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Is Texting While Driving the New Drunk Driving?

DECEMBER 16TH 2011 BY STAFF WRITER

Is Texting While Driving the New Drunk Driving?

There has been a lot of talk since the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said yesterday that they want to ban all non-emergency cell phone use by drivers. And by ‘a lot of talk,’ I mean 2,397 news articles found by Google as of 4:29 on Wednesday, 12/14. The New York Times, Washington Post and CNN are among the major news sources that have reported the story.

In case you didn’t read any of these articles, the NTSB was responding to an accident that happened on the highway last year in Missouri. A 19-year-old crashed into an 18-wheeler, resulting in a pile-up that involved two school buses. Two people, including the 19-year-old and a teen on one of the buses, were killed. 38 were injured. And the crazy thing is that leading up to the accident, the 19-year-old had sent or received 12 texts in 12 minutes, while barreling down the highway.

The NTSB has deemed that no cell phones—even the handheld kind—should be used on the road. This has generated an outcry, with most stories not really showing indignation so much as surprise. Is it really that dangerous a problem? The Christian Science Monitor reported in November 2009, two years ago, that talking on a phone while driving gives you the same reaction time as driving intoxicated.

(<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/2009/1105/p25s07-usgn.html>)

Texting while driving might be the new ‘drunk driving,’ a behavior that is quickly becoming stigmatized as irresponsible, reckless and inconsiderate. This leads to some serious questions. Will texting while driving soon mean that some people have to get non-

standard insurance, take distracted driving courses and even serve jail sentences?

Texting while driving might be more dangerous than drunk driving, though. That’s because regular people are doing it—teens, commuters, truck drivers. It isn’t just the people with drinking problems that you have to worry about anymore, and it isn’t a problem that’s mostly isolated to late-night hours. People text while driving all the time, and maybe the behavior peaks during rush hours.

[images/Blog Images/show/ul83](#)

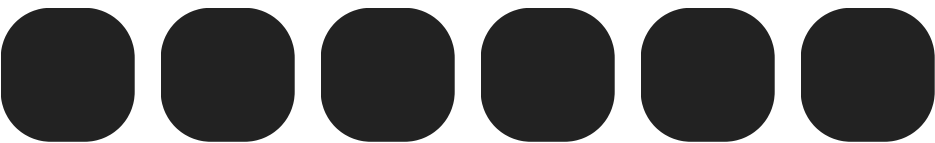
A blogger at Lacantdrive.com (L.A. Can’t Drive) says the following when mentioning the epidemic of Los Angeles commuters stuck on their iPads, Blackberries and other devices: “If you ask any of these drivers to close their eyes for 4-5 seconds while driving at any given moment—on local roads, in their neighborhood, on the freeway, etc.—I bet you every single one of them would refuse and think such an idea was insane. Well, essentially, that’s what they’re all doing multiple times on just one leg of their commutes by fueling their digital crack addiction.”

So maybe smart phones are a new form of substance abuse, in which case, the whole drunk driving comparison starts to make a lot more sense.

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Essex Man Joins Highway Patrol

DECEMBER 14TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Essex Man Joins Highway Patrol

A Stoddard County native is among those who will graduate this week from the Missouri Law Enforcement Academy.

Dylan L. DeJournett of Essex is among the 30 Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers who will graduate in ceremonies on Friday in Jefferson City. DeJournett is the son of David and Marilyn DeJournett of Essex and is a graduate of Richland High School.

The ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m. in the Patrol's Law Enforcement Academy gymnasium. The 94th Recruit Class reported to the Academy on July 1, 2011. The new troopers will report for duty in their assigned troops on January 2, 2012.

During the graduation ceremony, Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster will address the class. The Honorable Mary R. Russell, Missouri Supreme Court, will administer the Oath of Office to the new troopers. Thomas U. Black of Nelson, will give the invocation and benediction. The Troop F Color Guard will present and retire the colors, and Trooper Andrew A. Armstrong, Troop F, will sing the national anthem.

Dean Gil Kennon, vice president of college affairs for Mineral Area College, will be present to confer an associate's of applied science degree to the new troopers based on their course work at the Academy.

Four class awards will be presented. The recruits accumulated points toward graduation in the categories of physical fitness, firearms, and academics throughout their 24 weeks at the Academy. The person with the highest number of points in each category earns the respective award.

Class members include:

- Jason A. Akers, Ballwin, Troop C, St. Genevieve/Perry Counties
- Jason A. Ashby, Fenton, Troop C, Jefferson County
- Thomas J. Black, Columbia, Troop H, Buchanan/Andrew Counties
- Todd K. Burton, Springfield, Troop F, Audrain County
- Clinton R. Capps, Salem, Troop I, Crawford County
- Ryan W. Clement, Grovespring, Troop C, Franklin County
- Stephen J. Cool, Higginsville, Troop H, Clinton/Caldwell Counties
- John T. Cunningham, Belton, Troop A, Carroll/Ray Counties
- Robert R. Davis, St. Peters, Troop C, Lincoln/Pike Counties
- **Dylan L. DeJournett, Essex, Troop E, New Madrid/Pemiscot Counties**
- Jennifer A. Doplick, St. Louis, Troop C, Jefferson County
- Trevor H. Elliston, Mt. Vernon, IL, Troop C, Jefferson County

- Graydon L. Gaines, Kirksville, Troop B, Randolph/Monroe Counties
- Eric J. Graslie, Wentzville, Troop C, St. Charles County
- Erica L. Grass, Lake St. Louis, Troop C, St. Charles County
- Patrick T. Harms, St. Charles, Troop C, St. Charles County
- Cameron M. Heath Jr, Cape Girardeau, Troop E, Scott/Mississippi Counties
- Jordan A. Hilliard, Mt. Vernon, IL, Troop C, North St. Louis County
- Austin B. Kings, Moberly, Troop F, Audrain County
- Ashley E. Klempke, Los Angeles, CA, Troop F, Moniteau/Morgan Counties
- Jake T. Langsdale, Lee's Summit, Troop A, Johnson County
- Blaine M. Loring, West Plains, Troop E, Butler/Ripley Counties
- Lucas S. Lowe, Marthasville, Troop H, Grundy/Mercer/Livingston Counties
- Justin J. Moll, Centralia, IL, Troop C, North St. Louis County
- Mark A. Philpott, Ava, Troop G, Carter/Reynolds Counties
- Eric D. Rehmert, Owensville, Troop C, Franklin County
- Elvis Rondon, Batavia, IL, Troop A, Carroll/Ray Counties
- Rawn P. Toler, Monett, MO, Troop F, Montgomery County
- Joseph M. Van Meter, Bloomington, IN, Troop E, New Madrid/Pemiscot Counties
- Nicholas B. Yoder, Mundelein, IL, Troop C, St. Francois/Washington Counties.

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Wreaths Program Honors American Veterans

DECEMBER 13TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Wreaths Program Honors American Veterans

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

BLOOMFIELD - It was a beautiful day – with the sun shining down on the hillside south of town as volunteers of all ages converged on the Missouri Veterans Cemetery.

The brisk temperature and breeze didn't deter those who came to place evergreen wreaths on the headstones at the cemetery. From young people in red stocking caps and members of the Children of the American Revolution, to members of the Civil Air Patrol to the Patriot Riders – they all gathered for a very special holiday moment.

It's a simple image, but one of honor: A green and red wreath laid across the tombstone of a veteran. It's a powerful image: a veteran's headstone and a evergreen wreath with a red ribbon. It's an image of honor, or remembrance, of gratitude.

Along with scores of other communities around the country, including Arlington National Cemetery, the area gathered at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Stoddard County.

Founded in 1992 by wreath-maker Morrill Worcester, the event helps communities recognize and remember the sacrifices of those who've served in America's armed forces.

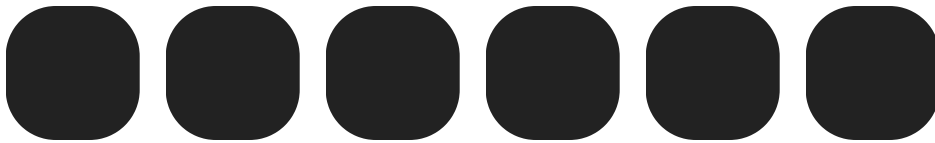
Following a brief yet poignant ceremony, volunteers scattered throughout the hillsides at the cemetery to place a wreath at each headstone in the cemetery. This is the third year for the Wreaths Across America at the Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Bloomfield.

ShowMe Gallery

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Candidates File On Opening Day

DECEMBER 13TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Candidates File On Opening Day

By Annabeth Miller, SMT editor

Candidates for Dexter city positions were on hand first thing Tuesday morning when city offices were open and filing for the April 2012 election could begin.

Five candidates had signed “on the dotted line” and were officially running for reelection by late Tuesday morning. Those who have filed for office include:

- Joe Weber, for reelection to a four-year term as mayor; Weber was first elected as mayor in 2002

- Crystal Allstun, for reelection to a four-year term as city collector. Allstun first became city collector in 2002; she is seeking her second four-year term
- Jerry D. Corder, reelection to a two-year term as alderman from Ward One
- Ray Pixley, reelection to a two-year term as alderman from Ward Three

In addition, Tim Aslin filled for election to a one-year term to fill an unexpired term on the board. Aslin was appointed to the Board of Aldermen earlier this year from Ward Two to fill an opening left by the resignation of Rick Hux.

Also this morning, one person filed to seek one of two positions open on the Dexter R-XI Board of Education. Allen L. Massey of Dexter filed the first morning for one of two positions on the board.

Two positions on the Dexter R-XI Board of Education will be on the April ballot. School board members serve a 3-year term. Positions on the ballot will be those currently held by Rick Williams and Kenny Pope.

Interested persons have until Jan. 17, 2012 to file for office for the April 3, 2012 election. Filing for city positions may be completed at the Dexter City Administration Building on Stoddard Street during regular business hours, except those days the city offices are closed for holidays.

Persons interested in filing for positions on school board may do so at the Dexter Schools Administrative Offices on Brown Pilot Lane during business hours except on those days the offices are closed for the holidays.

The last day to register or change an address for voter registration for the April 3, 2012 election is March 7, 2012.

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Filing Opens For City, School Elections

DECEMBER 12TH 2011 BY UNKNOWN

Filing Opens For City, School Elections

By Annabeth Miller, SMT Editor

Candidate filing will open tomorrow (Tuesday) for city and school board elections in Missouri.

Filing will open for the April 3 local elections on Tuesday, Dec. 13 for city candidates running for office in the city. In Dexter, four aldermanic as well as the mayoral and city collector positions will be on the ballot.

Three positions on the Board of Aldermen for two-year terms will be on the ballot. Positions on the ballot include those currently held by Ward I Alderman Jerry Corder, Ward II Alderman Kent Essner, and Ward II Alderman Ray Pixley.

In addition, Ward II Alderman Tim Aslin's position will be on the ballot. Aslin was appointed earlier this year to the board following the resignation of Rick Hux until the next election. This a one-year position to fill the unexpired term.

Two city positions will also be on April's ballot – mayor and city collector. Joe Weber has led the city as mayor since 2002. The mayor serves a two-year term. Crystal Allstun is the city collector; the collector serves a four-year term.

Candidates for city positions may file beginning at 8 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 13, at the Dexter City Administration Building on Stoddard Street in Downtown Dexter. Individuals may file on business days, Monday-Friday except on days when city offices are closed for holidays.

Two positions on the Dexter R-XI Board of Education will be on the April ballot. School board embers serve a 3-year term. Positions on the ballot will be those currently held by Rick Williams and Kenny Pope.

Candidates for school board positions may file beginning at 8 a.m., Tuesday, Dec. 13 at the Dexter R-XI Administrative Offices on Brown Pilot Lane in Dexter. Individuals may file on business days, Monday-Friday except on days when school offices are closed for holidays.

The last day for interested persons to file for either city or school board positions is Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2012.

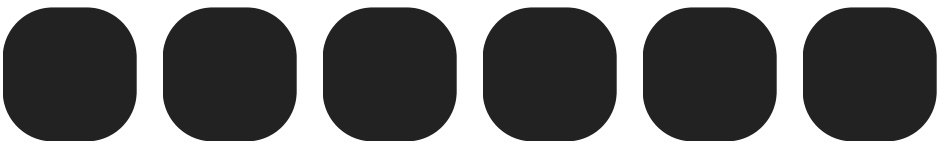
Each candidate filing for an elected position shall receive and sign for a “Candidate Acknowledgment,” a summary of Conflict of Interest and Campaign Finance Laws over which the Missouri Ethics Commission has enforcement powers pursuant to Chapter 105 RSMo and Chapter 130 RSMo.

The last day to register to vote or to change voter registration for this election is March 7, 2012.

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