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Missouri State Highway Patrol Joins Operation Dry Water

JUNE 21ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Colonel Sandra K. Karsten, superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol, announces the Patrol's participation in Operation Dry Water. Operation Dry Water is a national campaign in which marine law enforcement officers from across the country coordinate special patrols to keep our waterways safe from boaters operating under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This year, June 30-July 2 has been designated as Operation Dry Water weekend. As a partner in this national campaign, troopers will focus their efforts on detecting and apprehending impaired boat operators.

Missouri boat operators found to have a blood alcohol content of .08% or greater will be arrested for boating while intoxicated. Intoxicated boat operators endanger themselves, their passengers, and other boaters utilizing our many waterways.

“Missouri is blessed with a variety of water-related recreation opportunities,” said Col. Karsten. “Floating, swimming, and boating activities should be fun, safe experiences. When your family or friends plan a water outing, make sure safety is part of the discussion. Life jackets save lives. Consuming alcohol and then operating a vessel puts lives at risk. The Missouri State Highway Patrol joins its Operation Dry Water partners in stressing the importance of being sober when in and around water. Please don’t operate a vessel if you’ve consumed alcohol.”

Last year, 538 local, state, and federal agencies participated in a weekend long event of heightened BWI enforcement known as Operation Dry Water. Officers removed 367 intoxicated boat operators from the water. In addition, law enforcement officers made contact with over 131,054 boaters concerning BWI or boating safety enforcement and awareness. United States Coast Guard 2015 data reveals that alcohol use remains the primary known contributing factor for recreational boater deaths.

In 2016, troopers arrested a total of 11 people statewide for boating while intoxicated, contacted 661 vessels and 2,000 boaters, and issued 114 boating violation summonses and 613 warnings on Missouri waterways. Marine operations troopers also issued 176 summonses for non-boating violations during the 2016 Operation Dry Water weekend. Special enforcement operations will continue throughout the summer months. Boaters are reminded that designating a sober operator is always the safest bet if alcohol is going to be included in their boating experience.

LAST UPDATED ON JUNE 21ST 2017 BY DEE LOFLIN

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