

## **DID YOU KNOW???**

### **NO EMPTY CHAIR INITIATIVE APRIL 24-28**

The Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC), the agency that funds the Franklin County Traffic Safety Board, has announced the "No Empty Chair" initiative for this April, which will encourage heavy enforcement that targets specific violations relative to the safety of students and teenage drivers. The name of the campaign aims to make sure that there is no empty chair at graduation resulting from a student fatality or serious injury. The initiative specifically targets five serious violations:

Monday, April 24, 2017 – Speeding in School Zones;  
Tuesday, April 25, 2017 – Seatbelts and Child Restraints;  
Wednesday, April 26, 2017 – Cell Phone Use and Texting;  
Thursday, April 27, 2017 – Operation SafeStop  
Friday, April 28, 2017 – Underage Drinking and Impaired Driving

GTSC is encouraging law enforcement to focus on the five violations with extra vigilance. Extra funding for overtime is available to local enforcement agencies.

In Franklin County, speeding in school zones is an ongoing problem. School zones with the flashing beacons do better than those without, but speeds in excess of the school zone limit is difficult to enforce because of limited enforcement resources.

We do pretty well with seatbelts, achieving a compliance of over 90 percent in New York State, but we can still do better. Cell phone use and texting by drivers is a continuing problem. Enforcement initiatives are helpful in two ways – educating drivers that this is a dangerous practice and hitting those that do so with a five point violation and significant monetary fine.

On Thursday April 27th "Operation SafeStop" will target those drivers that pass a stopped school bus with flashing red lights. Professional school bus drivers have an awesome responsibility compared to other professional drivers – transporting precious and irreplaceable cargo – our children. Breaking the law by passing a stopped school bus that is in the process of loading or unloading children is a life-threatening decision and one that can change the lives of many. On April 21, 2016, another "Operation SafeStop" day, 859 tickets were written for passing a stopped school bus on that one day in NYS, and an additional 1,547 tickets for other violations were written as well.

Lastly, on April 28th, underage drinking and impaired driving will be targeted.

Furthermore, throughout the entire week, enforcement officers will be vigilant for Graduated Driving License (GDL) violations.

If you are a good driver (90% of drivers think they are) and obey vehicle and traffic law, you have nothing to worry about during the stepped-up enforcement week. If not, beware, and change your driving behavior. Everyone can be a better driver!

For more articles on traffic law and safety, go to the traffic safety board's web site at: [www.franklincony.org](http://www.franklincony.org) and click on "Traffic Safety Board" under departments then look for Did You Know articles under "services". You may also email me at: [dwerner151@verizon.net](mailto:dwerner151@verizon.net)

No Empty Chair Initiative April 24-28  
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