

Police officer attempts to keep intoxicated drivers off highways

By Nicole Turley
Freelance Reporter

An average of 38 percent of fatal traffic accidents from 1987-1992 involved a driver with a blood alcohol level of .10 or above according to *The Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*.

This year thousands may die as a result of drivers impaired by drug and alcohol use. Driving under the influence of intoxicants (DUI) is a major problem nationwide; but Eugene police officer Angela Baird is doing her part locally to prevent intoxicated drivers from harming themselves and others.

Baird has been an officer with the Eugene Police Department for four years; and for the past year has been driving the DUI car. She seeks out and arrests commuters whose driving has been impaired by the drugs or alcohol they have consumed.

"It seemed like an exciting area, something I could be proud of doing," said Baird, when asked why she chose law enforcement as her field.

When her current position opened up last year, she applied for it because she enjoyed the thrill of keeping intoxicated drivers from harming themselves and others.

"I enjoy arresting DUIs. I enjoy the gratification of getting them off the street. I am also a member of the Major Accident Investigation Team, and I have noticed that a lot of times they go hand in hand [fatal accidents and drug and alcohol use]," Baird said.

During a typical weekend, Baird said she will arrest at least two drivers for DUI.

On the road, she looks for clues that signal someone may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These clues include swerving and failure to use turn signals when changing lanes.

"If they are not signaling to change lanes, there is a good chance they have been drinking," Baird said.

After pulling over a suspect and telling him or her why they have been pulled over, Baird runs them through a sobriety test. This usually takes place in the field, but a suspect can be taken back to the station if other violations are suspected.

The sobriety test typically involves having the suspect stand with one foot six inches off the ground and having him or her pace nine steps back and forth in front of the officer.

The officer will hold a pen or pencil in front of the suspect's eyes. He or she will be asked to follow the tip of the pen or pencil with his or her eyes while keeping their head stationary.

"Normal eyes follow the path of the pen smoothly, but the eyes of someone who has been drinking will jerk side to side to side...After three or four beers, anyone will do this," Baird said.

After these steps the officer may request the suspect to take a breathalyzer test. If the suspect refuses, his or her license will be suspended for a year. If the suspect

cooperates, which Baird says most do, his or her license will only be suspended for 90 days if the blood alcohol level is above .08.

First time offenders have the option of participating in a Diversion Program. This program allows individuals to keep a DUI conviction off their record. To successfully complete the program, the suspect must take part in classes, pay a fine and keep a clean record for one year.

Baird warns the punishments stiffen with each subsequent DUI.

"Sooner or later they are going to get caught. I guess they need to decide whether or not it is worth it to them because they are going to lose a lot," Baird said.

For those who feel they can fail a sobriety test and later lie about it in court, Baird has a video camera and recording device in her patrol car to tape suspect's driving and actions after being stopped. The tape can be used as evidence in court.

Baird is also trained in doing drug evaluations. Friday night she and a fellow officer pulled over a 24 year-old man suspected of DUI involving drug use and driving a stolen vehicle.

"He almost hit a bicyclist. His driving has definitely been affected by the drugs he has been using," Baird said at the scene of the arrest.

The suspect was taken back to what Baird called the "intoxilizer room" and run through a sobriety test and drug evaluation. The suspect was charged with DUI.

Shipment of nuclear fuel sent to storage in Idaho

BREMERTON, Wash. (AP)

A shipment of spent nuclear fuel from several Navy ships is due to arrive at an Idaho storage facility this week, 2 1/2 years after a dispute between Idaho and the federal government ended such shipments.

The six railcars loaded with spent fuel from six deactivated submarines left the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard on Friday, bound for the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory. Shipyard spokesman John Gordon said Monday the shipment would arrive this week, although the exact time depended on railroad schedules.

The shipment was made just three days after Idaho, the Navy and the federal Energy Department agreed on a plan that allows the Navy to make 575 shipments of spent fuel over the next 40 years to INEL, the only site in the nation certified to store the highly radioactive material. The shipments will come from more than 100 nuclear submarines.

There are nine remaining railcars of spent nuclear fuel that will be shipped from the shipyard to Idaho in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, six railcars of nuclear fuel left Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co. in Virginia bound for Idaho, said Beatrice Brailsford of the Idaho-based environmental group Snake River Alliance. That shipment is in preparation for a planned 1998 refueling of the Bremerton-based nuclear aircraft carrier USS Nimitz, the Bremerton Sun reported.

The lifting of the ban on delivery of nuclear shipments is "extremely good news" for the Bremerton shipyard and the nation, said Navy Capt. Dale Baugh, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard commander.

"This will allow the shipyard to play its part in the downsizing of the Navy and provide a basis to proceed with our workforce and workload planning," Baugh said.

The shipyard, with 9,200 civil service employees, is the Puget Sound area's second-largest industrial employer after the Boeing Co.

Without the agreement that restarted the nuclear shipments, the shipyard would have needed to lay off permanent employees in the spring, Gordon said.

New fraternity chartered on Sunday

Joel Slaughter
Freelance Reporter

The first Oregon chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. was chartered in a private ceremony on Sunday.

Later, approximately 50 people attended a public reception for the event that recognized the 12 members of the newly-formed Alpha Theta Alpha chapter, in the Fir Room of the EMU.

Steve Belhumeur, the chapter's president, said the members' patience in waiting for a charter made Sunday sweet.

"It has taken us a year and a half to get to this point," he said. "This is a day we have been looking forward to for a long time."

Two basic requirements need-

ed to be met, Belhumeur said, in order for the Alpha Theta Alpha chapter to charter. First, there had to be at least five undergraduate members active on campus. Second, there was a chartering fee to be paid. Meeting those terms, as well as taking care of some personal matters, took time, Belhumeur said.

"There was a lot of work involved in getting here," he said. "Sunday's reception was a chance for the public to come celebrate with us the result of that work."

The reception's keynote speaker was Bennie Harris, western regional director of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Incorporated.

Although Harris spoke to the audience as a whole, his message

was directed primarily toward the new members.

"... [A]nd when you accept the call of Phi Beta Sigma," he said, "you accept the call of service and you accept the call of leadership."

Belhumeur said Alpha Theta Alpha gains both recognition and authority through the charter with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

"As far as national and regional meetings go, we now have our own vote," he said. "And we now have our own representation on campus. So, it really is necessary to be affiliated in order to be active independently."

The reception culminated in the pinning of nine of Alpha Theta Alpha's members.

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