Simon signs "It Can Wait" pledge, urges students to consider dangers of texting

CARTERVILLE – September 11, 2012. Illinois Lt. Governor Sheila Simon today joined AT&T Illinois and Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) officials at John A. Logan College to announce a joint statewide initiative urging community college students to take a pledge against texting while driving.

"Most community college students commute to class on a daily basis and need to understand the grave danger of texting while driving," Lt. Governor Simon said. "I'm taking the pledge today to never text and drive, and I encourage students everywhere to join me. When you are driving, put down your phone – it can wait."

Simon made her comments at the statewide announcement of the AT&T "It Can Wait" campaign on the campus of John A. Logan College in Carterville.

"Our goal is to save lives," said Jim Maurer, VP of External Affairs, AT&T Illinois. "Too many lives have been forever changed by a texting-while-driving accident, and together, we want to spread the word about how deadly a single text can be. We're challenging everyone to take the pledge to never text and drive and to make it a lifelong commitment."

"We believe community colleges are uniquely positioned to help in the effort against texting and driving and we fully support the initiative from Lt. Governor Simon and AT&T," said Geoff Obrzut, President & CEO, Illinois Community College Board.

The "It Can Wait" campaign is focusing attention on September 19th as "No Text on Board Pledge Day," where the company is asking all drivers to take the pledge to never text and drive again. To take the pledge, you can log on to www.ItCanWait.com .

IDOT is assisting in the effort with electronic highway signs that remind drivers not to text and drive, and cause drivers to think about traffic safety by providing the updated number of Illinois

highway fatalities.

“Gov. Quinn is committed to making our roads safer, and at IDOT efforts to discourage texting while driving have been significant. The Governor signed the state law that prohibits texting while driving, and we are educating voters through our ‘Drive Now. Text Later.’ traffic safety initiative,” said IDOT Secretary Ann L. Schneider. “We are pleased to join Lt. Governor Simon, AT&T and community colleges in Illinois to encourage drivers to take the pledge to never text and drive. There is no text message that is more important than the safety of our citizens.”

John A. Logan College President Dr. Michael Dreith said that to promote safe driving among students, the college will send an informational email message to its students encouraging them to take the pledge to never text and drive again.

“Texting while driving has become an epidemic on the roads today. As many of our students are commuters, we want them to stay safe, and this initiative will help ensure they recognize the dangers of distracted driving,” Dreith said. “We want our students to make the right choices and to take the pledge to never text and drive.”

"I am confident that my colleagues from the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents join with me and Lt Governor Simon in enthusiastically supporting the ‘It Can Wait’ anti-texting while driving campaign," said Margaret B. "Peg" Lee, Oakton Community College President and President of the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents.

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