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May 1, 2006

06-101

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Cinco de Mayo – a dangerous day for driving

KDOT urges revelers to designate a sober driver

Cinco de Mayo is an increasingly popular holiday in the United States and, like other holidays, it is often marked by parties and other celebrations, particularly by young adults.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), it also has become a dangerous day, with a significant number of impaired drivers getting behind the wheel. NHTSA reports that between 1999 and 2004, an average of 43 percent of all highway fatalities on May 5 and overnight into the early morning of May 6 were caused by impaired drivers.

Given those grim statistics, the Bureau of Traffic Safety of the Kansas Department of Transportation is urging observers of Cinco de Mayo to take precautions if alcohol consumption is planned as part of their celebration.

“Obviously, you should not even think about driving if you’ve been drinking, and you shouldn’t let anyone else do it either,” said Pete Bodyk, Chief of the Bureau of Traffic Safety. “If you know you and your friends might have some drinks when celebrating the holiday, it’s important to designate a sober driver before the celebration gets underway.”

(more)

Bodyk said many communities in Kansas have sober driver programs that offer free rides for drinkers. Mass transit of various types also is available in some Kansas communities.

“And, you shouldn’t hesitate to call a sober friend or relative to come and get you if you’ve been drinking. I am sure they would rather pick you up at the party than have to visit you in the hospital,” Bodyk said.

According to Bodyk, law enforcement agencies will be mounting special patrols on Cinco de Mayo to look for drunk drivers.

“And if you get stopped and ticketed for DUI, you’ll find yourself finishing your celebration in a holding cell,” Bodyk said.

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