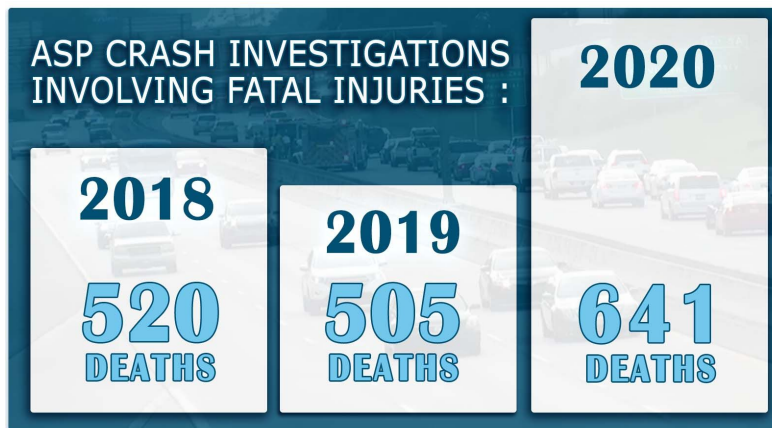




Arkansas House Newsletter

July 23, 2021

Committee hears report on Aggressive Driving in AR



This week, a subcommittee of Arkansas Legislative Council that provides oversight for Arkansas Game and Fish and Arkansas State Police heard from Arkansas State Police Director Col. Bill Bryant regarding recent successes and challenges facing state troopers. His testimony alerted us to some startling statistics regarding an increase in aggressive driving and fatal accidents in our state.

In 2018, the Arkansas State Police Highway Patrol Division conducted 520 crash investigations involving fatal injuries. In 2019, the number was 505.

But in 2020, that number increased by 27% to 641 deaths. Col. Bryant says 14% of those crashes documented excessive speed of the vehicle as a contributing factor.

So far this year, the division says they have conducted investigations of accidents resulting in more than 330 deaths.

The number of citations related to acts of aggressive driving is also on the rise.

In 2019, there were 1,064 citations issues. In 2020, there were 2,030 citations issued.

So far this year, Arkansas State Police have issued more than 2,380 citations with some documented speeds as high as 160 miles per hour.

Aggressive driving incidents have included acts of violence documented by troopers assigned to the Arkansas State Police Highway Patrol Division and investigated by Special Agents of the department's Criminal Investigation Division. Colonel Bryant testified the troopers and special agents confirm an explicit increase in incidents of gunfire involving motorists shooting at and into other vehicles traveling along Arkansas highways.

The Arkansas State Police Highway Patrol Division commanders are proactive with respect to patrol assignments to combat the incidents of aggressive driving and ensuring saturated patrols dedicated to speed enforcement are regularly occurring.

The division is dedicating the use of the department's aircraft to monitor broad sections of U.S. and state highway traffic. The troopers operating these aircraft are in radio communication with ground patrols, providing them with speed and reckless driving observations, directing these highway patrol ground vehicles to specific locations where the violations are being observed.

Each highway patrol division troop commander has immediate access to deploy low profile patrol vehicles with minimal Arkansas State Police markings and different colors, unlike the white with blue stripe markings motorists are accustomed to seeing. These vehicles blend into traffic, allowing troopers a better perspective to identify speeding and dangerous driving and take immediate enforcement action.

While we continue to look for ways to support our law enforcement further, there are some ways every Arkansan can help keep our roads safer.

Arkansans are encouraged to let the troopers know they're appreciated for what they're doing to keep local highways safe. Likewise, citizens should speak up and let the troopers know where they are witnessing regular incidents of lawlessness on the highways. Citizens shouldn't hesitate to reach out to the commanders at these local headquarters. Arkansas motorists traveling across the state are encouraged to call 9-1-1 and ask to be connected to the nearest state police headquarters to report incidents of dangerous driving they witness on U.S. and state highways.

A listing of the twelve Highway Patrol Division Troop Headquarters, including local telephone numbers and points of contact can be found [HERE](#).