

Wreck emphasizes message

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A crumpled automobile on the campus of Niagara College sits as a grim reminder of the dangers of drinking and driving.

Community partners gathered at the corner of Woodlawn Road and First Avenue Wednesday to promote traffic safety through the Safe Communities initiative.

Niagara Regional Police, city staff, elected officials, volunteers, the college and CAA Niagara decided to place the wreck at the busy intersection to send a timely message — not only to students returning to Niagara College, but to the community at large.

The sign on the vehicle is simple and to the point: *Driving after Drinking? Think Again.*

Inspector Rick Lundy, of the Niagara Regional Police, said the "very visual program" is just one initiative currently under way to make the roads safer for drivers.

He said speed and alcohol are two of the main contributors in traffic fatalities.

"We want to reinforce the idea for the safety of not only the students but the community," Lundy said. "This helps promote safety at the college



STAFF PHOTO MARK TAYTI

Community partners gathered at Niagara College to promote a campaign aimed at reducing the number of drunk drivers on Niagara's roads. The damaged automobile at the corner of Woodlawn Road and First Avenue is also meant to send a timely message to college students returning to school. From the left are Brigitte Chiki, chair of the Safe Neighbourhoods subcommittee, Coun. Pat Chiochio, of the Safe Communities Initiative, Niagara Regional Police Inspector Rick Lundy, John Sherwin of CAA Niagara, Rick Demers, vice-chair of the Safe Communities Initiative, and David Ferguson, manager of traffic and parking services for the City of Welland.

and gets the school year off on the right foot."

Lundy said driver safety on the

region's roads is something the Niagara Regional Police take very seriously.

John Sherwin, of CAA Niagara, said similar programs are conducted at high schools in May.

Spring is a time in the school year known for both bush parties and proms.

Sherwin said wrecked vehicles have also been strategically placed during the Christmas season to discourage drinking and driving.

The vehicle will be on campus until Friday as a visual reminder during Orientation Week.

Brigitte Chiki, chair of the safe neighbourhoods subcommittee, said the wreck is there to make students aware of the consequences of drinking and driving.

"Not every accident is going to end in a fatality but there can be lifelong consequences."

Chiki said the wreck is just one facet of an overall safe neighbourhoods program being carried out at the college this week.

"Our goal is to make Welland as safe a community as possible."

Coun. Pat Chiochio, who has taken a lead role in the Safe Communities Program, said the only way the city will achieve its goal is through strong partnerships.

"That's how we're going to get the message out," Chiochio said. "We have to work together."