

Gov. Rauner proclaims traffic fatality awareness day, urges public's help in making Illinois roads safer

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SPRINGFIELD — With traffic deaths on the rise in Illinois and throughout the country, Gov. Bruce Rauner proclaimed today Traffic Fatality Awareness Day in Illinois. The proclamation was announced at the Illinois State Fair by the Illinois Department of Transportation and partners at the Illinois State Police, Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Secretary of State and Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

“One death on your roadways is one too many. Sadly, most of these deaths are preventable,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Randy Blankenhorn. “The unfortunate truth is the number of fatalities continues to climb each year. We need every driver’s help to improve safety by making responsible choices.”

In 2017, 1,090 people died on Illinois roads. The inaugural Traffic Fatality Awareness Day calls attention to new and ongoing initiatives to raise awareness and educate the public with a goal of moving toward zero deaths.

“As always, we ask drivers to be responsible before getting behind the wheel, and passengers in the vehicles to hold drivers accountable, in order to avoid a senseless tragedy,” said ISP Director Leo P. Schmitz. “As the summer is coming to an end and the Labor Day Holiday rapidly approaches, we want to urge drivers to drive responsibly and help reduce the number of serious injury and fatal traffic crashes.”

Some of the current work championed by IDOT includes: crashed cars on display at rest areas as a physical reminder of the importance of responsible driving, dynamic messages signs across the state that display topical messages to capture public attention, and continued development of new ways to improve safety in work zones.

“While reducing motor vehicle crash deaths has been one of the great public health achievements of the 20th century, crashes remain a leading cause of injury death in the country,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Assistant Director Don Kauerauf. “Preventing motor vehicle deaths and injuries will take a proactive, preventative approach that involves bringing together multiple stakeholders – law enforcement, transportation experts, advocacy groups, and public health. Working together we can continue to reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by vehicle crashes each year.”

In October, IDOT will convene state and local agencies, elected officials and other stakeholders for a safety summit with discussion focused on distracted driving.

Earlier this year, IDOT launched Life or Death Illinois, a multimedia campaign that includes vivid imagery and key statistics to underline the importance of safe driving and appeal to audiences to stop and consider the seriousness of the issues on the state’s roads.

Life or Death Illinois marks the first time IDOT expanded its key safety messages beyond the ongoing problems of impaired driving and unbuckled motorists to include new materials aimed at reducing fatalities and injuries tied to motorcycles, bicycles, pedestrians, work zones and distracted driving.

Visit www.lifeordeathillinois.com for more information.

“One of Secretary of State Jesse White’s top priorities is to make Illinois roads as safe as possible. One fatality is one too many,” said Michael Geier, chief deputy director, Illinois Secretary of State Police. “We remain committed with our partner agencies to improving the safety of our drivers and passengers.”