

Event shows effects of driving drunk

Daniel West
Oregon Daily Emerald

The Chrysler Drunk Driving Simulator made its second appearance in Eugene this week. The simulator is a 1995 Dodge/Plymouth Neon equipped with an on-board computer that can replicate the delayed reaction of alcohol-impaired drivers. The computer slows the car's braking and steering reaction times.

"This is a real good way to show students that alcohol does impair their ability to drive," said Nancy Tharpe, coordinator of Project Eugene: A Century Council Coalition. "Just beware of what you're doing because it (the alcohol) affects your judgment. Often, they (students) don't realize that they aren't in shape to drive."

The simulator is located at the Valley River Center behind the Montgomery Ward & Co. Auto Express, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. This event is free and open to the public until Saturday.

The event will allow a driver first to maneuver the car through a pylon-lined, figure-eight course in normal operating mode. Then the driver's body weight and hypothetical number of drinks are entered into the computer, and the driver attempts to propel through the course without hitting any pylons.

While drivers await their turn at the wheel, they can participate in some of the other educational exhibits and activities that are planned, such as viewing actual vehicles from drunk driving accidents.



Jerry Barnhart, program instructor for the Chrysler Drunk Driving Simulator, tells Springfield resident, Lisa Tietz, how the simulator operates. This event will be at the Valley River Center until Saturday.

University officials, Rich Brooks, and Jane DeGidio, gave support for this event. Brooks is the University football coach, and DeGidio is the University Dean of Students and a member of Project Eugene: A Century Council Coalition, a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing drunk driving and underage drinking.

"Alcohol is a concern to us (officials) on campus. Also, students have been very interested in other simulators that have been on campus. This drunk driving simulator has been successful in the past," DeGidio said. "For example, one percent of all University undergraduates are arrested for DUIs and students don't drink only one drink or less."

Ironically, this event comes just

one day after a University student was killed in an alcohol-related automobile accident. "It's always a tragedy when young people die," said DeGidio, in response to the accident.

At Valley River Center, there was a kickoff for the event, that included Brooks and some members of the football team. Others, such as Peter Sorenson, an Oregon state senator, and local media personalities also attended the kickoff.

"I hope that people will realize that this isn't a game," Tharpe said.

The simulator is part of the "Think ... Don't Drink and Drive!" campaign launched by Dodge Division of Chrysler Corp., Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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8:30 am-5:00/6:00 pm

Place: The Twins
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Fee: Only share the gas.

Pre-trip meeting: Oct 27, 1994
(Thurs.) 7:30 pm in
Outdoor Program

**This program is coordinated with the Outdoor Program.

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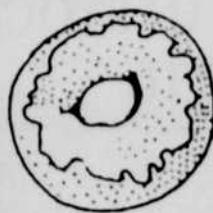
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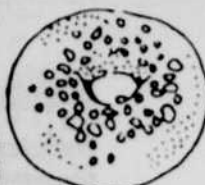
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