

NEWS RELEASE – July 1, 2013

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KDOT AND KHP ENCOURAGE SAFE INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS AND TRAVELS

People across the nation will take to the roads, and be out in their communities to celebrate America's independence this Fourth of July. The Kansas Highway Patrol and the Kansas Department of Transportation are encouraging everyone to plan ahead, to make their trips and their celebrations safer.

Nationally over the July 4th holidays from the last five years (2007-2011), according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 780 people lost their lives in crashes involving drivers who were driving under the influence. These fatalities account for 40 percent of all motor vehicle traffic fatalities over this same five-year period. In 2012, in Kansas, there were 149 crashes over the July 4th reporting period (6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 3, 2012, through 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, July 4, 2012). Three of those crashes were fatality crashes, and 36 were injury crashes. Of the 149 total crashes, 13 were alcohol-related.

Law enforcement agencies from across the State of Kansas will be out actively watching for impaired drivers over the 4th of July holiday weekend. Officers want everyone to have fun, but to do so safely and responsibly. If you are going to celebrate, or be drinking alcohol, have a plan established for a safe ride ahead of time.

For those traveling over the holiday weekend, be sure to check your route ahead of time. The Kansas Department of Transportation maintains helpful tools to allow you to check for road construction, and other issues that might delay your trip. Visit www.kandrive.org to see a map of the state's roads, with links to our neighboring states' sites, weather information, and other helpful items. Motorists can also call 5-1-1 (or 1-866-511-KDOT) to hear the road conditions from any phone in Kansas. If you are traveling on a Kansas highway and need assistance from the Kansas Highway Patrol, you can call *47 (*HP) from your cell phone, or for the Kansas Turnpike dispatch, call *582 (*KTA).

A few tips to help keep you safe this holiday weekend:

- If you plan to drive, do not drink. If you plan to drink, designate a non-drinking driver ahead of time and give that person your keys.
- Never ride with a driver who has been drinking.
- Take a list of phone numbers with you for cabs or friends to call for a sober ride home.
- If possible, plan to spend the night at the event.
- If you are throwing a party, provide non-alcoholic alternatives, and never let guests drive drunk.
- Report impaired drivers to your local law enforcement agency.
- Always buckle up and properly secure children in their safety seats.

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