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Press Release

ACPD participates in 'You Drink. You Drive. You Lose.' campaign

Statewide enforcement campaign to focus on impaired driving, crash reduction

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (August 15, 2019) — The Arkansas City Police Department will join 150 other police agencies across the state, including the Kansas Highway Patrol, in the “You Drink. You Drive. You Lose.” traffic enforcement campaign from today through Labor Day on Sept. 2.

A grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) will underwrite overtime traffic enforcement that specifically targets impaired drivers in a crackdown aimed at removing drunk, drugged and other dangerous drivers from the roadways.

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

In 2017, alcohol and other drugs were implicated in 40 percent of crash deaths on Kansas roads.

Kansas averages one person killed every two days, with at least 163 families receiving death notifications in 2017, in crashes in which at least one of the drivers is impaired by alcohol or other drugs.

In the past five years, the average number of Kansas fatality crashes attributable to alcohol impairment is 23 percent, or almost one-quarter of all fatality crashes in the state, according to KDOT.

Crashes involving at least impaired driver are likely to be much more severe than other crashes, according to KDOT, which tracks all crashes in the state. That is why people involved in such a crash — in any capacity — are five times as likely to be injured seriously, and 15 times more likely to die from their crash injuries, than if the crash does not involve impairment.

A driving under the influence (DUI) conviction can result in up to one year in jail, the suspension or permanent revocation of a driver's license, a fine of \$500 to \$2,500, increased insurance premiums, participation in an alcohol or other drug treatment program, and the purchase and installation of an ignition interlock device in the offender's vehicle. (An ignition interlock device requires the offender to blow into a device that measures blood alcohol concentration prior to starting the car.)

For immediate release

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"Clearly, impaired drivers need to be taken off the road, for their good and for the good of others sharing the road with them," said Arkansas City Police Chief Dan Ward.

He wants the "You Drink. You Drive. You Lose." campaign to remind drivers of several things.

"First, if you're going to drink while away from home, do it responsibly by planning ahead and lining up a designated driver before leaving your home," Ward said.

"Don't make the mistake of waiting until it's time to go home to start asking around. Chances are if you do that, you will wind up with someone who may be more sober than yourself, but not sober enough.

"Second, check your medications for driving warnings. More and more DUI arrests in Kansas are occurring during daytime hours, largely due to the side effects of prescription drugs. It's not uncommon to find alcohol or illicit drugs present, as well.

"Third, think of a family you know, maybe your own, and consider how it would be to wake up every day to the memory of your decision to drive after drinking — a decision that unintentionally brought injury or death to one of them. If you're driving impaired, you are not only more likely to crash, but you are much more likely to cause serious injury — even death — to yourself and others when you do crash."

Fourth, Ward reminds drivers that even if they appear to be driving well enough to get by, police still might be able to pull them over for a number of other traffic offenses.

"If we do this and we detect a hint of alcohol, you will be tested," he warned.

"Fifth, we need everyone to be our eyes on the road. If you see suspicious driving behaviors, take note of their location, direction of travel and the vehicle's description, and call 911 as soon as it's safe to do so. You might save a life.

"Fifth, you can count on this department to vigorously enforce impaired driving and other traffic laws — not just during this campaign, but all year long."

Finally, Ward reminds drivers always to remember that the best protection against an impaired driver is the use of seat belts and appropriate child restraints — "every trip, every time."

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