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Heightened enforcement of hands-free law in April, National Distracted Driving Awareness Month

Prairie Grove, IL - April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and the Prairie Grove Police Department is partnering with the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Illinois State Police, and more than 100 local law enforcement agencies throughout the state to remind drivers to drop their phones or pay up.

Motorists will see increased patrols and enforcement zones across Illinois throughout the month. The Prairie Grove PD will be ticketing drivers who text or use their cellphones while driving.

Over the past decade, distracted driving has become one of the leading causes of vehicle crashes on our roads. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Association, 3,166 people died in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2017. While this represents a nine-percent decrease in distracted driving fatalities from 2016, there is clearly more work to be done.

“Every day, you can look out your car window and see a driver using their cellphone,”
“People know texting and driving is dangerous and illegal, but they do it anyway, and it puts others at risk.”

Texting while driving distracts a driver visually, manually and cognitively. Sending or receiving a text takes a driver’s eyes off the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent of driving blind at 55 miles per hour for the length of an entire football field.

Follow these steps for a safe driving experience:

- If you are expecting a text message or need to send one, pull over and park your car in a safe location. Once you are safely off the road and parked, it is safe to text.
- Designate your passenger as your “designated texter.” Allow them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving. Cellphone use can be habit-forming.
- Put your cellphone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat until you arrive at your destination.

The Distracted Driving enforcement campaign is supported through federal funds administered by IDOT.