



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

A STATE ACCREDITED LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY

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Media Release

From: Corporal Wendy McGinnis
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Re: Labor Day Weekend - Cracking Down on Impaired Drivers

Date: August 29, 2011

Historically, the number of citizens who drive under the influence of alcohol increases significantly during holiday weekends. When the number of impaired drivers increases, the potential for serious traffic crashes, which can result in serious injuries and even death, also increases. In an effort to crack down on impaired drivers, law enforcement officers will be stepping up traffic enforcement during the Labor Day weekend.

In 2009 alone, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, approximately 10,839 people died in crashes where a driver was at or above the legal limit (.08 Blood Alcohol Content). The age group with the highest percentage of alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes was the 21-to-24 age group. Tragically, an average of one fatality occurs every 48 minutes.

Beginning September 2, 2011, at 5:00 p.m. until September 4, 2011 at 5:00 a.m. the Hernando County Sheriff's Office and the Florida Highway Patrol will be utilizing both marked and unmarked patrol units in an effort to keep the roads safe in Hernando County. All law enforcement officers in Hernando County will be taking a zero tolerance stance on any driver who is found to be driving while impaired.

Citizens who are caught driving under the influence could face jail time, loss of their driver licenses, higher insurance rates, and may also be required to use ignition interlocks. Other financial hits include attorney fees, court costs, lost time at work, and the potential loss of job or job prospects. When family, friends and co-workers find out, violators can also face tremendous personal embarrassment and humiliation.

"It is our mission to safeguard life and property," said Sheriff Al Nienhuis "therefore, we are taking a zero tolerance stance for drivers who choose to drive while they are impaired. We just lost a hero last month because of an impaired driver. One of the hardest tasks in my career was delivering the death notification to Deputy Mecklenburg's wife. I am sure that most impaired drivers who have taken a life, or even caused serious injury, would give anything to have had their night 'ruined' with a DUI arrest instead. A DUI arrest is much easier to recover from than a serious traffic crash."