



DeWitt Police Department

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Press Release **UP Care Operation**

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Recently, the DeWitt Police Department working in conjunction with the Union Pacific Railroad and the Iowa Governors Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB), conducted a UP Care Operation to increase awareness and educate the public about how to safely and legally cross at railroad crossings. Although UP Care Operations occur all across the country, this exercise specifically targeted the three railroad crossings in DeWitt and was partially organized in response to recent events involving a school bus at a crossing in DeWitt, Iowa.

The UP Care Operation is an education and enforcement activity where local railroad managers, police and media conduct operations to educate the community about rail safety. The event in DeWitt took place on April 27th from 2-4pm, and consisted of having an officer stationed on a locomotive that traveled back and forth through the community activating crossing signals with the officer on the train communicating any violations to officers in patrol cars stationed nearby. During the event, DeWitt Police Officers and Union Pacific Railroad Police issued 12 written warnings for violations of railroad crossing codes. Written warnings differ from an actual written citation, in that there is no fine associated with a written warning. Written warnings are simply designed to document the contact and allow the officer to educate the motorists about the violation they committed. During the UP Care Operation in DeWitt the most common violation reported was for motorists attempting to cross the tracks before the crossing arms and flashing signals had stopped after the train had crossed. Waiting for the crossing arms and flashing signals to stop after a train passes is important because many times there are two sets of tracks and a train may be travelling on the second set of tracks. In fact during the DeWitt UP Care Operation on two different occasions the crossing arms began to rise with the flashing lights still activated, when another train approached on the second rail. This caused the arms to stop going up and begin to close again for the second oncoming train.

Although the City of DeWitt only has three railroad crossings in town, the DeWitt Police Department will continue to work closely with the Union Pacific Railroad and the GTSB to help provide a safe community and educate the public about railroad safety.