



ANNUAL “TIE ONE ON FOR SAFETY” CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO PROMOTE SAFE AND SOBER HOLIDAY SEASON

COLUMBUS (NOVEMBER 18) – Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS), the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), The Motorists Insurance Group, a key sponsor of the campaign in Ohio, law enforcement from around the state and other safety advocates gathered this morning to launch the annual “Tie One on for Safety” campaign with a message to drive safe, sober and buckled up.

At the event, Michelle Watrous shared the tragic story of her 11 year old daughter Dalynaca, who was killed by a drunk driver Dec. 19, 2008. This crash prompted Michelle to become involved in helping to prevent tragedies like her own from happening to others. Michelle volunteers her time in support of anti-drinking and driving campaigns, such as MADD’s “Tie One On For Safety Campaign.”

This is the 24th year for the holiday ribbon campaign which encourages motorists to tie the MADD ribbon to their vehicles as a pledge to be safe on the roadways. The campaign also reminds drivers to buckle up, because a seatbelt is the best defense against a drunk driver.

“ ‘Tie One On For Safety’ is MADD’s largest public awareness campaign to heighten awareness about the dangerous consequences of drinking and driving over the holidays,” said Doug Scoles, MADD Ohio executive director. “We’re pleased to be partnering with the Ohio Department of Public Safety and for The Motorists Insurance Group’s sponsorship, their support will help us save more lives in Ohio!”

According to ODPS crash statistics, 390 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes in Ohio in 2009. Of those crashes, 37 of the fatalities occurred between Thanksgiving and New Years.

“I encourage everyone to do their part to be a visible reminder of the dangers of drunk driving by displaying a red ribbon and by making good decisions about driving safe and sober,” said ODPS Assistant Director George Maier. “Together we can help reduce deaths and injuries so that no family has to experience this preventable tragedy.”

All of ODPS’ divisions are working to remind people to drive safe and sober. The Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO), OSHP and local law enforcement are using stepped up enforcement and educational efforts to prevent injuries and deaths. Law enforcement representatives from DUI Task Forces around the state attended the event in support of the campaign. Local Deputy Registrars for the Bureau of Motor Vehicles are passing out the red ribbons throughout the campaign and the Ohio Investigative Unit (OIU) will continue its focus on over-serving and underage consumption.

Local law enforcement around the state are planning more than 4100 hours of enforcement this holiday season including 15 sobriety checkpoints and more than 1400 hours of saturation patrols. These efforts are funded and coordinated by OTSO. OSHP will have a visible presence on the states highways and OIU will be enforcing liquor laws.

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“State Troopers are maintaining a zero tolerance approach to removing impaired drivers from Ohio roadways,” said Ohio State Highway Patrol Assistant Superintendent, Lt. Col. Peyton Watts. “Simple things like planning ahead to designate a driver if you choose to consume alcohol, and insisting that everyone in the vehicle is buckled up before you leave, can go a long way toward ensuring tragedies do not occur.”

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