



PATRICIA R. LYKOS
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
HARRIS COUNTY, TEXAS

July 2, 2010

Public Information Office:
Donna Hawkins
George Flynn
(713) 755-3320

DA's No Refusal Prepares for July 4th Weekend DWI Enforcement

Houston, Tx – The Harris County District Attorney's Office will deploy the No Refusal program for the Fourth of July weekend, to help citizens enjoy another kind of freedom -- from the threat of DWI drivers, District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced Friday.

The program will operate from tonight (Friday) through Monday. For the first time, the La Porte Police Department will serve as one of the host agencies for the program, along with the Houston Police Department. The program targets intoxicated motorists countywide.

Assistant District Attorneys team with medical personnel and law enforcement officers who will conduct special DWI enforcement patrols. The teams follow state laws that authorize them to draw blood samples from suspected DWI motorists who refuse voluntary breath tests to determine their level of intoxicants.

"The Fourth of July is truly a day of celebration honoring our Founders and all the guardians of our freedom," District Attorney Lykos said. "Liberty and personal responsibility are twin pillars of our society, it is the duty of each motorist to be sober and conscientious – if you are not, you could wind up spending Independence Day incarcerated."

Catherine Evans, Chief of the District Attorney's Vehicular Crimes Section, reminded the public to plan ahead for safe holiday travel. Options include designating a sober driver or using cabs or other public transit for events. "Everyone should enjoy the holiday – but in a way that doesn't endanger the rest of our community," she said.

For DWI suspects, choices do not extend beyond the initial request to take a breath test, Evans noted. Refusal at that point begins the process of officers obtaining a search warrant to order a registered nurse to draw a blood sample for testing.

During the Fourth of July weekend last year, police and the District Attorney's No Refusal teams filed 182 DWI-related charges. That operation focused on "hot spot" areas that had recorded the highest numbers of vehicle crashes related to intoxicated motorists.

(end)