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## NEWS RELEASE

August 17, 2010

10-075

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## DUI Crackdown Coming in Kansas

*Major Enforcement Effort Seeks to Save Lives*

**WICHITA, Kan.** – Kansas law enforcement agencies have seen enough – enough people killed and maimed by impaired driving. So they're cracking down, in south-central Kansas and statewide, and a lot more people are going to find themselves wrapping their hands around jail cell bars instead of a steering wheel.

Under Kansas law, all impaired drivers go to jail. The minimum sentence is two days; the maximum is six months. Law enforcement and public safety officials gathered Aug. 12 in Wichita to discuss upcoming enforcement efforts that will put more offenders behind bars.

Whitney Williams, a teenage student whose father was killed in a crash caused by an impaired driver, discussed how her life changed after the crash.

Two senior officials from the Wichita Police Department, Deputy Chief Terri Moses and Lt. Joe Schroeder, also participated, along with Pete Bodyk, traffic safety manager for the KDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety and Technology.

Whitney, 18, lost her father in Sept. 2008. He was riding a motorcycle when a driver who had been drinking ran a red light and hit him. Whitney, a 2010 graduate of Wichita Northwest High School, is a volunteer with the DUI Victim Center of Kansas and will enroll at Cowley County Community College.

She said she is trying to create something positive from the tragedy through her volunteer work.

“Three weeks after the funeral, when I went back to school, I was the girl whose dad was killed. I didn’t want to be that girl,” she said. She speaks to convicted drunk drivers who attend court-ordered sessions. “They come up to me afterward and say, ‘You just changed my life.’ And I think, wow, I *can* do something.”

Whitney stressed the risks of impaired driving, even by drivers whose blood alcohol level does not exceed the legal limit. The driver who hit and killed her father had a BAC of .03, while the legal limit is .08.

“My story proves you don’t have to be legally drunk to hurt someone,” she said. “The first drink impairs you. Please have a designated driver.”

Whitney said her long-term goal is to establish a ride-sharing program at bars and restaurants throughout the Wichita area, in an effort to prevent drunk driving.

Moses called on the public to support law enforcement efforts to save lives.

“In the law enforcement community, we do a lot to enforce DUI laws, but the best way to deal with drunk driving is simply not to do it,” she said. “People need to take responsibility for their own actions and the actions of their families and friends. We need to do more as a community. Talk to your friends and families. Have plans in advance when you go out – have a designated driver, use public transportation. You can still have a good time but you have to plan ahead to avoid the serious injuries and fatalities that come with drunk driving.”

Schroeder described an internal impaired-driving task force he is leading for the department and the formation of a regional cooperative effort involving multiple law enforcement agencies in south-central Kansas.

“The Wichita police department is working closely with the city prosecutor’s office to review our procedures. We’re also working with other law enforcement agencies and KDOT to set up Project Impact, a program modeled on one that’s being used already in the Kansas City area,” he said. Project Impact promotes sharing of information and resources among law enforcement agencies to leverage impact on impaired driving and other crimes across a metropolitan area.

Schroeder said the first meeting of the south-central Kansas Operation Impact team will take place later this month, but several initiatives are already underway. The Sedgwick County Sheriff’s office is obtaining a specially equipped mobile unit for DUI checkpoints and will share it with other regional agencies. The Wichita Police Department, in cooperation with the Kansas Highway Patrol, is providing training for law enforcement officers throughout the region to obtain certification to supervise checkpoints.

“Law enforcement is committed to reducing the carnage on our roads, so if you are over the limit you will be under arrest,” Schroeder added.

Bodyk discussed the statewide “Drunk driving. Over the limit. Under arrest.” crackdown. Starting Aug. 14 and continuing through the Labor Day weekend, Kansas law enforcement agencies will team up with law enforcement and highway safety agencies across the nation in the annual DUI enforcement mobilization.

“Overall traffic fatalities in Kansas are down over the past few years, but drunk driving fatalities have not experienced this same decrease,” Bodyk said.

“When you drink and drive, so many bad things can happen,” Bodyk said. “It’s not worth it.”

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