

WisDOT: State Troopers target drunk drivers with special patrols during Country USA

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(Fox Cities) When country bands light up the stage for Country USA in Oshkosh next week, the Wisconsin State Patrol will light up local roads with extra patrols to target intoxicated drivers. Special Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) Saturation Patrols will be in effect for the five-day concert beginning June 20.

Local law enforcement is especially concerned with the recent trend of drunk drivers leaving Country USA events who are not of legal age to drink alcohol.

"We have really noticed an uptick in underage drinking at Country USA. Unfortunately, those not of legal age to drink are making the deadly decision to get behind the wheel as well," said Sergeant Tim McGrath, Wisconsin State Patrol, Fond du Lac Post. "'Law enforcement officers are well trained in identifying the signs of impaired driving, and they know where and when to look for drunken drivers."

Sergeant McGrath notes that any amount of alcohol in a person under 21 years of age and driving is illegal, and they will get a citation for a violation of the absolute sobriety law and possibly arrested for OWI.

If drivers make the irresponsible and reckless decision to get behind the wheel while impaired, officers are ready to stop, test and arrest them with increased patrols on area roads. OWI Saturation Patrols receive special funding that provides officer overtime and increased law enforcement presence where impaired driving is highest.

"Our goal is to get people to drive sober, not to make more arrests," explains Sergeant McGrath. "Events like Country USA are important and vital to our local economy, but just one bad decision to drink and drive following the concert can turn a night of fun memories into a lifetime of nightmares, pain and even death."

To help prevent drunken driving, WisDOT offers a free Zero In Wisconsin Drive Sober mobile app, which includes a find-a-ride feature that uses a smart phone's GPS to locate alternative transportation, a blood alcohol estimator, designated driver selector, and interactive games that help determine whether drivers should give up their keys. The Drive Sober app can be downloaded for free at: www.zeroinwisconsin.gov/drivesober/.