

# MEDIA RELEASE



## **SOBRIETY CHECKPOINT ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Pima County Sheriff's Department will conduct two sobriety checkpoints during the Fourth of July weekend. Funding for these operations is being provided by a grant from the Arizona Governor's Office of Highway Safety.

The sobriety checkpoints will include both a low manpower operation on a rural Pima County roadway and a large scale checkpoint on a principal roadway. The locations of these checkpoints have been identified by their propensity for alcohol related arrests and collisions and recent alcohol related motor vehicle crashes.

Studies conducted by the National Highway Safety Administration (NHTSA) indicate that sobriety checkpoints are typically a greater deterrent to potential impaired motorists while saturation patrols typically result in more DUI arrests. Therefore, both of these DUI enforcement tools will be used by the Pima County Sheriff's Department in efforts to detect and deter impaired motorists on local roadways this weekend.

Surveys completed by motorists who have passed through Pima County Sheriff's Department sobriety checkpoints during the last four years have been overwhelming in favor of the checkpoint efforts. These surveys indicate that over 90 percent of drivers passing through the checkpoints approved of their use and believed that the sobriety checkpoints would increase an impaired driver's chances of being arrested.

According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) statistics, nearly two out of every five Americans will be involved in an alcohol related traffic collision. During the 1990s, ten percent of all reported motor vehicle collisions in the United States were alcohol related. Between 1980 and 1994, alcohol-related traffic deaths dropped by a dramatic 43 percent. Since then, the drunk driving death toll has reached a plateau at approximately 16,000 to 17,000 lives lost annually. Crashes involving alcohol now represent forty percent of total highway fatalities.

The Pima County Sheriff's Department remains fully committed to removing impaired drivers from our roadways. Driving while impaired is the most frequently committed violent crime and costs thousands of lives every year. It is a completely preventable and inexcusable crime.

For information on upcoming DUI sobriety checkpoints, please contact Lt. Karl Woolridge at (520) 351-6204.