

PRESSRELEASE

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Winter Holidays Bring Deadliest Time of Year on Roadways

Michigan City, IN (December 19, 2003) – For most Hoosiers, the winter holiday season is a special time to join family and friends to celebrate the season and welcome the New Year. Unfortunately, the winter holidays also bring one of the deadliest times of year on Indiana's highways for impaired driving.

Between December 19 and January 4, Michigan City Police Department officers will be out in force, targeting impaired drivers. During this enforcement period, over 220 Indiana law enforcement departments will intensify the search for impaired drivers.

"Our goal is to make sure that Hoosiers get to their destinations safely," said Michigan City Police Chief Gene Simmons. "There are still many people who don't realize the threat they are on the roads after one drink. Drunk drivers are a threat to everyone's safety. There will be no warnings issued this holiday season. Our message is simple: "you drink and drive – you lose."

Impaired driving is no accident. It kills a motorist every 33 minutes. After a decade of gradual success, fatalities in alcohol-related crashes have not significantly improved nationally in the last three years. Because of trends such as this, the Indiana Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving provided law enforcement departments with the funds to increase their enforcement efforts. As a direct result, Indiana law enforcement efforts have lowered the alcohol fatalities on our roadways while the national numbers continue to increase. These results are a result of the dedication and commitment of law enforcement professionals such as the officers of the Michigan City Police Department.

Indiana drivers' best defense in a crash involving an impaired driver is to be wearing their seat belt. Wearing a seat belt reduces the chance of death or injury by nearly 50 per cent. Wearing a seat belt is the law in Indiana.

The Governor's Council on Impaired & Dangerous Driving is a division of the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute. The Council created a DUI Taskforce to further reduce alcohol-related crashes and fatalities in Indiana.

For more information regarding "You Drink, You Drive, You Lose," please contact the Michigan City Police Department at 219/874-3221 or the Governor's Council at 317/232-1295 or visit www.in.gov/cji.

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