

Funds help cops nab drunken drivers

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills police did their part to provide the gift of safe roads during holiday season.

The department made 104 traffic stops during the first phase of a countywide program to thwart drunken driving and enforce seat belt laws.

In all, police agencies taking part in the Oakland County Safe & Sober program totaled 537 arrests Dec. 21 through Jan. 10. Of those, 16 were for drunken driving and 120 tickets were issued for improper seat belt use. Another enforcement period is scheduled for Memorial Day.

The effort allows police officers to be freed up to strictly watch for drunken driving and seat belt usage. Overtime is paid for through a Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning Grant given to the Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County.

Farmington Hills officers put in 72 hours of OT during the latest enforcement wave. As a result, Hills police made eight drunken driving arrests that otherwise wouldn't have occurred without the special detail.

"They're being very productive out there," said Lt. Dennis Green, Farmington Hills police. The goal of the program is to reduce drunken driving and the resulting crashes, injuries and deaths they cause."

Mothers Against Drunk Driving commends the effort.

An average of 45 people are killed every day due to alcohol-related traffic crashes, a MADD spokeswoman said. Farmington Hills had one alcohol-related

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Lt. Dennis Green
—Farmington Hills police

traffic death last year. "We think it's an excellent program," said Michele Compton, MADD Oakland County Chapter administrator.

"It keeps the police on their toes and it provides extra money for enforcement."

"It also sends a serious message to the community that law enforcement means business as far as getting drunk drivers off the road."

The idea of using police officers to strictly be on the lookout for intoxicated motorists is not new. The Oakland County Sheriff's Department has an alcohol enforcement unit and other large departments are seeking money to establish their own.

With a department the size of Farmington Hills, a special

enforcement unit is not feasible, Green said.

"We have to be a large department," Green said. "We can't take people off the street and put them on alcohol enforcement only."

"Essentially, that's what this grant allows us to do during selective enforcement periods."

An officer needs a keen sense to identify a motorist under the influence, Compton said. For instance, Hills Officer John Markey has been cited by MADD five times (1988, '93, '94, '95 and '96) for his knack for spotting drunks. In 1996 alone, Markey made 35 OUIL arrests.

"It's more difficult and time consuming to pick up drunk drivers," said Compton, noting the lengthy procedure involves tests for sobriety, level of alcohol in breath and blood, booking and paperwork.

"If they have these other crimes they're going after, it's more difficult to spend time with that."

Wolf leads GOP caucus

Oakland County Commissioner Donn Wolf, who represents Farmington and part of Farmington Hills in the 19th district, was elected by his peers Republican Caucus Chair for 1998, for the third year in a row.

The Board of Commissioners is made up of 18 Republicans and seven Democrats. Most resolutions, board actions and positions come through the Republican Caucus.

"I was very pleased that my fellow Republican commissioners chose me again to chair this key Republican committee. The Caucus is the forum where positions on issues are formulated and differences are discussed and

resolved. I realize the importance and responsibilities of chairing the caucus and am honored that I was re-elected," Wolf said.

Board Chairman John McCulloch said "Wolf was the logical choice for this leadership position. He is a strong Republican that does his homework, knows the issues and the personalities involved in the legislative process. And he has a good working relationship with the Democrat board members."

Wolf was also re-elected chairman of the Oakland County International Airport Committee and a member of the General Government Committee.

Interim principal takes reins in C'ville

Jan. 23 was James Lancaster's first day as interim principal of Clarenceville Middle School.

Lancaster, Clarenceville's assistant principal of instruction and personnel, assumed the temporary post following the retirement/resignation of Carl Wagner, who served nine years as the middle school principal.

Wagner's last day on the job was Thursday.

The Clarenceville Board of

Education Thursday accepted Wagner's retirement/resignation and put in motion a search to permanently fill the job.

Lancaster, who previously served as middle school principal in another school district, came to Clarenceville four years ago from the Huron Valley School District in Milford.

Clarenceville serves students from Livonia, Redford and Farmington Hills.

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You control polymyalgia rheumatica with a relatively low daily dose of oral steroids, which are further reduced if your condition comes under control. Early diagnosis is important, since therapy is successful.

However, if you are once treated and relieved, you can not assume that the problem is over. Polymyalgia rheumatica can return. Therefore, it is important to inform any doctor whom you see, that you had the condition, and report to a doctor when you believe the stiffness is returning.

To date, using a cortisone regimen that helped in the past, will result in another resolution if the condition returns.

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