

Missed message?

With a new year begun some disturbing statistics, courtesy of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), remind us of a resolution some of us need to keep in 2013.

Impaired driving—thought to be a preventable behaviour headed for almost certain extinction by way of tougher laws and law enforcement and almost constant public education campaigns—has again battled back against the popular trend not to drink and drive, according to police.

Just-completed holiday season Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (R.I.D.E.) campaigns by local and provincial police officers netted plenty of charges against people who apparently still can't comprehend that when you consume alcohol, driving is no longer an option.

How many times do we need to be reminded, to be shown gruesome images from scenes of traffic fatalities, to hear the cries of spouses, children, parents or siblings left behind each time an impaired driver claims another innocent life? How often do we need to be asked to think of loved ones before getting behind the wheel of a motor vehicle after having consumed alcohol, before we all finally get the message?

Apparently we're not shouting the words loud enough or repeating them often enough because it definitely hasn't sunk in with everyone yet.

During its 2011 holiday campaign, the OPP charged 682 motorists with impaired driving and issued 'warn' suspensions to another 583 drivers.

During the just-completed holidays, 693 drivers were charged with having more than the legal limit of alcohol (80 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood) in their system, while 625 received warning licence suspensions for having between 50-80 mg of alcohol in 100 ml of blood.

Although it's impossible to know for sure why a small percentage of the population continues to be willing to risk their licence to drive, their own lives and the lives of innocent bystanders, what we can predict is that the resulting carnage (and incarceration) is practically inevitable.

While these recent statistics may mean we're still far from winning the battle, this fight is far from over and the message must not be silenced.

WEB POLL RESULTS

(Go to www.theifp.ca)

Which of the following do you think will dominate the headlines in Canada in 2013??

- The world's economy (58%)
- Canadian politics (both provincial and federal) (22%)
- None of the above (11%)
- Global military conflicts (3%)
- Environmental issues (3%)
- Terrorism (3%)

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Letters to the editor

Walmart employee thanked for kindness

Dear editor,

Recently, as I was rushing out the door, my daughter informed me that she needed some colouring pencils for her class and asked if we could stop at Walmart on the way to school.

I had figured on going to the bank, but instead off to Walmart we went. She picked up what she needed and we proceeded to the cashier. I asked the cashier if it would be possible to get \$20 in cash back, but she nicely informed me that it was too early in the day and she didn't have any cash.

I guess the gentleman beside her, who was the store greeter, must have sensed my disappointment.

Although I did not go into any details for the reasons that I needed the cash, he quickly piped up and asked how much cash I needed. When I said \$20, without hesitation, he quickly produced \$20 from his wallet and handed it to me and then told the cashier that he would get it sorted out later but, "Let's get this nice lady and her daughter on their way, as they look like they are

in a little bit of a hurry."

We thanked them both for their kindness and we were on our way.

So thank you Ken. You cannot imagine how much that simple act of kindness helped me and others.

Lisa McMaster, Georgetown

CNOOC takeover a dangerous move

Dear editor,

I am writing to share my serious concerns regarding Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government allowing CNOOC, the Chinese state-owned oil company, to take over Canadian fossil fuel giant Nexen and of the pending FIPA deal.

Voters need to become aware of the appalling dangers these decisions, along with the many other foreign and domestic policies his government has adopted, poses to Canadian and global well-being.

The CNOOC takeover deal, which, among other things, puts three to six billion barrels of tar sands oil in CNOOC's hands, would be a big step in the wrong direction for global climate change if CNOOC exploits Nexen's reserves to their fullest extent.

If the secretive and extreme FIPA (Canada-China Foreign Investment Protection Act) passes, Chinese corporations would gain unprecedented powers over Canadian natural resources. Under FIPA, CNOOC would be able to sue Canadian governments in secret tribunals if our governments do anything to counter its growing interests—including common sense environmental protections and job creation efforts.

Already, under NAFTA, Canada has spent hundreds of millions on penalties alone from lawsuits launched under that trade agreement and is currently being sued by a U.S. corporation because Quebec placed a temporary moratorium on fracking to study its controversial health and safety impacts. If FIPA passes, the door will be open for CNOOC and other Chinese corporations to do even worse.

The bottom line is: Prime Minister Harper must protect Canadian democracy and natural resources from corporate greed.

Now that Harper has allowed this damaging Nexen takeover, he must not pass the secretive and extreme FIPA agreement.

Dan Poirier, Acton