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SNARE the Drug Impaired

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MINNESOTA DRE

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TENTH DRE SCHOOL WRAPS UP

The spring of 2002 proved to be a very successful one for the DRE program. Program coordinator, Sergeant Doug Thooft, had some apprehensions going into this year's school. "We only had a few students from the metro area and the weather wasn't cooperating", Thooft said. He was nervous that the certification phase of training might go longer than expected. Much to everyone's surprise, the class wrapped up certifications in 10 nights.



The Tenth DRE School was comprised of 21 officers from 16 different departments. The roster included officers from the State Patrol, Saint Paul, Northfield, Rochester, Hutchinson, Winona County, Willmar, Kandiyohi County, Owatonna, Sartell, Worthington, Eagan, Woodbury, Mille Lacs County, Hennepin County, and Lindstrom.

This year's class was held at the Metropolitan Transit Police Department in Minneapolis. The Transit police staff was extremely helpful and the facility was fantastic. With any luck, future classes will be held at this top-notch police department. Special thanks go out to Transit Police Executive Administrative Assistant Angela Lenart for all her hard work and support during the class.

SERGEANT DOUG THOOFT PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT

After more than seven years overseeing the DRE Program in Minnesota, Sergeant Doug Thooft was promoted to Lieutenant in the State Patrol's West Metro District. The newly promoted Lieutenant Thooft will be overseeing the 'dogwatch' shift from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

In the early years of the DRE Program in Minnesota, our sponsoring agency (Office of Traffic Safety) was looking for a Trooper to be assigned as Statewide Coordinator. A number of Troopers applied. Doug Thooft was deservedly selected. Doug took over the program with 36 trained DREs. Minnesota now boasts 140 DREs from 54 different agencies. In addition, DRE from Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota, and Canada were trained here in Minnesota. This is a true testament to the level of quality that Doug brought to the program.

Doug's commitment to removing impaired drivers is nothing new. From 1992-1993, Doug was assigned to the State Patrol's Commercial Vehicle section as part of a team to examine alcohol and drug use by commercial vehicle drivers. Doug was one of a few DREs nationally selected to take part in a study of drug impairment at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland in 1993. Minnesota was put on the map in 1999 when Doug organized the 5th Annual Drug, Alcohol, and Impaired Driving Conference. In 1998, Doug was nationally recognized by the IACP and CANDID as an Outstanding Educator for his efforts in educating DREs. Doug received the President's Award in 1999 for his service as the Chairman of the DRE Section of the Technical Advisory Panel of the IACP. In 2000, Doug agreed to add Minnesota DREs to a national test program using Palm Pilots for compiling evaluation data. DREs in Minnesota now use the high tech hand held computers to document the evaluation. The information is then downloaded to a report form and a national database.

These accomplishments are just a few highlights of Doug's career. We wish him the best of luck as he moves up in rank and back out to the road duties.

MINNESOTA LAW ENFORCEMENT TARGETS THE UNBUCKLED

State's Largest Blitz Aims to Increase Seat Belt Use, Save Lives

The Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) sponsored the largest statewide, synchronized law enforcement wave targeting seat belt use from May 24th through June 2nd. The enforcement wave, dubbed May Mobilization, was part of the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Safe & Sober education and enforcement campaign. Nearly 380 enforcement agencies participated in the enforcement wave.

The mobilization period, which included Memorial Day weekend, is historically one of the deadliest driving periods of the year, due in part to the dramatic increase in road traffic with the approach of summer. During this same period last year in Minnesota, 15 people were killed and 1,212 people sustained injuries in crashes.

Minnesota's effort mirrors a nationwide program lead by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in which every state is simultaneously enforcing seat belt laws. NHTSA will use the data compiled from the mobilization to gain support from Congress in order to aid future traffic safety initiatives.

Seat belt use in Minnesota currently stands at 74 percent. Although this number has increased for the last three consecutive years, the rates of increase have been minimal. Nearly two-thirds of the 460 motor vehicle occupants who died in 2001 were not using seat belts. It is estimated that half of those fatalities would have survived if they had been wearing seat belts. Traffic deaths and injuries cost Minnesotans approximately \$1.2 billion in 2000.

For the details on the success of the mobilization, go to <http://www.dps.state.mn.us/trafsafe/trafsafe.asp>

STATE PATROL DRE WEB SITE MAKES ITS DEBUT

Thanks to the many hours and hard work of Trooper Jeff Westrum, the State Patrol DRE web site is up and running. It is a very comprehensive look at State Patrol DREs and the DRE Program in Minnesota. Most of the site is complete. There are a few pages that are still under construction, but the entire content should be completed very soon. Take a few minutes and look around. If there are content suggestions or comments, please go to the 'CONTACT' section and let us know what you think. You can go to <http://www.mspta.com/> and look for the link or find the site directly at <http://www.mspta.com/DRE>.

AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY

As the deaths from drug and alcohol impaired drivers on our roads grows every year, we scarcely need to be reminded of the bloodshed. Here are some numbers that might help illustrate the point to those that don't risk their lives everyday to save others.

2001 DWI Related Deaths: 16, 652
2001 DWI Traffic Injuries (estimated): 3 Million

How many more deaths and injuries are a result of DRUG impaired driving? Add that to the alcohol numbers. Then add it to the numbers from every country! Here is a comparison from other events. (All numbers rounded off).

Attack on Pearl Harbor:	2200
Battle of Gettysburg:	46,000
US Casualties in Viet Nam:	58,000
Iraqi casualties in Gulf War:	150,000
Nuclear Bomb over Hiroshima:	200,000
United States Civil War:	620,000
Holocaust:	6,000,000
September 11, 2001	3800
Murders in USA:	2000 15,517
	1999 15,522

DWI would qualify as America's greatest on-going disaster done to Americans by Americans. Where is the outcry?

DRE SUMMER SATURATION PROJECT IN FULL SWING

The summer of 2002 will prove to be a milestone for the DRE Program in Minnesota. With the help of Lieutenant Mark Peterson, the State Patrol has received a Federal grant to increase arrests of drug-impaired drivers. This project will also help to increase the awareness of the DRE Program.

The State Patrol has undertaken a monumental project. With these dedicated funds, they have assigned two Troopers (one to the East Metro District and one to the West Metro District) every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday night from mid-May through the end of August. These Troopers have been given two 'simple' tasks: find and remove drug-impaired drivers and promote the DRE Program.

According to Lieutenant Peterson, "We hope to replicate the success achieved during certification training during this project". It is not uncommon to have 3-4 'legal' evaluations performed during a typical night at certification training.

These Troopers have also been assigned to promote our program. With statistics and fliers in hand, these Troopers have been given a schedule of roll calls and briefings they are to attend. With the increased presence and education, this project should prove to be a huge impact on traffic safety.

OFFICERS BETTER EQUIPPED TO DETECT IMPAIRED DRIVERS

In 2001, NHTSA once again awarded a grant to Minnesota's Office of Traffic Safety to train officers in DWI detection skills and school district employees in detecting drug and alcohol impairment. This \$120,000 grant is used to administrate the SFST, Drugs that Impair Driving, and Drug Influence Training for Education Professionals (DITEP) classes.

In 2001, 477 officers attended 28 classes in Standardized Field Sobriety Testing, 471 officers attended 24 classes in Advanced Field Sobriety Testing/Drugs That Impair Driving, and 450 school district employees attended 20 DITEP classes.

SEARCH FOR A NEW STATE COORDINATOR BEGINS

With the promotion of Doug Thooft to Lieutenant on June 19th, the DRE Program will temporarily be without a State Coordinator. A search has begun to fill that position. The State Patrol is looking for a dedicated and hard working Trooper to fill the vacuum left with Doug's departure. Memos of interest for the position will be accepted through June 21st. The selection process will take place on July 10th. The Trooper selected to become State Coordinator will begin those duties in early August.

A CALL FOR ARTICLES

This is the first issue of Snare The Drug Impaired. This will be a quarterly newsletter addressing DRE, DWI, and Traffic Safety issues. Each issue will have articles about the latest projects, statistics, and newest information. The majority of this information will come from officers in the field. If you have any initiatives to promote traffic safety, trends you are seeing in your area, articles you have read, or interesting anecdotes, please forward them to the State DRE Coordinator (as yet to be named) at 444 Cedar St., Saint Paul, MN 55101.

TRAINING VIDEOS NEEDED

A search for 'new' videos for SFST and DEC classes continues. According to Sergeant Thooft, "Officers want to see 'actual' videos of SFSTs and DWI stops. It's one of the more common comments we receive on course evaluations".

With that in mind, a request for videos of DWI stops, SFSTs and DRE Evaluations is going throughout the state. If you have any archived videos that would be appropriate for use in SFST and DEC training, please copy and send them to Lieutenant Mark Peterson at State Patrol Central Office (444 Cedar Street Saint Paul 55101). These tapes will be reviewed for use in training classes. The tapes will not be returned, so please do not send your original copy. Please speak with your prosecutor and make sure that they will not have an issue with the use of these tapes.

ALBERTVILLE SATURATION NABS TRUCKERS

A Multi-jurisdictional enhanced enforcement project was conducted at three locations in Wright and Hennepin counties on May 22nd and 23rd. For 48 hours, a net was cast over the entire area. The Commercial Vehicles Division of the State Patrol organized and coordinated this unprecedented effort.

This Project brought representatives from the State Patrol, Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, Wright County Sheriff's Office, Saint Paul, Minneapolis, Plymouth, Rochester, and Edina Police Departments, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Revenue, Internal Revenue Service, and the National Guard together to focus on commercial vehicles and their drivers.

The three locations were each staffed with officers having specialized skills. State Patrol Troopers were on hand for drug evaluations. Additional Troopers and their canine partners searched for Illegal controlled substances. Commercial Vehicle Inspectors checked for weight violations, unsafe equipment, and drivers driving outside of their requirements. HazMat staff inspected vehicles for federal compliance. Immigration and Naturalization Officers checked for identification violations.

The detailed enforcement activity for the project is listed below. The Commercial Vehicles Division accomplished a task never seen before in Minnesota and, at best, a rarity anywhere else. Calls from as far away as Missouri and Indiana were received prior to the project. Congratulations to everyone involved in a job well done.

909 Commercial Vehicles Inspected
199 Vehicles Placed Out of Service
89 Drivers Placed Out of Service
2970 Total Violations
172 Citations Issued
24 Over Weight Violations

16 INS Arrests
5 Alcohol Related Arrests
4 Drug Influence Arrests
2 Drug Possession arrests
65 Seat Belt Citations
1 Alcohol Beverage Possession Arrest