

HAZARDS OF THE HOLIDAY

Number of traffic accidents traditionally increase during long holiday weekends

By Marilyn King
THE STATE NEWS

Fourth of July weekend means hot dogs, fireworks and fun — but it can also mean an increased level of risk on the roads. When traveling during the holiday weekend, swerving and other obvious signs of recklessness are some common signs to alert others that a driver could be drunk, but there are other telltale signs that law enforcement look for that may not be as commonly known by drivers. Instead of driving too fast, drunk drivers usually drive much too slow, said East Lansing police Sgt. Carl Nowak.

By the numbers

60: The percentage of crashes that involve drunk driving during holiday weekends

16: The number of fatal traffic accidents in Ingham County in 2007

4: The number of fatal car crashes in Michigan last Fourth of July weekend

0.08: The blood alcohol content level to be charged with a DUI in Michigan.

SOURCE: MICHIGAN STATE POLICE

“Along with erratic driving like stopping and going, drunk drivers may be going fast and then slow,” Nowak said.

Other more uncommon signs of reckless drivers include driving without headlights on, driving with high beams on or having the radio turned up extremely loud, Nowak said. Fluctuations in speed are another tip that something is not right.

In an effort to reduce fatalities on the roads during holiday weekends, Michigan State Police will instigate Combined Accident Reduction Effort, or CARE, this holiday weekend.

CARE, which has been in operation for more than 30 years by the State Police, was formed

See SAFE DRIVING on page 2

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION SAM RUIZ/THE STATE NEWS

you oughta know

BUSINESS Construction on office space to begin after the holiday

The vacant space above Barnes & Noble, 333 E. Grand River Ave., is in the process of being transformed into office space for start-up technology-based businesses.

“This will support the long-term growth of technology-based industries that will eventually become big businesses,” said Jim van Ravensway, director of Planning and Community Development for East Lansing.

Construction on the space is scheduled to begin soon after the Fourth of July, and the space will be ready for tenants early October, he said.

To read the full story, turn to page 3.

PREVENTION Local officials warn of dangers of illegal fireworks

The Fourth of July fireworks season is approaching and East Lansing fire marshal Bob Pratt said that many of the fireworks set off in Michigan are illegal.

“We will at the very least confiscate any illegal fireworks that we find,” Pratt said. “We have issued tickets in the past — they are criminal misdemeanor tickets (that result in a) \$500 (fine), and/or 90 days (in jail), and occasionally we turn stuff over to the state police.”

Pratt said that ladyfingers, bottle rockets and screamers were some of the types of illegal fireworks that he has confiscated.

To read the full story, turn to page 5.

SUPREME COURT Convicted child rapists can no longer be executed

The Supreme Court on Wednesday outlawed executions of people convicted of raping a child.

In a 5-4 vote, the court said the Louisiana law allowing the death penalty in such cases violates the Constitution's ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

“The death penalty is not a proportional punishment for the rape of a child,” Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in his majority opinion.

His four liberal colleagues joined him, while the four more conservative justices dissented.

To read the full story, turn to page 6.

OLYMPIC GAMES MSU diver competes in Canadian trials

Senior diver Danielle Williams competed in the Canadian Olympic trials on Sunday.

She finished seventh, and although she didn't make the Canadian Olympic team, she will try to build on the experience and improve her diving at MSU next season.

Williams' time at MSU has been quite the journey, as she battled back from a shoulder injury which forced her to sit on the sidelines for an entire year.

Find out how she was able to work up the confidence to get back on the board and compete at the national level.

To read the full story, turn to page 10.