

The Vicksburg Post.



DISTRACTED DRIVING: Senior Courtney White tries texting and driving on an MDOT simulator during Vicksburg High School's third annual Prom Safety Awareness Day.



VHS hosts annual prom safety day

Published 10:20 am Thursday, March 31, 2016

By Austin Vining

There was music, dancing and (simulated) cars crashing everywhere.

It wasn't prom night, but it was an indication of what could happen if students aren't safe during the time-honored tradition.

The third annual Prom Safety Awareness Day was held Wednesday morning at Vicksburg High School.

“We do this through SAVE (Students Against Violence Everywhere),” Vicksburg High School’s Tameka Johnson said. “It’s a grant that I write every year so we can do things like this. This year we also partnered with the ARL Project.”

Allstate, Vicksburg Police Department, Sheriff Martin Pace, Alderman Michael Mayfield, Mississippi Department of Transportation, and other organizations were represented.

MDOT Safety Educator Greg Smith said his team was there to show students the dangers of distracted driving.

“This is a simulator in which we want participants to text and drive,” he said. “This simulation correlates with everyday driving: you have people that walk out in the crosswalk, cars that veer into your lane, dogs, cats, balls and children who run out into the street.”

Smith said the simulator shows students how well they are able to text and drive under normal driving conditions.

“Most people fail at it,” he said. “It helps them to realize they can’t multitask and they don’t need the extra distractions.”

Dearius Jones, a junior, tried the simulator but got pulled over by the cops for several traffic violations.

“It was already confusing before the phone even popped up,” he said. “I had to decide if I wanted to concentrate on driving or the phone.”

Jones said he already doesn’t text and drive because he knows the consequences.

“My mom doesn’t allow me to. She takes my phone,” he said. “The simulator really shows you though that you shouldn’t text and drive.”

Allstate agent Steven James was in attendance promoting a new program designed to help students be safer drivers.

“This is our new program called #GetThereSafe,” he said. “We’re talking to kids about the dangers of texting and driving and buckling their seatbelts so they can get there safe.”

A banner was available for students to sign if they took a pledge to do the things necessary to #GetThereSafe.

“We leave it with the school, so when they come by it’s a reminder to get there safe,” he said. “Once they get all of their signatures, there’s also rings so they can put it on their flagpole.”