

For Immediate Release

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Kentwood Police Department Earns State's Outstanding Traffic Safety Award *KPD's School Safety Campaign Recognized by Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission*

Kentwood, Michigan, May 12, 2021 – The Kentwood Police Department has received the 2020 Outstanding Traffic Achievement Award from the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission in recognition of its school safety campaign.

The GTSAC honors organizations, programs and individuals for outstanding contributions to traffic safety. The virtual awards ceremony is scheduled for Thursday, May 27.

"We are grateful to the state for this high honor, which is a reflection of our department's ongoing commitment to increasing traffic safety and our Traffic Services Bureau's hard work to help make school zones safer for students and drivers," Kentwood Police Chief Richard Roberts said.

KPD's Traffic Services Bureau launched a safety campaign during the 2019-20 school year that provided dedicated personnel to monitor and enforce residential speed limits near schools on 60th Street SE and whether drivers stopped for Kentwood, Kelloggsville, and Forest Hills school buses when students were boarding and departing. KPD had received complaints about drivers speeding in properly posted school zones and not stopping for buses when their red flashers were on.

The initiative started in October 2019 and ended early in March 2020 due to school closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 184 personnel hours were dedicated to the five-month campaign, which yielded 428 school speed zone violations and 31 school bus violations.

This enforcement resulted in an 800% increase for school speed zone violations and a 300% jump in school bus violations from the previous school year. Fifty-one school speed zone violations and 10 school bus violations were issued in 2018-19.

During the first month of the campaign, 93 school speed zone violations were issued. That number peaked at 104 in February 2020 before dropping to 31 in the final month.

"This was a successful effort that changed behaviors and garnered positive feedback from our community, with many parents stopping to thank our officers," Roberts said.

The safety campaign encompassed Kentwood, Kelloggsville and Forest Hills schools. It resumed in October 2020 and went through December, resulting in four school speed violations and eight school bus violations.

KPD's Traffic Services Bureau includes one sergeant, three traffic specialists and one police cadet. The team's primary responsibility is to enforce traffic laws. Other services include abandoned vehicle follow-ups, salvaged vehicle inspections, traffic engineering studies, speed monitoring and accident investigations.

More information about the Kentwood Police Department is available at kentwood.us/police.

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