



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

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Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger Announces Launch of 'Safe Start to Summer 2024' Road Safety Campaign

KINGSTON, NY - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger today announced the launch of "Safe Start to Summer 2024," a three-week road safety campaign to elevate awareness about the dangers of speeding and distracted driving, promote a culture of safety and respect on roadways, and help save lives.

The campaign is a collaboration of the Ulster County Executive, Ulster County Transportation Council, Ulster County Traffic Safety Board, Office of the Ulster County Sheriff, local governments, and state and local law enforcement, and involves both public education and enhanced enforcement of traffic laws at specific locations around Ulster County. The enforcement program will take place from July 1 to 14 at locations identified by local governments and local law enforcement, or based on data provided by the Ulster County Transportation Council showing a higher than average risk of traffic incidents. The public education campaign will begin this week and continue through mid-July.

County initiatives are intended to address growing problems on roadways with distracted driving as well as aggressive driving, which has been on the rise since the pandemic. In her State of the County address, County Executive Metzger announced plans for road safety initiatives in the wake of several tragic motor vehicle incidents, including a crash on Route 28 in Shandaken and hit-and-run incidents in Saugerties and New Paltz that claimed four young lives. A third hit-and-run incident occurred several weeks later in Marlborough in which two people died.

"Every life is valuable, and we have to work together to make our roads in Ulster County safer for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians, alike," **said County Executive Metzger.** "With the school year ending and more young people out enjoying the summer, and with the influx of summer

tourists we typically see, this is a good time to elevate awareness and encourage safe and responsible behaviors on our roads. I want to thank all of our partners, including the Ulster County Office of the Sheriff, the Ulster County Transportation Council and Traffic Safety Board, State Police, and the many local governments and local law enforcement agencies for their enthusiastic support and participation in the “Safe Start to Summer” campaign. This is the first of a number of road safety initiatives we are planning for the coming year.”

“The last few years have seen the disregard of traffic laws causing deaths that were preventable,” **said Ulster County Sheriff Juan Figueroa.** “Traffic safety is the responsibility of all on the road, whether driving, walking, on a bicycle or motorcycle. Pay attention to the road traffic laws, don’t be distracted by cell phones, and save lives.”

“Marbletown is proud to join County Executive Metzger and Sheriff Figueroa’s “Safe Start to Summer” education and enforcement campaign,” **said Marbletown Supervisor Rich Parete, President of the Ulster County Association of Town Supervisors and Mayors.** “Road safety is all of our responsibility, whether you are driving a motor vehicle, a pedestrian, or a bicyclist. Everyone on our roads are going somewhere, so please be aware.”

“I believe the “Safe Start to Summer” campaign presents an ideal opportunity for our police agencies to address traffic complaints within our communities and offer educational components that will contribute to a safer summer for everyone,” **said Rosendale Police Chief Scott Schaffrick, who also serves as President of the Ulster County Police Chiefs Association.** “Utilizing data provided by individual agencies and analyses from Ulster County Traffic Safety, we will focus enforcement efforts on speeding, aggressive driving, and cellphone usage in areas with the highest concentrations of accidents and fatalities.”

Local law enforcement agencies participating in the two-week enhanced enforcement effort include agencies in Ellenville, Kingston, Lloyd, Marlborough, New Paltz, Olive, Plattekill, Rosendale, Saugerties, Shandaken, Ulster, and Woodstock. The Ulster County Sheriff’s Office is providing enhanced enforcement for communities that do not have a local law enforcement agency.

The educational campaign involves traditional and social media, and also includes a [dedicated page on the County’s Participate Ulster website](#) that will be updated regularly. A 4”x9” road safety hand-out has been created, and can be downloaded and distributed by County and local governments, law enforcement, and community members.

In a separate road safety initiative, County Executive Metzger directed the Ulster County Department of Public Works to purchase 20 portable radar speed sign kits for loan to municipalities to support their local road safety efforts. The signs alert drivers to their speed and help to slow traffic while also collecting speed data to inform future traffic-calming measures. Local governments can contact the Department of Public Works if they are interested in obtaining a sign.

For more information about the “Safe Start to Summer 2024” road safety campaign, please visit: participate.ulstercountyny.gov/road-safety

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