

The Increased Fight to Prevent Pedestrian Deaths

Dover – The Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) is pleased to announce an increase in pedestrian safety initiatives that began November 3rd. These initiatives include outreach to the pedestrian population, enforcement of pedestrian safety laws, placement of paid media and a variety of public relations efforts. Full details of the campaign were unveiled on Friday, November 13, 2015, during a press event outside the Emergency Department at Christiana Care Health System's Christiana Hospital. Speakers included the Director of the Office of Highway Safety, the Colonel of the Delaware State Police, the Safety Programs Manager for DelDOT, and the Associate Medical Director for the Christiana Care Trauma Program.

To date, Delaware has lost 30 pedestrians on roadways across the state. The total number of pedestrians lost in 2014 was 27. Given that many of these crashes occurred late in the year, the Office of Highway Safety and its partners announced a variety of initiatives that are intended to keep additional pedestrian crashes at a minimum.

Outreach to the pedestrian population started on November 3rd, with Delaware State Police Troop 2 conducting a special project involving high visibility education and enforcement along US Route 13 from the Route 13/40 split to I-295. This project is part of a pilot program initiated by the International Association of Police Chiefs (IACP) and funded by OHS. The initiative began with outreach to educate pedestrians about how to make walking a safer mode of transportation. Two weeks of education patrols include teams of two Troopers intercepting pedestrians who may be breaking the State's pedestrian safety laws. Following the education patrols, Troopers will conduct one week of enforcement patrols, targeting pedestrian safety violations.

During Troop 2's special project, the following promotion will be conducted:

- Safety messages on DelDOT's variable message boards
- Social media announcements and press releases
- Public Service Announcement on Traffic Watch radio programs

In addition to the Troop 2 project, OHS began funding outreach patrols on November 5th to additional law enforcement agencies including Dover Police, Elsmere Police, Laurel Police, Milford Police, Newark Police, Seaford Police, Smyrna Police, Wilmington Police, and Delaware State Police Troops 2, 3 and 6. These outreach patrols will run through December 12th and will be followed with one week of enforcement patrols that conclude on December 19th. Officers working both initiatives will provide pedestrians literature that includes safe walking tips and a small flashlight to increase their visibility in low-light or dark conditions.

OHS's media and public relations component to improve pedestrian safety will include the following:

- Press releases and social media announcements
- Special announcements on the University of Delaware's Facebook page
- Signage at bus shelters in New Castle County, focusing on the Route 13/40 corridor, Kirkwood Highway, and Limestone Road
- Bus wraps on DART buses in New Castle County
- Signage at Dover Mall and Concord Mall
- Signage at Tanger Outlets in Rehoboth Beach
- Sidewalk clings within the City of Dover
- A pedestrian safety educational checkpoint along the Route 13/40 corridor
- Flyers for law enforcement to hand out during education/outreach patrols
- Small flashlights for pedestrians
- Posters placed with businesses and apartment complexes along the Route 13/40 corridor
- Marquee messaging along the Route 13/40 corridor

OHS reminds pedestrians and motorists that the holiday season truly is the most dangerous time of the year on Delaware roadways. Pedestrians are reminded to cross only in marked crosswalks or at intersections with traffic signals; if walking at night, carry a flashlight or wear reflective clothing; use sidewalks whenever possible; be patient – wait for cars to stop before starting to cross; and finally, do not walk under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Be as visible as you possibly can. When driving, always anticipate pedestrians, and plan extra time in your travel schedule to allow them time to cross. Vigilance is essential. And remember, always follow the posted speeds and never drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol.