

Choose Your Ride: TUPD combats college student DUIs and accidents

The Troy University Police Department is taking the wheel on an increasing danger to the community: Driving under influence.

With a spike in DUIs and accidents, limited cab services after 5 p.m. and no ride-share services in Troy, the Chose Your Ride program is a 24/7 student service determined to protect students and residents. The service is free to students because it comes out of the police budget.

“The idea behind this is to reduce the number of drinking and driving incidents, to reduce the number of accidents and potentially save the lives of our students,” said Chief George Beaudry.

Choose Your Ride operates as a last resort for students within a 4 mile radius of Troy’s city limits. Regardless of age or influence, they just have to call the non-emergency number and an officer will be there. Students will have to show their ID. Parents will not be notified of the interaction.

“That ride will be from that location to a residential address with no stopping. We’re not going to drive students from one bar to another bar. We’re not going to stop at McDonald’s for dinner. We’re just going to take them straight to the residential address,” Beaudry said.

However, if the student is not alert, concious or physically in control, their health will be evaluated by a medic. For underage students, the police will file a report and send it to the Student Services Division.

“This is not going to be a punishment or a discipline. However, because of their age they are going to have to go through an alchohol education program because we want to prevent underage drinking from being a common and regular occurrence. We also don’t want to leave them stranded if they’re in a position where they just don’t have a ride,” Beaudry said.

Choose Your Ride is roughly three weeks old. No one has turned to the service yet, but Beaudry said parents are providing lots of positive feedback. He said that students approach it with more hesitance, though.

“It’s going to have to be used to prove our intentions are exactly what they are, which is a safe ride home for them,” he said.

Trace Carlisle, Troy University freshman, understands the hesitance but supports the program.

“It’s a good idea and I know they want to make sure no one is stumbling or hurting themselves walking or getting behind the wheel and killing someone or themselves. It’s really just all about being responsible and using your resources when you have nothing else,” Carlisle said.

Carlisle thinks that once someone tries Choose Your Ride and builds the foundation of trust between students and police, students will utilize it more.

Janiyah Brown, a Troy University sophomore, is from LaGrange, Georgia. Without family or hometown friends to rely on in Alabama, she feels safer knowing that she can turn to TUPD for help if the situation warrants it.

“Sometimes things happen that you don’t plan for when you go out, like peer pressure or the DD deciding to drink. For me, if I got a DUI or something like that, my parents couldn’t be here at the drop of a hat to get me out of jail and I would rather have someone here that can help me despite being a little nervous to ride in a cop car,” Brown said.

Outside of Choose Your Ride, TUPD offers many [interactive programs](#) to ensure student safety.