcement effort

Statewide enforcement campaign to focus on impaired driving, seat belt use

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (November 20, 2016) — The Arkansas City Police Department will join many other police agencies across the state, including the Kansas Highway Patrol, in the Kansas Thanksgiving Traffic Enforcement Campaign, from Monday through Nov. 28.

A grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) will underwrite overtime traffic enforcement that specifically targets impaired drivers and vehicle occupants who are improperly restrained or unrestrained entirely.

The Thanksgiving holiday period, from Wednesday through Sunday, outranks all holidays other than New Year's Day in the average number of crashes in which driver impairment is cited as a factor.

Those driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs endanger not only themselves, but also others with whom they share the road, including passengers, other motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

On average across Kansas, five people are killed or injured in alcohol- or drug-related crashes each day — and the crashes tend to be more severe.

Vehicle occupants in alcohol- or other drug-related crashes are more than 2 1/2 times more likely to be injured or killed than those involved in crashes in which alcohol or other drugs were not a factor, according to KDOT, which tracks all crashes in the state.

Each week across Kansas, more than 250 drivers are arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence.

A DUI conviction can result in jail time, the suspension or revocation of a driver's license, a fine of \$500 to \$2,500, participation in an alcohol or other drug treatment program, and the purchase and installation of an ignition interlock device in the offender's vehicle.

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An ignition interlock device requires the offender to blow into a device that measures blood alcohol concentration prior to starting the car.

Also responsible for needless death and maiming is the failure by many drivers and passengers simply to buckle up. 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 properly.

That applies regardless of speed or whether the collision is on a city street, county road, or highway.

Be sure that children are restrained properly. Across Kansas, 1 in every 5 children aged 5 to 9 routinely rides in a vehicle without the benefit of a child safety seat or booster seat.

A collision at any speed can turn unrestrained occupants into human torpedoes who are a danger to themselves and anyone they impact. Young children are especially vulnerable to this phenomenon.

Drivers always should keep in mind that if they are going to be drinking any amount at all, they should not drive home. Arrange to ride with a non-drinking acquaintance instead.

Don't let pride or concerns for convenience endanger innocent lives. Drunk drivers who cause injuries or fatalities have to live with the consequences for the rest of their lives.

And always wear a seat belt and don't move until each passenger is buckled in, too. This is the best defense against death and injury — and it's the law.

By always following these simple rules, Arkansas City motorists will preserve lives — maybe even their own — and certainly their cash. It will cost drivers if police catch them breaking the law.

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