

Cops coordinating massive crackdown on DUIs

By Shannon Laney

The problem of impaired driving is a serious one. While America witnessed a decline in the number of DUI fatalities in recent years, the numbers are still too high. That's why the Avoid the 6 DUI Task Force Campaign today announced it will join other law enforcement agencies throughout the country in support of an intensive crackdown on impaired driving Aug. 20–Sept. 6, known by its tagline, Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.

Alcohol involved fatalities and injuries have dropped dramatically in the last three years of this end-of-summer enforcement campaign in California. Combined deaths and injuries in 2007 were 1,780, dropping to 1,682 in 2008. Provisional 2009 data show that the numbers have dropped again, to 1,317 a 26 percent decrease in just three years.

The Avoid the 6 El Dorado County will deploy officers to conduct 3 Checkpoints, a multi-agency DUI Task Force operation, 5 local roving DUI saturation patrols, and a warrant/probation sweep targeting repeat offenders throughout the county.

Aug. 20 from 8pm-2am, officers from South Lake Tahoe, Placerville and El Dorado County will be conducting a DUI checkpoint on Pioneer Trail and on Lake Tahoe Boulevard.

Aug. 24, South Lake Tahoe will be conducting a DUI checkpoint along Pioneer Trail.

Aug. 27, Placerville and South Lake Tahoe will be conducting a DUI checkpoint along Highway 50 in Placerville.

“All too often, innocent, law-abiding people suffer tragic consequences and the loss of loved ones due to this careless disregard for human life,” said Christopher J. Murphy, director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Because of the commitment to end the carnage, Police, Sheriffs and CHP are intensifying enforcement during the crackdown. They’ll be especially vigilant during high-risk nighttime hours when impaired drivers are most likely to be on our roads.”

According to the latest national data, 32 percent of fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes involve a driver or motorcycle rider with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 percent or above, averaging one fatality every 45 minutes.

“Our message is simple and unwavering. If we find you driving impaired, we will arrest you. No exceptions,” said interim Police Chief Martin Hewlett of South Tahoe. “Even if you beat the odds and walk away from an impaired-driving crash alive, motorists should be aware that the financial and social consequences of a DUI can be devastating.”

Violators will face jail time, loss of their driver’s license, huge fines and maybe sentenced to use ignition interlocks. Their insurance rates go up. Other financial hits include attorney fees, court costs, lost time at work, and the potential loss of job or job prospects. When family, friends and co-workers find out, violators can also face tremendous personal embarrassment and humiliation.

Driving impaired is simply not worth all the consequences. Just designate a sober driver. Don’t take the chance. Remember, if you are over the limit, you’re under arrest.

For more information on local and statewide Avoid DUI Task Force Campaign Enforcement Schedules and Daily DUI Arrest/Fatal Stats, visit the www.californiaavoid.org. The Program is funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety who reminds everyone to report drunken driving by calling 911.

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