

CITY OF GARDEN CITY
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Release #1:

During the period, August 20 through September 7, 2009 look for aggressive enforcement of Kansas drunk driving and other traffic laws by the Garden City Police Department. This national crackdown – known as *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest* – is underwritten by a grant from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT).

On any given day in Kansas six persons are killed or injured in alcohol-related crashes. From each crash, emotional, social, and economic effects ripple out. The financial ripples, by themselves, are formidable. Alcohol-related crashes last year, in Kansas alone, cost almost \$628 million in medical charges, property damage, lost earnings, lost household production, emergency services, travel delay, vocational rehabilitation, and workplace disruption, among others. Added to this must be the many millions of tax dollars spent yearly on prevention activities, court-ordered education programs, victim impact panels, enforcement, processing, prosecution, incarceration, monitoring, and drivers' license suspension hearings in an effort to make the roadways safer.

The Garden City Police Department is among more than 100 law enforcement agencies across the state who will participate in *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest*. The aim is to dramatically reduce the number of preventable deaths and injuries that occur when alcohol is mixed with driving – a particularly dangerous combination. According to KDOT crash data for the period 1999-2008, if you are involved in an alcohol-related crash – as a passenger or driver, impaired or unimpaired – you are two and one-half (2½) times more likely to be injured and four-and-one-half (4½) times more likely to be seriously injured or killed than if you are involved in a crash in which alcohol is not determined to be a factor. The ratio of death to injury in alcohol-related crashes is almost four (4) times higher than the death to injury ratio for non-alcohol related crashes. In 2008, alcohol was a contributing factor in a record 34 percent of all fatal crashes in Kansas.

There are a few things people need to take away from this impaired driving campaign. First, if you're away from home and drinking, don't even consider driving home. Be sure to ride with a sober driver. Sober doesn't mean someone you believe is less drunk; this is a judgment mistake which costs lives every year. Second, there are any number of traffic infractions and mechanical deficiencies we can pull you over for. If we detect a hint of alcohol you will be tested. Don't take the chance. Third, you can expect impaired driving enforcement year-round, not just during this campaign. Fourth, if you see suspicious driving behavior, take note of the location and call 911. Finally, always remember that everyone's best protection against a drunk driver (as well as their own mistakes) is to always wear their seat belt and properly restrain their children – every trip, every time. It saves lives and it's the law.

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