

From the Sheriff:

As fall approaches many of you will be driving our rural roadways admiring the fall colors. If you have not noticed by now, you will soon notice an increased presence of marked patrol cars on your county roadways. This increase in visibility should act as a deterrent to those who wish to intentionally violate our traffic laws. Christmas is coming and citations are very expensive!

This significant increase in law enforcement presence is a result of a two traffic enforcement enhancement programs. Both programs are made possible due to the cooperation of the Sheriff's Dept. and its employees. Our Traffic Patrolmen take our fatalities as serious as I do and they want to make a difference. In mid-Sept. I pitched two new initiatives to the Patrolmen. We are thinking outside the box in an effort to finish our year on a more positive note.

Our first initiative began two-weeks ago when we asked our Traffic Patrolmen to work additional hours each month at the beginning or end of their shift. They accepted and now all these civil servants will be working extra hours. We are focusing this effort during hours of high traffic volume and in areas that we have identified as an area that have yielded multiple traffic complaints from residents or motorists. These 9 & 10 hour shifts will maximize our resources during peak travel times.

Our second initiative is even more bold and a win-win for our employees and our residents. I offered our Traffic Patrol a written agreement that will allow them to use their county squads for personal use. Now, before you rant and rave, let me finish. We know based upon many traffic surveys we have completed that the cheapest enforcement tool in our tool box is visibility. I can park an unoccupied squad on a state highway and traffic will slow to a crawl. In 2002 we flooded the highways with additional enforcement units and cut traffic fatalities in half. That same year our traffic arrests doubled. This initiative will remain in effect until the end of the year and will offer the same successes. Participation in this initiative is voluntary but all choose to participate.

This initiative will allow an employee who is assigned a marked traffic patrol car to use his/her car for various personal appointments. Examples include trips to pharmacy, doctor, fitness center, and grocery store. The employee can not be accompanied by family or friends. The employee will radio in that he will be available and log his mileage. They must use their radar equipment to monitor traffic flow and take action if they observe a violation that would normally generate a traffic citation. These employees must also make themselves available for emergency calls, assist with EMS and fire calls. They must be dressed appropriately and have all necessary equipment with them.

This initiative became effective around Oct. 1st and will continue thru the end of 2005. The costs are being paid by excess revenues within the Sheriff's Dept. budget. The employee will only be compensated if he/she is required to take law enforcement action or pressed into service by our dispatch center. All hours will be compensated at straight-time.

Too often employees think of themselves and employers have a difficult time gaining additional commitments from them. This is not so with the Dodge County Sheriff's Dept. I commend all the employees who are equal partners in our effort for safe highways. Both of these initiatives will be reviewed at year's end to determine their worth. This will also aid us in charting our direction for 2006. So slow down and buckle up, we'll be watching you more than ever! Thanks for listening, tnehls@co.dodge.wi.us.