



Community Notification

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wheat Ridge, CO — FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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City of Wheat Ridge Proclaims September 2011

BACK TO SCHOOL and TRAFFIC SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH

Wheat Ridge, CO ~ The City of Wheat Ridge and the Wheat Ridge Police Department are focusing their efforts in September on an education and enforcement program that addresses unsafe driving practices. The program has two components: addressing driving behaviors that result in traffic accidents and encouraging safe driving behaviors as our young drivers head back to school; some driving to school for the first time.

Traffic safety is a vital concern in our communities. Mayor Jerry DiTullio and the Wheat Ridge Police Department are committed to reducing traffic accidents, injuries and fatalities on our roadways through education and enforcement efforts. On August 8, 2011, a proclamation was adopted by City Council proclaiming September as Back to School and Traffic Safety Awareness Month.

With another school year upon us, members of the Wheat Ridge Police Department met recently with school administrators from Wheat Ridge area schools to provide an overview of this program. The department encouraged school administrators to send home an informational letter to students and parents reminding them of the numerous complaints the Police Department receives concerning driving behaviors of students. Additionally, the department reminds parents of the need to obey speed limits around schools, especially in school zones.

"I am pleased to partner with our Police Department to bring attention to such an important safety issue in our community," said Mayor Jerry DiTullio. "Irresponsible driving, such as speeding in school zones, speeding in neighborhoods, and running red lights in our community is a serious concern. For the wellbeing of all citizens, and especially pedestrians, we want to help educate drivers to practice safe driving habits".

This program will focus on the following violations:

- Speeding, particularly in school zones
- Red light and stop sign violations
- Parking violations around schools
- Aggressive driving behaviors

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- Violating the Colorado's Graduated Driver Licensing law
 - Newly licensed drivers are prohibited from transporting any passenger under the age of 21 for 6 months after getting his or her license. They are also prohibited from transporting more than one passenger at a time for the first year of holding a driver's license.
 - Seat belt use is mandatory for all occupants of a vehicle driven by a teenager.
 - Teenagers are prohibited from driving between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m. for the first year of holding a driver's license.
 - Cell Phone use is prohibited for drivers under 18.
 - Texting while driving is illegal for every driver.

Some disturbing statistics on young drivers are:

- One out of every five 16-year-old drivers will be involved in a crash
- 16-year-old drivers have the highest crash rate nation wide
- 16-year-old drivers are 3 times more likely to be involved in a fatal accident
- Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for kids age 15-20

"The department's efforts are focused on education and enforcement that encourage safe driving behaviors", said Police Chief Dan Brennan. "In addition, at the beginning of the school year the department experiences an increase in traffic complaints from around our schools. We want to make student drivers, as well as parents, aware of these problems and work proactively with the schools on addressing these concerns."

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"Exceptional People Providing Exceptional Service"
Wheat Ridge Police