**Sample newsletter article**

It’s time to get serious about roadway safety in Illinois.

From 2013 through 2017, nearly 11,800 crashes occurred in which some form of driver distraction involving a cellphone was cited by police according to the Illinois Department of Transportation.

These crashes resulted in 79 fatalities.

Also, in 2017 alone, a total of 434 people died in fatal crashes that involved cellphone-related activities as a distraction, according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration.

These are preventable tragedies.

In an effort to reduce the number of crashes caused by distracted driving, the Illinois Tollway, Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois State Police, Illinois Secretary of State and AAA are working together on a statewide campaign to educate drivers about the hand-held cellphone ban that took effect January 1, 2014.

The law prohibits motorists from talking on all but hands-free mobile phones while driving. In addition, the new law imposes fees starting at $75 for drivers caught using a hand-held cellphone while driving. Drivers could pay $150 for repeat offenses and may eventually have their driver’s licenses suspended.

In addition, the law imposes stricter penalties following crashes in which electronic devices were being used at the time of collision. A crash causing great bodily harm can earn a driver up to one year in prison and a fatal crash can result in a prison sentence of up to three years.

The only way to slow down the growing epidemic of distracted driving is by everyone doing their part to make Illinois roads safer. Drivers need to remember that if they drive with a phone in one hand, they can expect a ticket in the other.

Please visit [www.dropitanddriveillinois.com](http://www.dropitanddriveillinois.com) to learn more about how you can participate in the campaign.