

Winter Walk to School

Winter Walk to School Day 2026 is officially celebrated on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, encouraging students to walk, wheel, or "drive to 5" (dropping off 5 minutes away) to boost physical activity. This event promotes safe, active, and healthy winter travel habits. The purpose is to encourage walking/rolling in winter weather, promote, safety, and physical/mental health. The Line on 59 provided hot chocolate for the St. Bernard's elementary kids and the Teen TZD provided snack bars to start their day. The city police department and Pennington County Sheriff's department educated the students on how to cross streets safely and they led the pack and walked the kids to school. This is the 3rd year that St. Bernard's has participated in the Minnesota Winter Walk to School Day.



Frost Fest 2026

The Teen TZD/Key Club held a soup/chili cookoff fundraiser at the Eagle's Club in Thief River Falls. It was a fun event that educated passenger safety and to bring awareness of Teen TZD/Key Club in our community. It was a free-will offering and over \$700 was raised for the Key Club. Our own John Volker, MNDOT, participated with his famous chili. The Under the Bar Booster in the Car stand is a great visual and interactive tool used to demonstrate the height where kids should still be in some sort of passenger safety such as a car seat or booster. They also had a one-pager of the passenger safety laws and requirements. This is the 2nd year they have held this fundraiser.



Enforcement Update:

- DWI (optional) Mar 17, 2026—St. Patrick's Day
- Distracted: April 1-30, 2026



SAVE THE DATE!

NW MN TZD Regional Workshop
April 30, 2026 | Thief River Falls, MN

It's a Slam Dunk Don't Drive Drunk

The University of MN Crookston held their event again this year promoting safe driving. The Polk County Deputies and Crookston Police Department led the education with the students using the Toward Zero Deaths driving simulator and bean bag toss games. The interaction with law enforcement strengthens the relationships with the community and encourages the students to freely ask questions as they learn about the dangers of impaired driving.



St. Patrick's Day Shenanigans

According to NHTSA data, there were 290 people killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes during the St. Patrick's Day holidays 6 p.m. March 16 – 5:59 a.m. March 18) between 2018-2022. During the 2022 St. Patrick's Day holiday, 74 people died in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. Nighttime driving during the 2022 St. Patrick's Day holiday was significantly more dangerous than daytime driving, with 38% of drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes between the hours of 6 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. being drunk. Almost half (47%) of drivers involved in fatal crashes between the hours of midnight and 2:59 a.m. were drunk.

Get a Sober Ride Home to Your Pot of Gold!

Mark your 2026 Calendars

- Tribal Traffic Safety Summit March 23-25, 2026
- April—National Distracted Driving Awareness Month
- Apr 29, 2026—Teen TZD Conference—Evangelical Free Church in TRF
- April 30, 2026—NW Regional Workshop—Thief River Falls Legacy Center

Toward Zero Deaths Northwest Regional Newsletter

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