

Sioux City using bar napkins to combat drunken driving

4:53 p.m. CST December 29, 2014



(Photo: Jim Lee, Sioux City Journal/Associated Press)

SIOUX CITY

A group in Sioux City plans to distribute 36,000 bright yellow bar napkins that encourage people to avoid driving after drinking in the nights leading up to New Year's Eve.

It's the latest campaign launched through Mercy Medical Center's Reality Education Alcohol Prevention Program. The napkins say, "Friends do whatever it takes to stop friends from driving drunk," the Sioux City Journal reported.

Carla Granstrom, the center's education coordinator, is spearheading the bar napkin distribution effort. She also passes out fliers urging people to use a designated driver or call a cab around St. Patrick's Day.

"I've just seen, over the years, a lot of suffering that's happened. And it's preventable," Granstrom said.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety and Administration, nearly 10,100 people were killed last year in alcohol-impaired driving crashes. Those deaths accounted for 31 percent of all traffic-related deaths in the U.S.

More than 2,700 of the people who died in accidents last year were passengers and nearly 850 weren't in a vehicle.

"It's not only the people that are driving that are at risk," Granstrom said. "You have pedestrians. You have people in their own cars, minding their own business, that can be affected."

Granstrom, who began working at Mercy in 1973 as an emergency room nurse, played a key role in the establishment of the program about 20 years ago.

"At one point, they estimated that alcohol was a factor in about 95 percent of all the cases that came into the ER after midnight," she said. "It's not only the impaired drivers, but it's gun shots, traffic accidents, falls, fires, drownings, assaults, domestic violence. I've seen an infinite number of those kinds of events. Basically, how alcohol has affected all of society and the impact that it's had on a lot of peoples' lives."

SIOUX CITY

Nature center seeks Christmas trees

A western Iowa nature center is asking people for their discarded live Christmas trees.

Sioux City television station KTIV reported that the Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center will be collecting undecorated live Christmas trees through Jan. 11.

The center plans to mulch the trees and use them for the nature center's trails.

The nature center is located on Highway 12 in Sioux City.

TRAER

12-year-old dies in hunting incident

Iowa officials said the victim of a hunting fatality in Tama County over the weekend was a 12-year-old girl.

The state Department of Natural Resources says Liesel Casto died Saturday near Traer after a bullet from a muzzleloader rifle struck her. The girl, also of Traer, was preparing to hunt with others at the time.

Additional information was not released. Officials say the death remains under investigation.

COUNCIL BLUFFS

Inmate leaves work release

Officials said they're looking for an Iowa inmate who failed to return to a work release facility in Council Bluffs.

The state Department of Corrections said Roger Eugene Madsen, 31, was placed on escape status Sunday after he didn't return from a scheduled program appointment. He was required to check in at a work release facility in Council Bluffs.

Madsen is serving a 20-year sentence on multiple offenses, including first-degree theft and assault. His sentence began in 2009 and he was transferred to work release on Dec. 10.

WATERLOO

Trial in Minnesota man's slaying delayed

A new trial date has been scheduled for a 36-year-old Waterloo man facing a murder charge.

The Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier reported the trial of Rodolfo Gonzalez had been set to begin Tuesday in the slaying of Celio Posada, 35, of Minneapolis. The trial now is scheduled to begin Feb. 3 in Black Hawk County District Court.

Gonzalez is accused of shooting Posada in the early morning hours of Aug. 23 outside El Senior Tequila in Waterloo.

Iowa online court records list his last name as Gonzalez, but he also has gone by the name of Rodolfo Gonzalez Pena.

GRUNDY CENTER

Blaze damages manufacturing plant

A fire has heavily damaged a manufacturing plant in Grundy Center.

Firefighters were sent to Heavy Equipment Manufacturing a little before 9 a.m. Saturday. No injuries were reported in the blaze.

State investigators have been called in to help determine what caused the fire.

— From Register staff and news services

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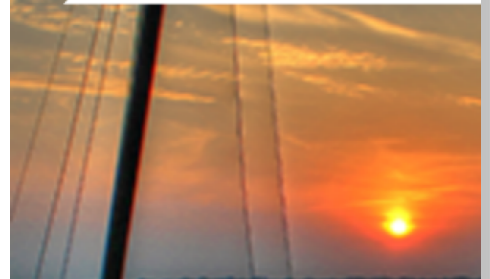
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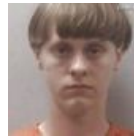
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