

THE POLICE NEWS

LPPD and H-GAC Continuing Regional DWI Task Force for Thanksgiving

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Additional police units on the streets during the holidays.

The Houston-Galveston Area Council is beginning the third year of its Regional DWI Task Force, which consists of 16 law enforcement agencies throughout the Houston-Galveston area, including the La Porte Police Department. The DWI Task Force will be operating throughout the Thanksgiving holiday to reduce the number of instances of Driving While Intoxicated (DWI). The Task Force is funded through a Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) grant awarded by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), supplying overtime funds for agencies to provide enhanced DWI enforcement during holiday weekends when there has traditionally been more alcohol-related traffic incidents. During the last year, the Task Force made a total of 372 DWI arrests.

Convicted first-time DWI offenders can pay a fine up to \$2,000, serve six months in jail, lose their driver's license for up to a year, and pay an additional \$3,000 to retain their license once they get it back. Safety officials say other costs associated with an impaired driving arrest and conviction can add up to more than \$17,000 for bail, legal fees, court appearances, court-ordered classes, vehicle insurance increases, and other expenses.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2012, 258 people died and over 1,100 people were seriously injured in DWI-related incidents throughout the region. These figures represent 21% of Texas' DWI fatalities.

“Thanks to our partnership with these participating law enforcement agencies, we hope to ensure that everyone can enjoy a safe holiday,” said Jeff Kaufman from H-GAC. “If you choose to drink, appoint a designated driver or arrange for a ride home.”

H-GAC is a voluntary association of local governments in the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning Region—an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 6 million people. H-GAC's mission is to serve as the instrument of local government cooperation, promoting the region's orderly development and the safety and welfare of its citizens. For more information on any of La Porte Police Department's traffic safety initiatives, please call 281-842-3171.