



# First State Road Scholar

A Newsletter of the Delaware Office of Highway Safety  
Committed to saving lives and preventing injuries on Delaware Highways.

INSIDE

Fitting Station Coordinator  
Receives Award.....2

OHS Hires new PR Firm...3

Underage Drinking Mobilization.....5

October 2005

## OHS Launches Two – Pronged Attack on Dangerous Drivers *Impaired and Aggressive Drivers are Targeted*

Delaware Office of Highway Safety officials have launched a two-pronged attack on dangerous driving behavior threatening the safety of motorists on First State roadways. Their targets...impaired and aggressive drivers.

This all out offensive began on the July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend when OHS kicked off its fourth annual *Checkpoint Strikeforce* impaired driving prevention campaign with six sobriety checkpoints conducted statewide. Less than two weeks later on July 13<sup>th</sup>, OHS, together with our law enforcement partners took aim at aggressive drivers with a brand new initiative called the "Stop Aggressive Driving" campaign.

Both campaigns are set to run for a full six months, through the end of December. According to OHS Director Tricia Roberts, "Both of these critical highway safety issues require a long term, comprehensive approach combining enforcement and awareness efforts if they are to be successful. And we have committed to doing just that."

### Tackling Impaired Driving



*Checkpoint Strikeforce* (CPSF) is a regional, multi-state crackdown on impaired driving, which includes the states of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia. Officers in each state are conducting weekly DUI checkpoints between July 1, 2005 and January 1, 2006, with the goal of deterring those who might otherwise choose to drive after drinking alcohol, as well as actively removing impaired drivers from area roads.

Since July 1<sup>st</sup>, there have been 54 checkpoints resulting in 295 DUI arrests, 57 underage drinking citations, 141 drug arrests, 61 felony arrests, the apprehension of 98 wanted individuals, the recovery of 11 stolen vehicles, and the issuance of 247 seat belt citations, 37 child restraint citations and 991 citations for other traffic violations. OHS officials point to the campaign as the primary reason for a reduction in alcohol-related traffic deaths in the last few years.

The campaign is coordinated in Delaware by OHS and participating police agencies include the Delaware State Police, Dover Police, Millsboro Police and officers from the 28 county, state and municipal police agencies that make up the Kent, Sussex, and New Castle County DUI Task Forces.

This year, three new police agencies and approximately 60 more officers joined the County DUI Task Forces. In all, approximately 160 Task Force members were sworn in by Attorney General Jane Brady.

Chief Michael Capriglione of the Newport Police Department continues to lead the New Castle County DUI Task Force however, the Kent and Sussex DUI Task Forces both got new leaders this year; PFC Todd Michelau of the Felton P.D. for Kent County, Chief Ken McLaughlin of the Ocean View P.D. for Sussex County.

### Aggressively Targeting Traffic Violators

Officers have also been busy putting the brakes on aggressive driving in DE. More than 1,500 citations have been handed out for aggressive driving behaviors since State and local law enforcement joined Office of Highway Safety officials in launching the "Stop Aggressive Driving" campaign on July 13<sup>th</sup> at the I-95 Travel Plaza, one of several high crash locations for aggressive driving in the state.

Aggressive driving behaviors are responsible for 61% (54) of Delaware's 89 fatal crashes since the beginning of this year. Over the last decade, this percentage has ranged annually from a low of 38% in 2000 to a high of 57% in 2002.

In all, 12 State and local police agencies with high crash locations in their jurisdictions that are statistically identified as being aggressive driving related, have been provided with federal grant funding to conduct overtime patrols.

During three enforcement "waves" lasting one month each during the campaign, most of these resources are being directed to agencies in New Castle County for a special pilot enforcement program. This pilot program involves the use of "Aggressive Driving Teams" to catch aggressive drivers.



## Message From the Director

It has been a busy summer in OHS. We had no sooner wrapped up *Click It or Ticket 2005* – which resulted in our highest statewide seat belt usage rate ever of 85% - when we launched our fourth annual *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign on July 1<sup>st</sup>, and then two weeks later launched the “Stop Aggressive Driving” campaign. As we head into the fall and winter months, we’re working on expanding the Graduated Driver Licensing Parent Orientation Program, to a limited number of schools statewide, and gearing up for an underage drinking enforcement and awareness mobilization.



Unfortunately, we have good reason to be busy. Delaware has experienced a huge increase in motorcycle fatalities this year, which has resulted in an increase in our overall traffic deaths, making them higher than they were at this time last year. In all of 2004, there were a total of 10 motorcycle deaths. As of September 26, 2005, there have been 22! After talking to State Police and Motor Vehicle officials, there seem to be several reasons for the increase.

One, there are simply more motorcycles on the road, even more so lately because of high gas prices. Two, when motorcyclists are at fault in these crashes, which they have been in over half of the cases, the crashes involve alcohol, speed, or improper handling of the motorcycle. DMV officials believe that many riders are self taught as opposed to having taken an approved motorcycle safety course.

When the driver of the other vehicle is at fault, it is usually inattentive driving that is at play. Lack of helmet use is also a factor because approximately 59% of motorcyclists killed were not wearing helmets.

Also of concern to us is the fact that alcohol-related traffic deaths are up slightly as is lack of seat belt use in fatal crashes. Only pedestrian fatalities are showing any significant decrease, where the numbers are currently showing a 50% decrease from this time last year.

So as we continue to address these emerging highway safety issues through a combination of high visibility enforcement and awareness efforts, we ask each and every member of the motoring public to do their part by driving responsibly, always buckling up, not drinking and driving, and not driving aggressively, and when operating a motorcycle taking care to wear proper protective clothing, watch out for road hazards and take an approved motorcycle safety course.

Together we make First State roads safer!

### OHS’s Fitting Station Coordinator Wins DSHS Choice Award

In May, Nadine Holleger, Office of Highway Safety Fitting Station Coordinator for Kent County, was presented with the Department of Safety and Homeland Security’s Choice Award. The Choice Award is presented to DSHS employees for outstanding service and contribution to improving public safety.

Nadine joined the Office of Highway Safety staff in February 2002 as the first OHS Fitting Station Coordinator. Her job is to assist OHS in improving the correct and consistent use of child safety seats by providing free child safety seat inspections to parents, grandparents, and caregivers.

Her responsibilities include Station, providing car seat and caregivers, and distributions for low-income of the program and the high Fitting Station location, the expanded and another child added to assist with the



*DSHS Cabinet Secretary David Mitchell presents Nadine Holleger with the Choice Award for 4th Quarter 2004.*

Nadine’s Fitting Station added two more Fitting New Castle County, and the She mentors new child passenger safety technicians, provides guidance for the other Fitting Station locations, and has even secured additional private funds for the purchase of more child restraint seats.

the promotion of the Fitting safety presentations to parents coordination of booster families. Because of the success volume of seats checked at her program’s hours were recently passenger safety technician was workload.

became the model when OHS Stations in the state...one in most recent in Sussex County.

Since February 2002, Nadine has checked over 1,060 seats for parents and caregivers for correct installation. The customer service surveys completed by parents always reflect their satisfaction with her service and their gratitude for her help in ensuring that they are transporting their children in the safest manner possible.

### DE Traffic Deaths as of 9/27/05

<b>Fatal Crashes</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Deaths</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Vehicle</b>	
<b>Occupants</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Seat Belts</b>	
<b>Worn</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Motorcyclists</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Helmets Worn</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Bicyclists</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pedestrians</b>	<b>5</b>

**Alcohol- Related**  
**41 (41% of total)**  
**Aggressive Driving**  
**Related**  
**54 (61% of total)**

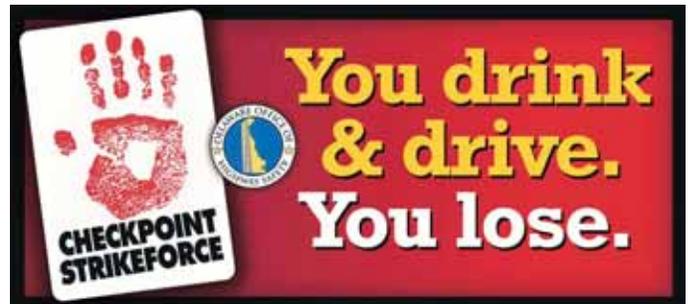
## OHS Hires PR Firm to Coordinate Safety Campaigns

OHS has contracted with the Advertising/PR Firm of Aloysius, Butler & Clark (AB & C) to coordinate all of its safety based public information and education campaigns. AB & C was selected to help OHS provide consistency among its varied campaigns, and to assist in the development of a long-term strategic communications plan for the office.

AB & C was quickly put to work to update the look of the *Click It or Ticket* campaign and the *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign. Then Account Executive Mike Cordrey and his team had a short turn around time to create a completely new campaign to support aggressive driving enforcement efforts.

They've also created materials promoting pedestrian safety and are working on plans for our upcoming underage drinking mobilization. OHS is pleased with the caliber of work they've been doing and welcome Mike, Paul, Donna-Marie, Lynda, Debbie and the rest of the AB & C team to our team!

Here's a quick look at some of the designs they've put together so far.



## OHS Photogallery

Take a look at some pictures from events and activities held in 2005. See anyone you know?



Capt. Mark Hitch, NcCo PD at launch of Stop Aggressive Driving Campaign 7/13/05



OHS Director Tricia Roberts talks to the media at the launch of the Stop Aggressive Driving campaign



DE Gov. Ruth Ann Minner presents Sgt. Norm Wood, Smyrna PD, with a Saved by the Seat Belt certificate to launch Click It or Ticket 2005



OHS Staff members Linda Kouse and Bonnie Whaley distribute safety information at Sussex County 911 Day in Georgetown in May



DSP Cpl. Jeff Whitmarsh conducts a "Beyond the Traffic Stop" session at the NHTSA MidAtlantic Occupant Protection Summit in Hershey, PA in April



Officers from the Kent County DUI Task Force at their July 13th checkpoint in Felton



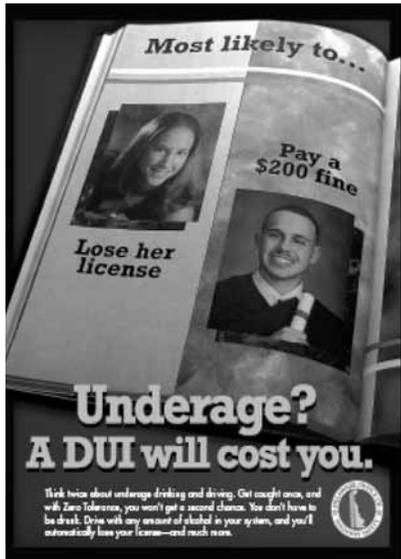
Col. Thomas MacLeish, Superintendent for DSP addresses seat belt survivors in Governor's office in May for CIOT



Dover High School was the statewide winner of NcCo PD's High School Seat Belt competition. Here Dover High's SRO Officer Danny Ranger, student Ashely Knotts, and Driver's Ed teacher Shawn Plews stand with NcCo PD Officer Amy Kevis at the ceremony



OHS NcCo Fitting Station Coordinator Larry Kelley shows a parent how to adjust the harness straps during Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week 2005 in February.



## OHS Coordinates Underage Drinking Mobilization and Awareness Efforts for Homecoming

If you're underage... a DUI will cost you. That's the message that Office of Highway Safety officials will be putting out starting in late October, as part of a coordinated statewide underage drinking enforcement and awareness initiative. The message is timely as many Delaware high schools have Homecoming activities during this time.

OHS's special prevention program will run from October 24<sup>th</sup> through November 13<sup>th</sup>. Several law enforcement agencies will be conducting various underage drinking stings during this time frame, to make sure that minors aren't trying to purchase alcohol.

A variety of awareness efforts are planned to support the enforcement. The first will be a mock crash at Middletown High School on October 19<sup>th</sup>, the week before enforcement starts. The event, which will be seen by the entire student body, is being organized by New Castle County EMS to make Middletown H.S. students aware of what can happen when you mix alcohol and driving.

Other awareness activities occurring during the three week enforcement mobilization include placing billboards near Delaware high schools, and providing School Resource Officers (SRO's) and YELL (Youth to Eliminate Loss of Life) chapters with posters, radio PSA's recorded by Miss Teen Delaware USA for MADD, and a list of speakers who are available to conduct

presentations on the dangers of underage drinking as well as impaired driving.

The following are penalties for violating underage drinking laws in Delaware:

- Underage Zero Tolerance law – loss of license for 2 months or \$200 fine if minor is driving without a license (1<sup>st</sup> offense)
- Underage Consumption – loss of license for 1 month or \$100 fine if unlicensed
- Using False Identification - \$500 fine or 30 days in jail if fine is not paid
- Entering a Bar or Package Store Underage - \$50 fine
- Providing a Minor with Alcohol – loss of license for up to 12 months, \$230 - \$1,150 in fines or the possibility of 6 months in jail

In 2004, six teenagers died in alcohol-related crashes in Delaware. Four of them were drinking drivers. An additional 115 teens were injured in impaired driving crashes last year, and 472 minors were arrested for DUI.

## “Walk Smart” Pedestrian Safety Initiative Underway

OHS recently began a new safety initiative aimed at reducing pedestrian fatalities and injuries called Walk Smart. In 2004 17 pedestrians were killed and another 240 were injured in crashes on Delaware roadways. Alcohol on the part of the pedestrian and failure to cross at marked intersections are primary contributing factors to deaths and injuries in Delaware.

Some law enforcement agencies have grant funding to conduct enforcement aimed at improving pedestrian safety, and OHS is now concentrating on improving its awareness efforts. Fourteen billboards went up across the state in September with a the Walk Smart message which encourages pedestrians to follow three simple rules, Look both ways before crossing, obey pedestrian crossing signals, and wear bright clothes in order to be seen.

OHS is also asking local businesses on targeted roadways with a data identified pedestrian safety problem to either distribute newly designed pedestrian safety fliers or display a message on their marquee or signboards. One suggested message is “Walk Smart. Look both ways, Obey pedestrian signals. It could save your life.”

Plans for pedestrian safety messaging in 2006 include also purchasing reflective wristbands with a Walk Smart message and being a sponsor of one local radio station's plan for their own pedestrian safety initiative.

## Legislative Update

It was another busy, if unproductive, year legislatively for OHS. Making improvements to Delaware's Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law was a hot topic of conversation among legislators. There were eight separate bills related to teen driving regulations! They ranged from raising the minimum driving age from 16 to 17 to extending the length of supervised driving time for GDL permit holders.

Among these bills was one on the Governor's Legislative Agenda, which was supported by the Office of Highway Safety. SB 117 sought to reduce the number of passengers permitted to ride with a teenager on a permit from 2 to 1, requiring teens to make up any amount of time their permits are suspended which is not currently covered in the law, and making failure to wear a seat belt a violation of the GDL regulations so that it would result in a license suspension instead of a painless \$25.00 fine.

In the end, the only bill to pass last session was one that prohibits GDL permit holders from using a cell phone while driving. All other bills that were not actively defeated can be considered again in January 2006 when the General Assembly reconvenes.

Other safety legislation that may still be acted upon in January includes a bill to prohibit open containers of alcohol in a vehicle, increasing the age and scope of the mandatory bicycle helmet law, and a bill addressing pedestrian crossing practices.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- October 11 - Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day
- October 17 - 21 - School Bus Safety Week
- October 19 - 22 – National SAFE KIDS Conference
- Oct. 24 - Nov. 13 - OHS Underage Drinking Enforcement and Awareness Mobilization
- Nov. 21 - Jan. 1 - DE Safe Family Holiday campaign

## Aggressive Drivers Targeted cont'd from pg 1.....

The teams, which are utilized by the Delaware State Police, New Castle County Police and Wilmington Police, consist of two officers each, one using a marked vehicle and one operating an unconventional vehicle. These unconventional vehicles look like any other car on the road. When a violation is spotted by an officer in the unmarked vehicle, he or she radios ahead to their partner in the marked car who then executes the traffic stop and issues the citation.

Since the campaign began officers have issued the following citations: 73 Aggressive Driving, 1,210 speeding, 164 unsafe lane changes, 85 following too closely, 143 running stop signs and stop lights, 5 failure to yield the right of way, and 117 passing on the shoulder. Additionally officers issued 546 citations to unlicensed, unbelted and uninsured drivers.

Aggressive driving enforcement is being supported by radio, internet and billboard ads designed to reach the most frequent offenders, young adult males 16 – 25 years old. The media campaign is also paid for through federal grant funds, with supporting funding coming from State Farm Insurance and the Delaware Department of Transportation. DelDOT is also employing the use of 8 Variable Message Signs statewide to broadcast aggressive driving messages such as “Aggressive Driver Patrols in Effect.”

Individuals who are stopped under Delaware’s aggressive driving law can be charged both with aggressive driving and charged for each individual traffic offense. Penalties include fines between \$100 - \$300 for a first offense, possible jail time, and mandatory attendance at an 8-hour behavior modification course. Subsequent convictions will result in the loss of driving privileges for one month.

For more information on all of OHS’s campaigns, visit our website at [www.ohs.delaware.gov](http://www.ohs.delaware.gov).



**OFFICE OF HIGHWAY SAFETY**  
**Dept. of Safety & Homeland Security**  
**P.O. Box 1321**  
**Dover, DE 19903-1321**  
**302-744-2740**

**First State Road Scholar** is a quarterly publication of the Delaware Office of Highway Safety. Material may be reprinted without permission. Address all inquiries to: First State Road Scholar, P.O. Box 1321, Dover, DE 19903-1321

Ruth Ann Minner, Governor \* State of Delaware  
 David B. Mitchell, Secretary \* Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security  
 Tricia Roberts, Director \* Delaware Office of Highway Safety  
 Andrea Summers, Editor \* First State Road Scholar