



# LAKELAND POLICE DEPARTMENT

## MEDIA RELEASE

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219 N. Massachusetts Avenue  
Lakeland, FL 33801  
www.lakelandgov.net/lpd  
(863) 834-6900

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 27, 2009

### CONTACT:

Sgt. Hans Lehman  
(863) 834-2561

## **GEICO INSURANCE AWARDS GRANT TO REDUCE IMPAIRED DRIVING**

### **Funds Will Purchase Educational Vehicle to Simulate Impaired Driving**

Lakeland, Florida — Impaired driving continues to be a deadly crime across our nation, but one that can be prevented. The National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration reports in 2006 that more than 13,000 people died in highway crashes involving a driver or motorcycle rider with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. Car crashes are also known to be the leading cause of death of adolescents.

Enforcement and education are two proven methods to reducing the number of impaired drivers on our highways. To that end, GEICO Insurance today provided a financial grant to the Lakeland Police Department and the Polk County Sheriff's Office to fund a joint educational effort to reduce impaired driving. The grant is a philanthropic donation by GEICO to purchase a special vehicle that simulates impaired driving.

The Simulated Impaired DrivINg Experience®, or SIDNE®, is a battery-powered vehicle that simulates the effects of impairment from alcohol or other drugs on a motorist's driving skills. The goal of this collaborative initiative is to create a program that educates young drivers how dangerous impaired driving can be.

Program instructors have complete control of the SIDNE® vehicle and can switch it from normal driving to impaired driving mode to demonstrate effects of impairment on driving skills. Participants experience with a sober brain how it feels when reaction time is slowed and they are unable to make a turn or stop, even when they have ample time and space.

SIDNE® vehicles are used in conjunction with FATAL VISION® goggles that vividly demonstrate the concept of impairment by showing the effects of alcohol and drugs on the human brain.

The Lakeland Police Department and the Polk County Sheriff's Office are teaming together to bring this educational program to the entire county. This joint effort is another demonstration of the commitment by Lakeland Police Chief Roger Boatner and Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd to work together to reduce impaired driving on our roads and highways.

For more information on FATAL VISION® and SIDNE®, visit the company's website at <http://www.fatalvision.com/fv/home.php>.

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