



The Red Light Alert

Prosecutor Schafer Receives MADD Life Saver Award

Ronald J. Schafer, Ionia County Prosecutor was recently presented with the Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Michigan Life Saver Award for Prosecutors at the PAAM Annual Conference on Mackinac Island. The award is given to recognize those who exhibit outstanding dedication and excellence in the prosecution of drunk drivers and in providing justice for drunk driving victims.

During this past year, Mr. Schafer exhibited what has been labeled as “a year of extraordinary work.” This extraordinary work included

prosecution of a high profile case in which there were no witnesses and other issues of evidence. Despite these obstacles, the case resulted in a conviction of O.W.I causing death and a maximum sentence for the offender. Another case prosecuted by Mr. Schafer resulted in a record restitution amount being ordered.

It was noted in the award comments that it is the impact on victim services where Mr. Schafer really allows his office to be extraordinary. Through a variety of extra activities, victim’s rights are pushed to the forefront in the Ionia County community. Mr.

Schafer’s personal approach to victims is what makes that difference. He is described by one of the victim’s families whom he worked with this past year as being a caring compassionate individual who is

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Award Winner Ronald Schafer (left) with Jason Hamblen from the Office of Highway Safety Planning

94% Safety Belt Use in Michigan!

For the fifth consecutive year, safety belt use has increased in Michigan, with the latest direct observation survey showing that 94 percent of motorists and their front seat passengers buckle up, according to the Wayne State University Transportation Research Group.



This is the highest rate ever recorded in the state, and puts Michigan among the highest belt use states in the country. The survey took place following the statewide Buckle Up or Pay Up/Click It or Ticket safety belt enforcement mobilization. This year’s campaign introduced new TV ads, including a spot aimed at high school teens, as well

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This material was developed through a project funded by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

MADD

Life Saver Award Winner

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dedicated to the fight for victim's and their families.

Homer Smith, State Executive Director for MADD stated, "Mr. Schafer's diligence combined with his concern for victims makes him an outstanding prosecutor. MADD is pleased to be able to honor him for his work."

Editor's Note: Press Release from MADD Michigan

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as an additional week of enforcement in more rural areas of the state.

"The continual increase in safety belt use is heartening news," said Col. Peter C. Munoz, director of the Michigan State Police. "This mobilization is a brief but massive effort to

remind motorists of the importance of buckling up. I have no doubt this increase will save lives and spare others the pain of a serious injury."

The official figure was derived from trained observers who

measure safety belt use from locations throughout the state. More specific and detailed survey information will be available in six to eight weeks.

Michigan was the only state east of the Rockies with a belt use rate of 90 percent or greater.

Safety belt use first climbed above 90 percent in 2003, reaching 90.5 percent. Last year, belt use jumped again, that time to 92.9 percent.

Safety belt use rates vary across the country. Last year, Hawaii had the highest rate at 95.3 percent and Mississippi the lowest with 60.8 percent. As of 2005, Michigan was the only state east of the Rockies with a belt use rate of 90 percent or greater.

Michigan experienced a significant increase in safety belt use in 2000 when the state's primary enforcement law took effect. Belt use went from 70 percent with a secondary enforcement law to 83.5 percent that year. Belt use dipped slightly in 2001 but has increased every year since 2002.

Editor's Note: OHSP Press Release—July 6, 2006