



State of Illinois
Bruce Rauner, Governor



Illinois Department of Transportation
Erica J. Borggren, Acting Secretary

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CONTACT:
Guy Tridgell (IDOT) 312.793.4199
Carson Quinn (IDOT) 312.814.4693
Sgt. Matt Boerwinkle (ISP) 217.782.6637

“Drive for Tomorrow” Program Helps Teens Drive Safely

Springfield Event Draws 2,000 Students to Help Reduce Teen Fatalities

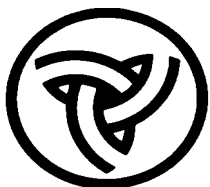
SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police and local sponsors are welcoming students to the Drive for Tomorrow program this week. This innovative, hands-on safe driving event, being held Jan. 27 through Jan. 30 at Prairie Capital Convention Center, is expected to draw more than 2,000 students from schools throughout the Springfield area.

Motor-vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death of American teenagers. National statistics show approximately seven teens died every day, according to the latest statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Teen drivers are also three times as likely to be involved in fatal crashes as drivers who are more than 20 years old.

“Drive for Tomorrow is a great way for us to have a positive and significant impact on young drivers,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Erica Borggren. “We hope the students who attend this program will leave better equipped to make the right decisions when they get behind the wheel.”

Traffic fatalities as a whole have gone down in Illinois, but teen driving fatalities still are a major concern. Many of these crashes could have been prevented and this program is helping to educate teens on safe driving practices, in an effort to eliminate crashes and fatalities.

“This is all about the safety of our young people and their driving skills because safe driving habits begin early and last a lifetime,” said Illinois State Police Col. Michael Zerbonia. “Teens who embrace a culture of safe driving and respect the rules of the road avoid law enforcement and ultimately become responsible adult drivers.”



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At Drive for Tomorrow, students engage in real-life driving situations at the event, in a controlled environment where they can make mistakes and learn from them. The program supplements driver's education instruction for students and is structured like a school day, with students divided into six groups and rotating between activities.

The activities include an impaired driving golf cart course, where students attempt to drive while wearing fatal vision goggles. Students also learn the dangers of driving through work zones, the importance of staying out of a semi truck's "no zone" and how dangerous it can be when you are involved in a crash and not wearing a seat belt.

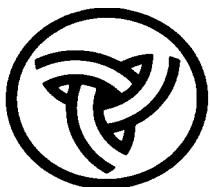
Students learn how drowsy driving can be deadly and how to share the road with motorcycles. In addition, students hear from paramedics about the importance of driving safely and the deadly consequences that can happen as an irresponsible driver.

Sponsors include Anheuser-Busch, Prairie Capital Convention Center, Green Toyota, Springfield Tractor & Trailer Sales, Battery Specialists & Golf Cars and Landstar Trucking.

Visit <http://youtu.be/4CvwZtkvHSI> for a look at what students experience while they attend the Drive for Tomorrow program.

For more information or to learn how to sign up for Drive for Tomorrow, please contact Cindy Houlihan at Cindy.Houlihan@illinois.gov or Patty Ambrose at Patty.Ambrose@illinois.gov.

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