Police Dept. 5480 Grant Ave. Cuyahoga Hts. Ohio 44125 (216) 640-2045 chpd@cuyahogaheights.gov

A MESSAGE FROM POLICE CHIEF, BRIAN STURGILL

The Cuyahoga Heights Police Department wants to remind residents of the increase in deer-related traffic crashes this time of year.

According to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife, deer become visibly active in late October, November and December. This is due in large part to the fall breeding season, which sometimes causes deer to dart into roadways with little caution. This unpredictable movement leads to an increase in deer-related vehicle crashes. Drivers are encouraged to be extra cautious in areas where fencerows, river/creek banks or blocks of forested habitat are adjacent to the roadway.

Cost of Vehicle vs. Deer Collisions:

Colliding with a deer is not only dangerous, but also increasingly costly. Recent data estimates the average insurance claim for a deer-vehicle collision in Ohio is nearly $5,000. Vehicle sensors found on newer vehicles continue to increase repair costs.

How to Avoid Animal Collisions:

- **Scan the road ahead:** Looking ahead helps provide enough reaction time if an animal is spotted. Also, remember some animals, like deer, move in groups.
- **Use high-beam headlights if there is no oncoming traffic:** This can help you spot deer or other wildlife more quickly and give you time to slow down, move over or honk the horn to scare the animal away. High beams also help in spotting animals' reflective eyes.
- **Be extra cautious at dawn and dusk:** Deer are more active in the early morning and at dusk. That's why these are peak times for deer-vehicle collisions.
- **If a collision is unavoidable, apply the brakes firmly and remain in your lane:** Swerving to avoid an animal can often cause a more serious crash or cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Drivers who swerve to miss a deer and hit something else may be charged for an at-fault crash.
- **Always wear a seatbelt and remain awake, alert and sober:** The chances of injury when hitting an animal are much higher if you don't have your seatbelt on. If you're distracted or drowsy, you're not properly scanning the road for deer and could end up spotting them too late.

What to Do If You Hit a Deer:

- Following the collision, call the police (911).
- Avoid approaching the deer/animal. A wounded animal can be dangerous and pose a threat when approached.
- Activate the vehicle's hazard lights whether it's light or dark outside.
- If possible, move the vehicle to a safe location off of the roadway, and wait for help to arrive.
- Contact your insurance company representative as quickly as possible to report any vehicle damage.

The Cuyahoga Heights Police Department would like to wish all a

Happy Thanksgiving