



LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, AGENCIES HONORED FOR IMPAIRED DRIVING ENFORCEMENT

Ceremony salutes efforts to keep Kentucky roads safe

The Kentucky Office of Highway Safety honored 193 law enforcement officers from 169 agencies across the Commonwealth for their efforts to target impaired drivers at the Governor's Impaired Driving Enforcement Awards Dec. 16 at the Embassy Suites in Lexington. Awards were presented to officers with the most impaired driving arrests in each agency and division. Lieutenant Governor Crit Luallen commended the aggressive enforcement and awareness efforts to keep Kentucky roadways safe.

"Kentucky drivers are hearing the message loud and clear about the dangers of driving under the influence," Lt. Gov. Luallen said. "However, we still have work to do because one alcohol-related crash is too many."

According to KOHS, last year Kentucky recorded more than 5,500 alcohol-related crashes, resulting in 138 deaths and more than 3,000 injuries. More than 440 of those crashes occurred in

December, resulting in eight deaths and 239 injuries.

"Impaired driving is not an accident – it's an epidemic of careless disregard for human life," KOHS Executive Director Bill Bell said. "These officers, their departments and agencies render a great service for public safety by removing drunken and drugged drivers from our roads."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one in three Americans will be impacted by a drunken driving crash in his or her lifetime.

MADD President Colleen Sheehey-Church said the holidays are especially difficult for those who have lost loved ones to an impaired driver.

"A drunk driver killed my son Dustin 10 years ago," Sheehey-Church said. "Telling his story to others allows us to help people understand that drunk driving has a profound impact on our neighborhoods, our towns, our states and our nation."

Click [here](#) for photos and [here](#) for a video of the ceremony.



KOHS Executive Director Bill Bell with KSP Sgt. Steve Walker, the overall winner with 225 impaired driving arrests.

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Director's Message — Bill Bell



Why Kentucky needs improved booster seat legislation

Last week, I ran into former highway safety employee and current [Lexington Police Department](#) Officer Brandon Muravchick. He was coaching 6-7 year olds in an instructional basketball league. I have met him at a few award luncheons and given him plaques for writing record numbers of seat belt and child seat citations. On this day, we caught up and talked about getting his assistance on passing a stronger booster seat law. He is a prime example of why we need a stronger law due to his [family's traumatic crash](#) that happened when he was 8.

The crash happened in Frankfort on Aug. 4, 1989, at the bottom of Louisville Road near Second Street School. He was in a lap belt but it was riding up on his stomach because he was too little. There were no booster seats back then.

All of Muravchick's injuries were internal. He had holes in his bowels and his abdominal organs were mashed together. These organs had to be separated, removed, cleaned and then put back in. Doctors didn't close the wound. They wanted it to heal from the inside out, which required

cleaning his stomach every hour throughout his three-month hospital stay. In total, he has had 10 surgeries; the last as recent as 2014.

Years later, Muravchick began having stomach pains that frequently landed him in the emergency room. In 2008, while Muravchick was in the police academy, he was in the hospital for three days. The doctor saw scar tissue built up around his

intestines and causing blockage. He was told he would continue to have problems until he had another surgery. Muravchick had always dreamed of following in his father's footsteps becoming a police officer, so he postponed the surgery in order to graduate from the academy. When he had the surgery in 2012, doctors initially thought they would remove two inches of his intestines, but they ended up removing two feet, along with cleaning out the scar tissue.

Some people see this legislation as government intrusion. As a father of four kids, I see it as erring on the side of safety. How many Brandon Muravchicks will we have to hear about before we bring our law in line with [federal standards](#) and 32 other states (including all surrounding Kentucky)?

Click [here](#) to view the episode of Rescue 911 that featured this incident.

HOUSE BILL 315

Officer Brandon Muravchick with his daughters, Makayla and Emilee.



SafetySpotlight



Don't Get Caught in the "No Zone"

by Jared Newberry, KSP CVE Division

Some things in our daily routine seem increasingly automatic. With the advent of technological advancements; we read our news, watch our favorite television shows, and make dinner reservations with the tap of a button on our favorite app.

I fondly remember road trips to the Great Smoky Mountains in an '80s conversion van with an air conditioner we couldn't afford to turn on because it caused the beefy 350 Chevrolet engine to consume more fuel. We arrived at our destination with very few inside or outside driving distractions, and most importantly we arrived safely.

Fast forward 20 years as I hop in my cruiser each morning and witness a variety of roadway distractions. Drivers are texting, applying make-up, watching videos on electronic devices — the list is endless.

The scary part is at times the driver weaving in-and-out of traffic is cutting off semi-tractors and driving along the "No Zone" — the danger areas around large trucks and buses where crashes are more likely to occur. [Four areas of the No-Zones are actual blind spots](#) where you car disappears from the view of the truck or bus driver.

Drivers sometimes forget they share the road with commercial vehicles that are 10 times heavier than their car and need more space to stop. The average commercial vehicle is 80,000 pounds, more than 70 feet long and requires the length of a football field to come to a complete stop. In addition, a semi tractor uses air brakes versus a hydraulic system on passenger cars, which is almost instantaneous. The semi tractor air brake system has "lag time," which takes an additional full one-second of braking time. Adding "distractions" with an 80,000-pound vehicle, with decreased braking efficiency, a full one second of additional needed reaction time, and four distinct areas where the driver can't even see you, and you no longer have an "automatic" safe trip.

Some folks will argue that technological advancements have made passenger vehicles safer. I

agree, but nothing can replace a diligent, non-distracted, careful operator.

The trucking industry in the U.S. is one of the safest and most cost efficient modes of transportation for commerce; and, according to the American Trucking Association, employs more than 3.5 million professional drivers. Keeping our roadways safe takes cooperation from everyone, including passenger car operators and professional truck drivers.

Before your next trip, whether it is a family road-trip or a trip down the street, keep in mind driving distractions and large trucks can have potentially deadly consequences. Keep your attention on the road and fingers off the cell-phone. Share the road with larger vehicles and give them the space they need to safely maneuver.

The [Kentucky State Police](#) participates in federal programs such as the [Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks campaign](#), which increases enforcement of semi-trucks and passenger cars driving aggressively on high-crash corridors. So please, drive safe Kentucky and hopefully you won't see me or one of my fellow officers in your rearview mirror.



Highway fatalities in Kentucky increased in 2014 after a record low in 2013.

Preliminary figures from KOHS and KSP indicate 667 people lost their lives on Kentucky roadways last year, up from 638 in 2013. However, it was the second lowest total since 1949, when 573 fatalities were recorded.

The figures will remain classified as preliminary until all highway crash data is collected. A final report is expected by April.

Your Letters

Dear Secretary Hancock,

My husband and I wanted to thank your service for making an unpleasant experience happier. We were traveling on I-75 when our car broke down in heavy traffic. Thankfully, your Safe Patrol driver, Mark Lawson, stopped to help. He was very courteous and waited with us until the tow truck arrived.

We truly appreciated the service. I am 73 years old and my husband is 83 years old. Thank you very much for being there.

Sincerely,

Clarence and Pam Lykins



Event Calendar

An up-to-date and detailed listing will be on our [Events Facebook page](#)

Did you know?

Scholarships available for children of those who are injured or killed on the job

[National Work Zone Awareness Week](#) is March 23-27. We take this time to honor those who have been killed or injured while working on our roadways, and to educate the motoring public on how to safely drive through a work zone.

For those whose lives have been tragically altered due to a parent who was disabled or killed on the job, there are a variety of scholarships available:

[Kids' Chance of Kentucky, Inc.](#) provides scholarships to children of Kentucky workers who have been killed or suffered catastrophic injuries in work-related accidents.

[Lanford Family Highway Worker Memorial Scholarship](#) is offered to children of highway workers who were killed or permanently disabled in roadway work zone accidents, related

construction or maintenance activities, including mobile operations and the installation of roadway safety features.

[Roadway Worker Memorial Scholarship Program](#) is offered to dependents of roadway workers killed or permanently disabled in roadway work zones.



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