

Secretary of State Police, Joliet Police crack down on parking placard abuse

Secretary of State Police and the Joliet Police Department recently conducted stings at the Chicagoland Motor Speedway in Joliet to crack down on the abuse of parking placards and disability license plates. More than 130 tickets were issued and all placards being used illegally were confiscated.

After receiving numerous complaints about placard abuse at the Speedway, the Joliet Police Department and racetrack officials worked with the Secretary of State Police to set a plan of action. A message ran in the Speedway's newsletter and on the radio reminding race fans that law

enforcement officials would be checking parking placards and plates to ensure that the authorized holders were present.

On the day of the race, officers checked placard and plate numbers, issued tickets to unauthorized users and confiscated illegally used placards. Placard owners had their parking privileges suspended for 30 days until their court date. If found guilty, the placard holder was required to pay a \$100 fine plus court costs. Once the fine is paid, he or she can petition the Secretary of State to have the placard returned. A record of the conviction was entered in their

file, and if abuse continues, their placard privileges will be further suspended or revoked.

Motorists are reminded that parking placards are not transferable and the authorized holder must be present when parking in reserved spaces for persons with disabilities. By allowing others to use their placards when they are not present, placard holders risk having their parking privileges suspended or revoked.

For more information, please contact the Persons with Disabilities Placards/Plates Unit, 217-782-2709, or visit www.cyberdriveillinois.com.

"Placard abuse is a matter I take very seriously," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "My office has taken an active role in reducing the abuse of this vital program for persons with disabilities, and we will continue to work with law enforcement agencies and community groups across the state to address this issue."

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AARP recognizes Secretary White

Donna Ginther, Governmental Relations director for the Illinois AARP, presents Secretary of State Jesse White its "Friend of the Frail Elderly" award for his efforts on senior issues. The award was presented Nov. 5 during AARP's Fall Lobby Day at the Illinois State Capitol.

The Senior & Community Services Department has outreach representatives around the state to inform and offer citizens the many programs and services provided by the Secretary of State's office.

"Sometimes, these outreach representatives may be the only contact that someone living in a remote area has to learn about the beneficial programs and services provided by the office," said Secretary of State Jesse White. "It also allows us to reach these citizens in a personal, one-on-one fashion."

Outreach representatives are available to speak on a number of topics concerning the office. They also provide Rules of the Road Review Courses.

"My goal is to give every person in Illinois an opportunity to contact us and take advantage of what this office has to offer," said Secretary White.

For more information on topics for presentations or the next Rules of the Road Review Course in your area, please call 800-252-2904.



Secretary of State outreach representative Dr. Gordon Bush (second from left) attended the Southwestern Illinois Senior Olympics Games in September at SIU-Edwardsville. Joining Bush are Senior Olympic chair Mike Moore and other supporters of the event.

Secretary of State Jesse White was the featured speaker at SPARC's annual meeting in October. SPARC — Springfield Association for Retarded Citizens, Inc. — has been serving area infants, children, adults and seniors with developmental disabilities since 1951.



Safe driving tips

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, drivers age 85 and over are more than 10 times as likely as those in their 40s to be involved in fatal multiple vehicle crashes at intersections. And while there may not be a large number of 85-year-old drivers on the road today, there will be in the near future. In the United States, the number of people age 65 and over is expected to double by 2030. In Canada, a quarter of the population already is over age 50, with drivers over age 80 comprising the fastest-growing segment.

Following are ways to stay safe behind the wheel.

- 1 Avoid driving at night, in heavy traffic or on unfamiliar roads.
- 2 Know the rules of the road. Rules of the Road booklets are available at your local Driver Services facility.
- 3 Have regular vision and hearing exams.
- 4 When traveling, wear your eyeglasses and/or hearing aids.
- 5 Use medications as prescribed; ask your doctor how your medications may affect your driving.
- 6 Always wear your seatbelt — it's the law in Illinois.
- 7 Be alert for parked cars, pedestrians and cyclists.
- 8 Use your rearview and outside mirrors frequently.
- 9 Avoid driving for extended periods of time or when tired.
- 10 Take a safe driving course. The Secretary of State offers a Rules of the Road Review Course. To find a time and location near you, call the number below.

SECRETARY OF STATE
SENIOR HOTLINE
800-252-2904

Alcohol can be dangerous when combined with age, medications

One of the thoughts we are least likely to dwell upon is the possibility of senior citizens abusing alcohol. Many do not realize how widespread the problem has become because of the fewer social contacts or events that seniors would normally attend. Seniors typically begin excessive drinking when a loved one or close friend(s) dies.

Alcohol impairs one's judgement and reaction time, and as individuals continue to abuse alcohol the problems magnify. In addition, an average senior citizen may take several medications for a variety of health conditions. Alcohol can neutralize the benefits of prescription medications or magnify them, making it a lethal combination. Alcohol also slows brain activity, causing falls and produces symptoms of dementia.

Obviously, not all senior citizens who consume alcohol overindulge, but any of the following symptoms may indicate a problem. If you or someone you know exhibits any of the following characteristics, please consult a family doctor or clergyman, your local health department or Alcoholics Anonymous.

- Drinking to calm your nerves, forget worries or reduce depression
- Lying about the amount of alcohol consumed on a daily/weekly basis
- Loss of appetite
- Drinking alone
- Increase in the number of accidents to yourself or others
- Irritability in non-drinking times
- Consuming more volume to reach the desired effect

Marine Corps license plates

Marine Corps license plates are available to any Illinois veteran who is an active or former member of the U.S. Marine Corps. The cost of the plates is \$20 for original issuance, in addition to the annual registration fee of \$78. An additional \$20 fee is required upon renewal, in addition to the annual registration fee. A portion of the fees goes to the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund. If you are eligible for the Department of Revenue's Circuit Breaker program, you may be eligible for a reduced annual registration fee of \$24. For more information, please call 800-252-2904 (voice/TTY).



Protecting your investments

We've all heard that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Seniors have spent a lifetime working hard, raising families and trying to set aside a portion of their income for retirement. Secretary of State Jesse White urges all Illinois residents to become better investors by being informed and better educated.

Following are 10 tips to help you avoid becoming a victim of investment fraud:

- ① Decline any unsolicited sales calls.
- ② Never trust a stranger with your finances. If someone is pressuring you to invest, chances are they are trying to steal your money. Take the time to learn about the investment.
- ③ Stay in control of your money. Educate yourself about securities and investing at a local library or call the Securities Department.
- ④ Never judge a con artist by his appearance. Most con artists spend a considerable amount of time and money to look good.
- ⑤ Don't let a con artist prey on your fears. Senior citizens have many financial concerns. Con artists know these fears and concerns.
- ⑥ Elderly women beware. Older women are more likely targets of fraud and abuse than older men. Educate yourself. Don't take unsolicited advice unless you know exactly what you are getting into.
- ⑦ Get tough and keep watch. Once you have invested your money, monitor your investments and ask questions.
- ⑧ Understand your financial needs. Know what you want out of your investment and be careful not to make changes that might disrupt your monthly income.
- ⑨ Ask for help. If you are unsure of an opportunity, ask for advice. If you have questions about an advisor, salesperson or broker, call the Securities Department.
- ⑩ Report all suspected fraud and abuse immediately so it can be stopped.

Illinois Securities Department
800-628-7973

Need a speaker?

The Secretary of State's office has a Speakers Bureau that coordinates speakers for community groups, schools, businesses and other civic organizations throughout the state. The free service is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Topics include Road Rage, a flag video called "Some Call Her Old Glory," How to Protect Yourself From Securities Fraud, Services to Veterans, Think Smart-Be Safe, and an Overview of the Secretary of State's Office.

To schedule a speaker for your event, please contact:

Secretary of State Speakers Bureau
324 W. Monroe
Springfield, IL 62704
800-252-2904 (voice/TTY)
217-782-8893
217-782-8629 (fax)

Stay warm safely

With the colder months ahead, furnaces, fireplaces and space heaters will be working overtime. Following are a few safety measures you can take to improve heating efficiency, lower your heating bills and improve the safety of your home.

- * Make sure your furnace stands free and clear of any combustibles. If the nearby ceiling or walls feel hot, add insulation. If you have an older furnace, have it inspected on a yearly basis.
- * Chimneys and flues should be inspected and cleaned on a regular basis.
- * Fire screens should always be kept in front of fireplaces to keep sparks from flying out. Arrange the andirons so logs can't roll out. Never leave a fire unattended.
- * Space heaters need space. They should be kept at least 3 feet from drapes, upholstery, walls or anything that might catch fire. Never use a space heater to dry clothing, and never leave one on unattended.

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www.cyberdriveillinois.com

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