

Highway 26 traffic taskforce under way

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JEFERSON — Wisconsin's first two-county traffic safety taskforce is in place with the focus on ensuring travelers on state Highway 26 in Jefferson and Rock counties will have a safe driving experience.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is working with the combined resources of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, Rock County Sheriff's Office, the Town of Milton Police Department and the Village of Johnson Creek Police Department to form a grant-funded taskforce that will patrol State Highway 26 in Jefferson and Rock counties during the summer months as construction continues.

The department will be deploying officers on the same days during daytime hours to make certain that both the motoring public and the construction workers stay safe.

"As the state Highway 26 construction has continued, we have seen an increase in crashes and speeding violations as the project has gone forward," said Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Capt. Duane Scott, acting as project coordinator.

"Jefferson County Sheriff Paul Milbrath, Rock County Sheriff Robert Spoden of Rock County, Town of Milton Police Chief Tom Kunkel and Johnson Creek Police Chief Gary Bleeker recognized that the issues they are seeing in their jurisdictions are not theirs alone, but are a part of the issue on the entire corridor," he added.

The captain said that the Bureau of Transportation Safety brought the four agencies together with some funding to see if they can make a difference this summer.

The Wisconsin State Patrol also has been deployed on concentrated deployment dates through its own Traffic Safety Grant funds. Scott noted that the State Patrol brings other opportunities to the enforcement efforts through the use of the airplane for speed detection.

Through the end of September, all four agencies and the State Patrol will be deploying additional officers on the state Highway 26 corridor between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m.



TRAFFIC ALERT

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From left, they are: Dave Heinle, Wisconsin Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Safety; Sgt. Jim Berlin, Town of Milton Police; Deputy Mike Schauer, Rock County Sheriff's Office; Sgt. Jay Wood, Rock County Sheriff's Office; Deputy Rob Hall, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office; Deputy Jason Behm, Jefferson County Sheriff's

“Officers will be concentrating on speeding violations, seatbelts usage and other dangerous driving behaviors,” Scott said.

“Hopefully, our combined efforts will make a difference.”

Office; Trooper Barb Gerins, Wisconsin State Patrol; Corey Foster, Wisconsin Department of Transportation Bureau of Transportation Safety; Officer Gary Steinhorst, Johnson Creek Police Department.