

PRESS RELEASE

Partnering County-Wide Law Enforcement Agencies Awarded Grant

The Chisago County Sheriff's Office, partnering with the Lakes Area, North Branch, and Wyoming Police Departments, has been awarded a grant through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety. The 2012 Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Enforcement Grant is in conjunction with Minnesota's Safe & Sober Program. As all of the law enforcement agencies throughout Chisago County participate in Safe & Sober, the sheriff's office, Lakes Area, North Branch, and Wyoming Police Departments have been selected in a jointly focused effort.

The importance of the TZD Enforcement Grant is to reduce serious traffic-related injuries and fatalities in Chisago County through education, engineering emergency trauma response, and enhanced enforcement. The 2012 TZD Enforcement Grant is expected to begin in October 2011 with a statewide "Click It or Ticket" campaign. Continuing into the 2012 calendar year, there will be a series of enforcement initiatives which focus on distractive driving, Ted Foss move over law, motorcycle, speed, and DWI enforcement.

From 2006-2010, Chisago County law enforcement agencies have responded to 1,571 motor vehicle crashes. As a result of those crashes, twenty (20) individuals were killed while several hundred were injured. This increase has occurred while the State of Minnesota has seen the lowest levels of traffic deaths in almost 70 years. During this same period, from 2006-2010, officers made 1,003 impaired driving arrests in Chisago County.

Officers around Chisago County also want to encourage safe driving behaviors as the 2011-2012 school year has begun. Remember to be vigilant in watching for children as they travel to and from school. Observe crosswalk and school bus laws. Motorists must stop at least 20 feet away from a school bus that is displaying flashing red lights or a stop arm when approaching from either direction on an undivided roadway. It is illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone, whether handheld or hands-free. It is also illegal for all drivers to compose, read, or send text messages or access the Internet while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic.

A primary vision of the TZD program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. For future up-to-date information regarding the TZD Enforcement Grant, visit the website at www.minnesotatzd.org.