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Rule the Road Equips Indiana Teens with Safe Driving Habits Vanderburgh County to Host First 2015 Teen Driving Skill Event

INDIANAPOLIS – In partnership with the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI), Indiana Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), State Farm Insurance, and the Evansville Police Department, the Vanderburgh County Sheriff’s Department is hosting 2015’s first *Rule the Road* – an event focused on enhancing teen driving skills.

“Safe driving comes through experience and skill,” said ICJI Director Mary Allen. “*Rule the Road* provides a great opportunity to partner with local law enforcement and educate teens on good driving habits that may very well save their lives.”

Taught by certified emergency vehicle operators from local law enforcement agencies, *Rule the Road* provides teen drivers with exposure to experiences not traditionally covered in driver education courses. These valuable hands-on driving lessons offer teens the chance to practice lifesaving skills on a closed course, with provided vehicles. Skills covered include, controlled skidding, controlled braking, the dangers of texting behind the wheel, and the seriousness of impaired driving. Teens can also participate in additional activities ranging from proper seat belt usage to recognizing and avoiding common driving distractions.

“Nationally, traffic fatalities claim more teenage lives each year than any other cause of death,” Vanderburgh County Sheriff Dave Wedding stated. “Young drivers are simply not as experienced and less able to cope with the unexpected. Add to the mix a smart phone, loud stereo and a car load of friends and it’s not hard to imagine why crash statistics for underage drivers are so dismal,” Sheriff Wedding added. “Driver training like ICJI’s *Rule the Road* is a great way to show kids firsthand what an awesome responsibility driving is, while making a lasting and potentially lifesaving impression on the young drivers who attend our event.”

Rule the Road is a free program for students ages 15-18, and is made available to law enforcement agencies across the state, through a grant provided by State Farm Insurance and administered by ICJI. ICJI partners with law enforcement agencies throughout the state to host *Rule the Road* events. State Farm Insurance has sponsored *Rule the Road* events since 2013.

“We are pleased to partner with ICJI and Vanderburgh County Sheriff’s Office to make this unique teen driving safety program a reality,” said Jim Slaven, State Farm Community Specialist. “*Rule the Road* provides hands-on driving skills that establish positive and permanent habits that will ultimately lower teen driving errors – keeping them safer on the road.”

The first *Rule the Road* event takes place Thursday, May 7, 2015 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m., and will be held at Robert's Park in Evansville, IN. For this event, students from Mater Dei High School and Reitz Memorial High School have been invited to participate.

Please note – Media are welcome to attend the *Rule the Road* event.

To learn more about *Rule the Road* or for information on hosting a *Rule the Road* event in your area, please visit: <http://www.in.gov/cji/2382.htm>. For updates on *Rule the Road* events held across Indiana, please visit: www.facebook.com/ruletheroad.

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