

**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Purdue, West Lafayette police set out to educate campus, community on crosswalks, enforcement**

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Purdue and West Lafayette police will conduct an enforcement campaign the week of Aug. 24-31 to educate the public about new crosswalks aimed at helping ensure pedestrian safety on busy streets around campus.

The newly installed crosswalks are the result of a joint effort between the city of West Lafayette and Purdue and have been applied to city streets at selected intersections and mid-block locations. Signs also have been installed.

While police can warn or cite pedestrians for jaywalking, an emphasis of the campaign will be on increasing motorists' awareness of the crossing points, said West Lafayette Police Chief Jason Dombkowski.

"We will focus enforcement on drivers who fail to yield the right of way to pedestrians who are in the crosswalks," Dombkowski said. "While pedestrians can be ticketed for not crossing at the crosswalks, that is not our focus. We won't chase pedestrians down and ticket them for jaywalking, but they must understand that the liability is on them if they choose not to cross at a marked crosswalk."

The crosswalks have been installed using a ladder-style marking for the crosswalk zones, as well as yield bars 20 feet before the crosswalk where drivers are to yield. Signs have been installed to alert drivers as to where they are to stop when yielding to pedestrians and to identify the crosswalks themselves.

During the campaign, officers from the two departments will patrol on foot, by bike and in marked squad cars, said Purdue University Police Chief John Cox. Purdue police will focus on pedestrian crossings at the intersections of Russell Street at First, Third and Fourth streets. West Lafayette police will concentrate on crossings on Northwestern Avenue at Columbia Street and at the corner of Grant and North streets. The two departments will patrol together a crossing at the Stadium and Northwestern avenues intersection. The locations were chosen based on crash data, vehicle traffic and pedestrian volume.

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"Changing driver and pedestrian behavior in and around crosswalks will not happen overnight," Cox said. "We are looking at this as a four-year project. By the time these incoming freshmen are seniors, our goal is that these safety features are engrained in them, and it will carry through to the new students."

David Buck, West Lafayette city engineer, said there is a lot of interest in the crosswalks and mid-block crossings and the city is putting time and resources into making the entire city more pedestrian friendly.

"This is a safety issue that is important to the city," Buck said. "Each crosswalk or mid-block crossing installed costs in the area of \$5,000.

Jim Knapp, senior civil engineer for Purdue, said pedestrian safety is a priority for the university, as well.

"The university is committed to making our campus as safe as possible for all students, staff and visitors. The crosswalk project is one of many safety enhancements the Office of the University Architect works on in concert with the city each year."

Both Cox and Dombkowski say it is important for pedestrians and motorists to understand Indiana state law regarding marked pedestrian crossings.

"State law governing the use of crosswalks is not new. Educating pedestrians and motorists on the laws will be one of the keys to making it safer for pedestrians as they cross busy city and university streets," Cox said.

Dombkowski said there will be an educational effort, then an enforcement component to the campaign.

"Purdue and West Lafayette officers will begin issuing warnings for crosswalk violations through Aug. 23. Beginning Aug. 24, officers will patrol in and around the crosswalks, issuing warnings and tickets to violators," he said.

State law regulates pedestrian and driver actions at such crossings. Indiana Code concerning traffic and pedestrian controls is available online at

<http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title9/ar21/ch17.html>

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