



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

COLUMBUS – Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS), including the Ohio State Highway Patrol (OSHP), key sponsor Motorists Insurance Group 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.

Bob Kent, whose son, along with two friends, was killed in a drunk driving crash on Christmas morning in 2004, shared his story as a reminder that driving drunk affects everyone.

This is the 26th 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.

“For 26 years, MADD has held our annual holiday red ribbon campaign, asking people throughout Ohio and nationwide to *Tie One On For Safety* in support of our heroes in law enforcement,” said Doug Scoles, MADD Ohio Executive Director. “Display a MADD red ribbon on your vehicle to demonstrate your commitment to make our vision of a nation without drunk driving a reality.”

According to OSHP crash statistics, in Ohio last year 410 people were killed in 379 alcohol-related crashes, with 27 of those deaths occurring between Thanksgiving and New Year’s.

“The holidays are a joyous time of year, filled with celebrations, time with loved ones and good cheer, but one bad decision can change everything,” said ODPS Director Thomas P. Charles. “I urge everyone to display a red ribbon and make good, sound decisions when it comes to safe and sober driving this holiday season.”

All of ODPS’ divisions are working to remind people to drive safe and sober. The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS), 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, including Franklin County, 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 9,700 hours of enforcement this holiday season, including 23 sobriety checkpoints and more than 3,500 hours of saturation patrols. These efforts are funded and coordinated by OCJS. OSHP will have a visible presence on the state’s highways and OIU will be enforcing liquor laws.

“We are urging motorists to make smart decisions -- plan ahead and designate a sober driver or call a taxi to ensure that everyone makes it home safe,” said Colonel John Born, Ohio State Highway Patrol superintendent. “If everyone does their part, we can save many families from the heartache of losing a loved one.”

“As one of the largest automobile insurers in Ohio, we at The Motorists Insurance Group unfortunately see the often tragic results of alcohol impaired driving, distracted driving or the failure to use seat belts,” said Todd Long, Asst. Vice President Corporate Communications and Advertising for Motorists. “Let’s hope these red ribbons serve as a reminder to each of us, to our families and to our friends to plan ahead with a designated driver, put down the cellphone, drive sober and buckle up.”

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