

June 04, 2012

News Release

For Immediate Release

Fatality Accidents Show Alarming Increase

The Springfield Police Department, Missouri State Highway Patrol and Greene County Sheriff's Office want to make motorists aware of an alarming increase in fatality accidents in Greene County so far this year.

To date, Greene County has seen 23 fatality accidents as compared to just 7 from the same time frame last year.

Many factors are contributing to this dramatic increase in those numbers, and include: texting, inattention, failure to comply with all road regulations and a trend officers are seeing where motorists are not anticipating other driver's actions. With the advent of cellular phone use, motorists tend to focus in their immediate area while using their cell phone to surf the web, check email, text and place phone calls, forgetting that many other motorists around them are doing the exact same thing. The inattention on the part of both parties leads to crashes, and what law enforcement is seeing now – fatalities. In addition to exercising safe personal driving habits, motorists need to also drive defensively and be observant of those drivers who may not be paying attention.

Greene County Sheriff Jim Arnott says "Traffic fatalities in Greene County have made a big increase lately. Please remember the many small things you can do to increase your safety. Wear your seat belt; this one action cannot be emphasized enough. Stay focused when driving a motor vehicle. Always be aware of the road conditions and changes the weather can make to your vehicle's handling. Consider adding a few minutes to your commute and avoid heavy traffic areas. You're in the driver's seat of your safety."

Captain Juan Villanueva, commanding officer of Troop D, of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, states, "The mission of all law enforcement agencies is to make our communities safe, including the roads you travel on. In order to meet this goal, it is vital that every motorist be responsible for their own actions and take it upon themselves to be safe and pay attention to the job of driving or when they are walking near a roadway. For the past six years, Missouri has experienced a decrease in the number of fatal traffic crashes. We ask that everyone does their part to continue this decline in 2012."

According to SPD Chief Paul Williams, "Springfield has historically been a very safe place in which to operate a motor vehicle, however this year's numbers have shown that many things are distracting drivers from what they should really paying attention to – the roadway. To date, 6 fatalities have included pedestrians, a number much higher than what officers usually see. Remember to watch for pedestrians as they walk along the roadways and to keep yourself, your family and other innocent drivers on the road safe by paying attention to all rules of the road"

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