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Police extra-vigilant for distracted drivers this week

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By **Robert Connelly**

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GALESBURG — This week area law enforcement officers have been focusing on traffic violations to bring more awareness to distracted driving.

Gov. Bruce Rauner declared the week of April 24 to April 28 as Illinois Distracted Driving Awareness Week “in an effort to bring attention to the dangers and consequences associated with driving distracted,” a **news release** from Galesburg police said.

That has meant an increased focus on traffic patrols by local law enforcement, including the Galesburg Police Department.

“Officers are working in tandem with one in a marked unit and one in an unmarked unit” for four-hour stretches, said Lt. James Bradford.

Those patrol periods occur at varying times of day for GPD “to get a good mix of times that we’re doing it instead of focusing on one specific time.”

The push for the awareness month came from the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. It is supported by AAA, Illinois State Police, SafetyServe.com, the National Safety Council, the Illinois Insurance Association, private sector supporters in the state along with nearly 300 law enforcement and fire agencies.

Distracted driving affected 10 percent of fatal crashes, 15 percent of traffic accidents involving an injury and 14 percent of all motor vehicle accidents in 2015, according to GPD’s news release.