



## Students say drunk driving simulator eye-opening

By Andrea R. Sanders Staff writer  
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Students had a chance to experience the road through the eyes of a drunk driver Wednesday night in the Commons.

The national Make a Difference "Save a Life" tour made a stop on ISU's campus after visiting Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology earlier this week.

Brian Beldyga, a senior manager of the "Save a Life" tour, said drunk driving is a problem on college campuses.

"We had people here today who said they drink and drive, and after the experience their views changed," Beldyga said. "People should really be there for their friends and take those keys." Beldyga said that if students are willing to learn, they will gain from this experience.

**Otis Harris, 19, a freshman business administration major, said, "It was very informative. I hope people who do drink and drive get something out of this."**

Tarena Daniels, 21, senior business administration major, said the simulator was a good experiment.

**"People think the simulator is just something fun to do, but when you get in the seat, you really see what it is like to be a drunk driver," Daniels said. "A simple task like making a right turn is really hard to do when you are under the influence."**

The event had a very large turnout according to ISU police officer Chris Smith.

"We expected a lot of students to come this evening and they have exceeded our expectations."

Smith said Public Safety looks forward to having the event at ISU in the future.

According to the ISU Alcohol Use Handbook, many college students drink 0-4 drinks when they party and about 1 in 5 choose not to drink at all. One drink equals 12 ounces of beer, a 5-ounce glass of wine, one standard mixed drink, or one shot of liquor. All of these units have the same dose: one half ounce of pure alcohol.

ISU has organizations that are willing to help students with alcohol issues. Alcohol.edu is a course offered through the Student Counseling Center. The course is free and confidential. This is often an option for students when they are asked by Student Judicial Board to examine their alcohol use.

BASICS (Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students) is also a free program offered by the Student Counseling Center.



The program's goal is to reduce risky behaviors and dangerous consequences of alcohol abuse.

Officers from the Indiana State Excise police and Project 21 were also in attendance at the event to answer questions.

Indiana State Police detective John Moats said Project 21 is a program that discourages underage drinking.

Project 21 officers patrol Vigo County and the Terre Haute city limits looking for underage drinking parties. Since April of this year, Project 21 has arrested 196 underage drinkers as young as 14.

**"The drunk driving simulator is beneficial," said Moats. "It gives students a sense of how dangerous it is to drink and drive. Some students may be looking at this as a fun time, but hopefully they'll take it seriously."**

Indiana State Excise police officer Bill Turner said that there are many consequences for underage drinkers.

"First the person is asked to blow into a portable breath tester (PBT)," Turner said. "If it reads anything other than zero, the individual will receive a ticket."

If the offender is under 18, Turner said their parents are called and the person is released to them. If the individual is older than 18, they are released at the scene with a Class C misdemeanor ticket, instead of being taken to jail. Depending on the person's record, the offense could lead up to 60 days in jail or a fine up to \$500.

The Indiana Excise Police work closely with Project 21 to help enforce minor consumption laws.

They also make sure that businesses that sell alcohol and tobacco are in compliance with the law and are selling products to people who are old enough to have them.

Vigo County Sheriff's department detective Frank Shahadey said that they have had about 50 underage drinking violations during the past three weekends. Twenty-nine of them were at one location.

"College students think that because they are walking drunk they're OK but it's still against the law to be drunk in public," said Shahadey.

With Homecoming weekend approaching, Shahadey warns that several Project 21 officers will be assigned to assist excise police with ISU's Homecoming.