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David Graves, Sheriff Kurt Picknell, Undersheriff

PRESS RELEASE

Date: Sept. 29, 2010

Type: Results of Multi-Jurisdictional Enforcement

Released by: Captain Scott McClory

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Narrative

During the week of Sept 20-24, 2010, multiple police agencies participated in the annual "STEP up for Highway Safety" program. S.T.E.P. – Specialized Traffic Enforcement Program, which is a weeklong effort focusing on automobile and commercial motor vehicle safety. The program began in 2006 with Walworth County Sheriff's deputies. Each year, more and more police departments join us as we ask all drivers to "take a STEP towards voluntary compliance with the law and making the roads safer for all."

This year, the following agencies participated in the program: Elkhorn Police Department, Janesville Police Department, Village of Walworth Police Department, Wisconsin State Patrol, Illinois State Patrol, Jefferson County Sheriff, Kenosha County Sheriff, Dodge County Sheriff, and Walworth County Sheriff. Any police agency in Wisconsin or northern Illinois is invited to join us each year.

All of these agencies deployed law enforcement officers within their jurisdictions at various times throughout the weeklong program. This occurred on all shifts during the five day period.

Here are the COLLECTIVE totals from all agencies who participated in 2010. Contact information for each agency's individual efforts may be found at the end of this release. For questions or comments regarding the overall operation, or results specific to Walworth County Sheriff, please contact the STEP Coordinator, Captain McClory.

Days Worked – 5

Total Warnings Issued –412

Total Citations Issued – 554

DUI arrests – 11

Alcohol Related Citations – 7

Speeding – 103

No Seatbelt – 84

Unsafe Lane Deviation – 09

Other Initiated Vehicle Contact – 238

Insurance Law Violations – 66

Crash Investigations – 25

Operate After Revocation/Suspension/No Valid License – 36

Arrests (warrants/bail jumping/possession of narcotics, etc) – 59

Ordinance Narcotics Citations Issued – 5

Truck Inspections – 61

Drivers Placed Out of Service – 6

Semis Placed Out of Service – 3

Log Violations -30

Contacts:

Elkhorn PD – Chief Joel Christiansen

Janesville PD – Sgt Holford

Village of Walworth PD – Chief Chris Severt

Wisconsin State Patrol – Sgt Michelle Martino

Illinois State Patrol – Master Sgt Tim Murphy

Kenosha County Sheriff – Lt Shannon Rawson

Dodge County Sheriff – Capt Molly Soblewski

Jefferson County Sheriff – Sgt Brian Olson

Walworth County Sheriff – Capt Scott McClory

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Jim Stigl | In My Opinion

A bad sign? Feds insist on lower-case letters on road signs

Oct. 7, 2010 | [\(118\) Comments](#)

It's science, the feds insist. A street sign printed in both capital and lower-case letters is easier to read than one using all caps.

So communities across America are supposed to replace their signs, and Milwaukee is estimating that will cost \$1.4 million over the next four years.

This is the first time in my life I paid any attention to the font on street signs here. Somehow, I've found my way to the Journal Sentinel for the past 23 years even though the sign out front says STATE, rather than State, street.

Using all caps on e-mail is seen as shouting. But it makes a street sign bold and easy to read, at least to my eye. BURLEIGH street isn't mad at you; it's just trying to be noticed.

A fellow from the Federal Highway Administration explained the error of my thinking. But he asked me not to use his name, probably because he didn't want riled taxpayers finding our way to his street to ask for our \$1.4 million back.

Using all capital letters takes up more space on the sign, leaving less non-letter space, and therefore making it a bit harder for the eye to distinguish the word, he said. It's a difference of a split second, but saving that time can help a driver make a quicker and safer decision about whether this is where to turn.

He said the new rules are contained in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, or MUTCD. Let me make that easier for you to read - Mutcd.

Much like the large-print edition of the Reader's Digest, the new signs are a nod to the fading vision of a driving population that's getting older. They want to make sure we can find our way to the early-bird

specials, and then home again. Most street signs in Milwaukee are in all upper-case, though the newer ones are rocking the mixed-case look. The newer number-street signs read, for example, N. 66th, rather than N. 66TH. Subtle difference, I know. Meaningless, I know.

What bugs me more than letter styles are the missing signs. I did a quick drive-around Thursday and found no street signs at all at the sleepy corner of 81st and Locust and the busy intersection of James Lovell St. and Wisconsin Ave. And the Center St. sign where the arterial crosses 51st St. is turned the wrong way.

Jumping on the expressway, I noticed that the exit signs are a mix of upper and lower case. But the lighted overhead signs warning of trouble ahead or estimating travel times are all caps. You'd think the feds would be all over that.

Though there is no deadline for the mixed-case letters on street signs, the highway administration is insisting the signs be more reflective no later than 2018. Again, I'd rate this pretty low on the scale of global problems.

The street signs in Milwaukee look fine to me, even though many of them are supposedly nearing the end of their natural lives. But we could get to work on that fourth-worst poverty in the nation thing. At the very least, fix more potholes.

Ald. Bob Donovan and U.S. Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner agree. Neither could recall a single time that a constituent voiced concern that these signs are a capital offense. Sensenbrenner said he is drafting legislation to make the Federal Highway Administration back off.

"To me this is just government run amok, and some bureaucrat sitting behind a desk to justify his job comes up with this," Donovan said.

Today's safer highways are the result of countless improvements big and small, my nameless federal source said. And it helps to have uniformity in street signs from state to state.

I guess. Most of us are fine with upper case, lower case, whatever. But do they have to make it a federal case?

Call Jim Stingl at (414) 224-2017 or e-mail at jstingl@journalsentinel.com

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