

Press Release

August 19, 2009

Williston Police Officers prepared for the opening of school this week by using their police explorers to train the city's four crossing guards for the new school year. Eighteen thousand vehicles a day traverse Noble Avenue in front of Williston High School. Crossing guards have to pick and choose the best time to navigate thru early morning and late afternoon traffic for four hours each day to help, first, elementary, then high school students cross the busy thoroughfare. Most motorists in this stretch are either headed to work in Gainesville or Ocala in the morning or destined for treatment at one of several hospitals in Gainesville. In the afternoon, traffic patterns are reversed.

The explorers played the role of the not always attentive or alert children who attempt to cross when not fully awake or alert to the danger of crossing a 5 lane roadway. The Crossing Guards practiced giving instructions, estimating speeds, and proper sign display, while officers in vehicles simulated traffic. Other officers used speed lasers to validate the guards' speed estimates.

Distracted drivers on cell phones or texting on blackberries are a relatively new hazard everyone on the highway has to be alert for. Women applying makeup or men reading papers while driving are not unheard of.

Recognizing that our children are our most precious commodity, the Williston Police Department will do everything in its power to have a safe school year. Extra officers will be on duty next Monday morning when school opens. Message boards will be employed to remind motorists of their responsibilities. School zone lights have been tested and trees trimmed back from school signs so all is ready. We all have a responsibility to see that our children reach adulthood safe and sound, and we ask that the entire community join us in this mission.

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