

Delaware General Health District

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A Safe Communities Grantee of the Ohio Department of Public Safety

NEWS RELEASE

ALCOHOL, DISTRACTION BLAMED IN MARCH HIGHWAY FATALITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DELAWARE, OH, April 9, 2010 - The Delaware County Safe Communities Coalition reports that there was one traffic fatality in March in Delaware County. As of March 31, there have been two traffic deaths in Delaware County this year. This compares with three during the same period in 2009.

A 31-year-old woman driving on Panhandle Road lost control of her vehicle at 11:15 p.m. on March 17, St. Patrick's Day evening. The Ford Fusion sedan went off the right side of the road, then back across the road into a guardrail. The car then went airborne and hit a utility pole and a tree. The woman was ejected and found under the vehicle.

The driver's blood alcohol level was .217, well over the legal limit. Investigators found a draft text message on the driver's phone, and listed distraction due to texting as another cause of the crash. Non-use of seatbelts also contributed to the death.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, each traffic fatality has a comprehensive cost of \$3,366,388 associated with it. Delaware County's fatality cost for 2010 is now \$6,732,776.

The Delaware County Safe Communities program at the Delaware General Health District works to prevent needless loss of life and injuries on local highways. The program is using a 2010 grant from the Ohio Department of Public Safety in the amount of \$32,500.00 to promote seat belt usage, encourage motorcycle safety awareness, and build a successful coalition to help spread highway safety messages throughout Delaware County.

For additional safe driving tips, contact Jackie Bain, Safe Communities coordinator, at 740-203-1700, or log on to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration web page at <http://nhtsa.gov>.