

Yes, count on heavy traffic this week

November 26, 2019



It's the Thanksgiving season, when people want to be "home for the holidays."

Which can translate to "on the road for the holidays."

Del Norte County roads will be packed and California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers are encouraging motorists to stay extra cautious as they – and many others - travel.

Wild Rivers Coast residents driving out of town will face adverse weather, extra traffic, and the curvy roads of U.S. Highways 101 and 199.

"It's supposed to be wet and cold during the holiday itself and during the end of the week. Slowing down is the number one way to avoid a collision," said Paul Craft, a California Highway Patrol Officer in Eureka.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) is predicting that more than 55 million people will travel during Thanksgiving week, making this the second-highest travel year (next to 2005) since 2000.

That's a 2.9% increase over last year, which AAA credits to recently lower national gas prices. Ironically, GasBuddy, a gas price tracking app, predicts the national gas price average this Thanksgiving (\$2.56) will be the highest since 2014, although by just a cent over last year.

Wednesday and Sunday of this week are expected to be the most crowded days for traveling. If you're headed south to San Francisco on Wednesday, AAA warns to avoid the city from 2-4 p.m., when roads are likely to be the most heavily traveled.

The CHP and Oregon State Police said they'll deploy the maximum number of troopers on duty to watch for speeding and to respond to accidents

According to a CHP press release, law enforcement's maximum enforcement period will begin at 6:01 p.m. Wednesday and continue through 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

During that time, officers will be looking for unsafe driving practices that include impaired or distracted driving, unsafe speed and vehicle occupants who fail to buckle up.

According to the CHP, 59 people were killed in collisions in California during the 2018 Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Among the 42 vehicle occupants killed in crashes within the CHP's jurisdiction, 43% were not wearing a seat belt.

To the east, Lt. Stephanie Bigman of the Grants Pass Police Department said plans are to enlist more officers to patrol U.S. Highway 199. "The crash rate (there) is really not higher than other places, but they are of a more-serious nature," Bigman said.