

Press Release

Contact: Pam Sharp
Phone: (608) 392-0275

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STEPPED UP ENFORCEMENT IN ONALASKA DURING THE "DRIVE SOBER OR GET PULLED OVER" CAMPAIGN

The Onalaska Police Department will have extra patrols out looking for drunk drivers this month as the "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign kicks off on August 19th. Formerly called "Drunk Driving-Over the Limit Under Arrest" this is an annual collaborative effort by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and law enforcement to curtail drunk driving.

Anyone doubting that drinking and driving is a serious problem need only look at the statistics.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health indicates that over 15% of current drivers nationwide have driven while under the influence of drugs or alcohol within the past year. Wisconsin's percentage sits at 26.4%. That's 11 percentage points above the national average giving Wisconsin the highest drunk driving rate in the nation.

"That's not a list you want to be on the top of," said Onalaska Police Chief Jeffrey Trotnic, "Last year alone alcohol related crashes were responsible for 220 deaths in Wisconsin and over 3,500 injuries. Looking at these numbers it's easy to see how

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many lives drunk driving impacts. I think that the recently enacted, more stringent law governing penalties for OWI is a step in the right direction. The new law coupled with efforts like Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over, help law enforcement keep drunk drivers off our roads."

Trotnic is referring to the state law that took effect in July of 2010 that increased penalties for drunken driving.

The Onalaska Police Department is also currently participating in a C.A.R.D. (Comprehensive Alcohol Risk Reduction) grant which is designed to address under age alcohol consumption. The C.A.R.D. grant funds overtime for compliancy checks, Party Patrols and Cops in Shops.

Jasson Jobe is one of the Onalaska Police Department's alcohol compliance officers.

"We are very proud of our compliancy program here in Onalaska," said Jobe, "these grants allow us to put additional officers on patrol with the specific purpose of curtailing under-age drinking. It's not just stepped up patrols, we are actively working to change the drinking culture and raise awareness."

The "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over" campaign runs from August 19th through September 5th.