

Travel, Celebrate Independence Day Safely

Many Kansans will be traveling to Fourth of July celebrations over the next week, and the Kansas Department of Transportation and the Kansas Highway Patrol encourage travelers to plan ahead to make their trips as safe as possible.

AAA Kansas predicts that 3.3 million people in this region will travel more than 50 miles over the holiday – the most Independence Day travelers since 2007. Kansas gas prices that are the lowest since 2005, will boost travel to a record level this year, according to Jim Hanni of AAA Kansas. Gas prices are 44 cents or 17% lower than they were a year ago.

KDOT and KHP safety experts caution travelers not to drink and drive. In 2014, 397 people were killed in traffic crashes throughout the nation during the Fourth of July holiday weekend and 164 were alcohol-related. In 2015 in Kansas there were 417 crashes over the July 4 reporting period (6 p.m. Thursday July 2, 2015, through 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, July 5, 2015.) Two of those were fatality crashes and 99 were injury crashes. Of the 417 total crashes, 33 were alcohol-related.

Law enforcement agencies from across the state will be actively watching for impaired drivers.

“Travelers are going to take to the highway throughout the holiday weekend and we want them to take steps to make it to their destination safely,” KHP Lt. Adam Winters said. “We want people to enjoy the holiday weekend, but we want you to be safe doing so. For those planning to drink over the weekend, designate your sober driver before you celebrate. And any time you ride in a vehicle, buckle up and make sure children are in the appropriate child safety seats.”

Drivers can check KanDrive before leaving home for route delays and construction on www.kandrive.org. KanDrive includes camera images and interactive maps as well as links to rest areas and travel and tourism sites. KanDrive can be accessed from a smartphone.

Much of the same information can be accessed by calling 5-1-1 in Kansas or 1-866-511-KDOT (5368) in the U.S.

Know before you go by using these services from home or in a vehicle that is parked in a safe location. If you are involved in a crash on a Kansas highway call *47 (*HP) from a cell phone for a highway patrol dispatcher or if on the Kansas Turnpike, dial *582 (*KTA) or

