



Warren C. Evans
Sheriff

News Release

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Contact: Ofc. John Roach, 313-213-5162

Sheriff: "Gateway" detours won't become "getaway" detours for illegal & unsafe trucks

◆ *Deputies to re-tool interdiction efforts based on changing traffic patterns*

With the Michigan Department of Transportation's (MDOT) massive Ambassador Bridge "Gateway" Project now underway and diverting traffic heading to and from the bridge, Wayne County Sheriff Warren C. Evans has kicked off "Operation Gateway," an adaptive vehicle inspection effort designed to intercept illegal contraband and occupants.

Because bridge traffic for the next two years will be dispersed along a wide variety of new routes, Evans said, it could present an opportunity for individuals carrying drugs, illegal occupants or unsafe vehicles to avoid detection if law enforcement agencies don't adapt to their new patterns.

"The Gateway Project represents a significant challenge to our efforts to make sure these undesirable elements do not make their way into our region," Evans said. "Since Gateway construction began on Monday, our officers have been conducting surveillance to identify new routes that the type of traffic we are interested in has started to take."

Evans said that patrols and inspections may take place on posted detour routes, or non-posted ones, depending upon what officers are seeing. He also said that deputies will stagger the locations and times of their enforcement based on their observations and surveillance throughout the duration of the Gateway construction.

"The traffic dynamic will be changing constantly throughout the various construction phases and resulting lane closures," Evans said. "That's why having an adaptive approach is so important."

Evans said that the enforcement and inspections should not in any way exacerbate traffic slowdowns already being experienced.

"Our officers have designated locations in areas away from freeway traffic they lead drivers to for just that reason," Evans said. "Our plan is to improve safety and security on our roads without causing additional delays."

#more#

Specially trained deputies will be identifying and inspecting commercial vehicles, as well as some passenger vehicles, for a variety of public safety concerns, including:

- Illegal narcotics
- Illegal occupants
- Explosives
- Overweight loads
- Significant mechanical failures
- Operator safety issues, such as being overly tired, intoxicated or not properly licensed.

The Ambassador Bridge is the busiest international border crossing in North America in terms of trade volume. More than 25% of all merchandise exchanged between the U.S. and Canada crosses the bridge. Based on a recent Border Transportation Partnership Study, vehicles crossing the bridge (2-way) total 11 million a year, with 30% of those being commercial vehicles, or approximately 10,000 trucks a day. Eighty billion dollars worth of goods passes over the Ambassador Bridge annually.

FY 2006-07 stats

Overweight citations issued:	684
Overweight fines:	Approx. \$1.5 million (about 50% collected)
Safety violation citations:	638
Safety violation fines:	\$225,000 (about 50% collected)
Traffic stops:	7,381
Traffic citations:	7,226
Arrests:	212
Vehicle Forfeitures:	11 forfeitures (OUIL 3, narcotics, prostitution)
K9 searches:	200+