

Good Samaritan Credits Safe Driver Training in Assisting Motorist at Accident Scene

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PONTOON BEACH - Ameren Illinois energy services associate Ryan Lattina was returning home to Maryville from his job in Alton when he thought he spotted the front end of a vehicle submerged in a spillway off of Interstate 270 and a frontage road near Pontoon Beach. His mind quickly flashed back to days before when, on that very same stretch of interstate, he had encountered a motorist who had flipped his vehicle over on the side of the frontage road. Lattina credits safe driver training he received from Ameren Illinois for aiding him in observing the two accidents.

"We're instructed to keep our eyes up, see the big picture, and keep our eyes moving," said Lattina of the five rules of the Smith Driving System, a driver safety program introduced by Ameren Illinois in 2016 to reduce motor vehicle accidents among its employees. Ameren Illinois employees log an average of 30 million miles on the road each year.

"The accidents would not have been easy to spot if it weren't for these safe driving techniques," he said. "The second time I was driving on that part of the interstate I was even more attentive, obviously. I was constantly scanning the road and looking side to side."

Lattina got as close as he could to the submerged car and tried to get the driver's attention. A medical sticker affixed to the back of the car gave him additional cause for concern. Eventually, Lattina and the driver made eye contact and the driver flashed a thumbs-up letting Lattina know that he was ok. Lattina called 9-1-1 and the individual was eventually pulled from the vehicle and transported to a nearby hospital.

"The driver training definitely played a role in a safe outcome," he said.