

Leonard officers see rash of alcohol-related offenses

Written by By Betsy Blevins, Managing Editor
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June 23, 2011 - In one week's time, Leonard officers handled four cases on traffic stops where the drivers had been drinking prior to getting behind the wheel. In three of the cases, the drivers were arrested and taken to jail.

The first case came on Sunday, June 5, when an officer observed a gray Chevrolet Malibu cross the center line of traffic, and initiated a traffic stop for that offense. The officer observed a large box of beer in the back seat of the vehicle, smelled alcohol and noted that the driver appeared nervous. After first denying having had anything to drink, the driver, a 22-year-old Leonard resident, later admitted he had after the officer found five empty beer cans in the vehicle. Standard field sobriety tests were administered, and the driver was able to complete them satisfactorily. The officer attempted to take a breath test, but the breathalyzer was not working correctly. The driver and his vehicle were released to another adult.

The next two cases came on the same day, June 8, with one in the early morning hours, and one just before midnight. At 2:30 a.m. an officer performing a security check at a local business observed a white Ford truck pulling a boat trailer that had no taillights or license plate. Upon contact with the driver, the officer noticed the smell of alcohol, and performed several field sobriety tests that the driver was unable to complete satisfactorily. He admitted to having had four beers earlier in the evening, and an open container was found in the vehicle. He was arrested for driving while intoxicated and also cited for the container.

That night at 11:40 p.m., a 31-year-old Carrollton resident was arrested for driving while intoxicated. An officer on routine patrol observed another white Ford truck parked partly on the shoulder of U.S. Highway 69 near FM 896, with the left wheels over the white line still in the lane of moving traffic. Upon making contact with the driver, who advised that he was looking for his cell phone that he dropped, the officer noticed the man behaving strangely and reported that he could not give a consistent answer on where he was coming from and where he was going to. Beer cans were also found in the vehicle. The man failed the field sobriety tests administered by the officer and was taken into custody and transferred to Fannin County Jail. A licensed intoxilizer operator performed a breath test on the man, which recorded 0.285 and 0.297, while the legal limit is .08. In addition to the arrest for DWI, the man was cited for open container and failure to display his driver's license.

The final and most serious report came on Sunday, June 12, at 1:38 in the morning, when an officer on routine patrol witnessed an accident due to drunken driving. The officer was sitting stationary on U.S. Highway 69 when he observed a green Ford truck run the stop sign at the

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east end of Fannin Street, cross Highway 69, and crash through a metal gate on the other side of the road. The driver, a 34-year-old Houston resident, admitted to drinking at a party earlier, and stated that he felt intoxicated. The officer noted in the report that the driver had failed to put the vehicle in park after the crash, and it started rolling backward during the course of the investigation. The passenger, a 32-year-old Houston woman, also showed signs of intoxication. The driver was arrested for DWI and cited for failure to stop at a stop sign. The passenger was cited for public intoxication and released to a responsible adult. The vehicle was towed by a Bonham company. The damage to the metal fence that they crashed through was estimated to be \$1200.