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News Release

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This St. Patrick's Day, spread the word: The Luck o' the Irish won't save you from a DUI

Winnebago County, IL. – St. Patrick's Day will be here before we know it, bringing with it parades, parties, green beer and more to communities throughout the state. To remind motorists of the dangers of impaired driving and to help keep our streets safe, Winnebago County Sheriff's Office is teaming up with the Illinois State Police and Illinois Department of Transportation for a stepped-up traffic safety campaign.

"With St. Patrick's Day falling on a Monday this year, we expect increased celebrations throughout the weekend prior," said Sheriff Gary Caruana. "We urge everyone to celebrate responsibly. Please plan ahead for a sober ride home before you leave the house — your safety and the safety of others depends on it."

In addition to looking for alcohol- and cannabis-impaired drivers, the Winnebago County Sheriff's Office will be stepping up seat belt enforcement, particularly at night when seat belt usage rates are lowest. Speeding, distracted driving and all traffic laws will be strictly enforced.

Whether you're attending a party, hosting friends or going out to a bar, keep safety at the forefront of your day and night. When it's time to leave, make sure your designated driver is sober. Remember that walking impaired can also be dangerous, so designate a sober friend to walk home with you. Designated drivers: Be alert for impaired walkers who may not obey street signs. It's not about luck, it's about smart decisions.

Other important tips:

- Drunk or high, it doesn't matter. It is never okay to drive impaired. Designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
- Use your community's sober ride program by calling an Uber or Lyft.
- If you see an impaired driver on the road, contact law enforcement.
- Have a friend who is about to drive impaired? Take the keys away and plan to get your friend home safely.
- Always buckle up!

The St. Patrick's Day enforcement campaign is funded by federal traffic safety funds from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and administered by IDOT.

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