

Governor's Office of Highway Safety

NEWS RELEASE
THUNDER TASKFORCE UPDATE
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WAVE ONE REPORT: DUBLIN-LAURENS COUNTY THUNDER Taskforce Stepping-Up DUI Enforcement to Drive Down Highway Deaths

(DUBLIN-LAURENS COUNTY) **THUNDER enforcement totals from WAVE 1 are in.** During its first two days of joint law enforcement operations, ROLLING THUNDER road checks have resulted in 294 citations in Dublin and Laurens County. Taskforce Teams arrested three drivers with suspended licenses, cited two more driving without insurance, and swept up seven DUI's at sobriety roadchecks last Wednesday and Thursday night.

"Wednesdays and Thursdays aren't typically thought of as "big party nights," said Director Bob Dallas of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety. "So that's seven drunk drivers who could easily have killed the people you know and love right at home on your local roadways last week. That's the reason local law enforcement here has welcomed the Rolling THUNDER Taskforce to this Central Georgia community."

"Drunk drivers should consider last week's THUNDER motorcade down I-16 into Dublin their one and only warning that THUNDER means Zero Tolerance for impaired driving," said GOHS Law Enforcement Coordinator Sgt. Powell Harrelson who organizes the initiative. "During THUNDER, drunk drivers go directly to jail," said Harrelson.

TASKFORCE officers also wrote 73 child safety seat citations during the first wave of this county-wide crackdown. "We're truly concerned about the large numbers of parents and caregivers who aren't keeping their kids safely secured in child safety seats or they just aren't buckling them in at all," said GOHS Director Dallas. "This is national Child Passenger Safety Week and we hope Operation THUNDER enforcement activity will help us spread the word to motorists throughout Georgia that we're depending on parents and caregivers to make sure their kids are properly buckled-in, every trip, every seat, every time," Dallas said.

The Wave 1 THUNDER enforcement totals were released even as the TASKFORCE was rolling out WAVE 2 of sobriety roadchecks in Laurens County. Once THUNDER operations begin, the TASKFORCE will continue stepped-up enforcement here, working unpredictable schedules and enforcement patterns during the next sixty days. So impaired drivers won't know when and they won't know where to look for blue lights in their rear view mirrors.

Traffic enforcement officers also wrote 61 seatbelt tickets and another 83 citations for infractions like missing tags and dangerous safety equipment violations during WAVE 1. Because it was the first week of this THUNDER mobilization, officers also wrote 58 warning tickets to local violators for other first time infractions.

"The **THUNDER** strategy concentrates day-and-night patrol activity on interstates and state and local routes throughout the two-month period to keep those violators guessing," said LEC Sgt. Powell Harrelson. The **TASKFORCE** mission is to target high-risk drivers with high visibility enforcement and change their illegal driving behaviors. "No matter what the skeptics may say, Operation **THUNDER** is about *raising survival rates here, NOT raising revenue,*" added GOHS Director Bob Dallas.

To learn more about the continuing success of THUNDER Taskforce missions across Georgia, visit us on the web at www.gahighwaysafety.org/rollingthunder . For more information about Dublin and Laurens County **THUNDER TASKFORCE** operations contact GOHS Law Enforcement Coordinator Sgt. Powell Harrelson at 912-313-1581 or pharrelson@gohs.ga.gov .

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