



NHTSA moving forward on implementing impaired driving prevention technology



The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has taken a significant step towards implementing lifesaving vehicle technology by issuing an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) on Advanced Impaired Driving Technology. The technology is anticipated to significantly reduce fatalities related to impaired driving, with a focus on preventing alcohol-impaired fatalities, which reached a nearly 15-year high in December 2021. The initiative coincides with NHTSA's annual Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over impaired-driving campaign during the holiday season, emphasizing responsible driving to prevent accidents and fatalities. The NHTSA urges the public to plan ahead, avoid driving under the influence, and utilize alternative transportation options to ensure road safety.

[READ MORE](#)

Legal News: Computer systems of Kansas courts are gradually being restored following cyberattack



The Kansas court system is gradually restoring its computer systems, including case management, after a cyberattack forced a shutdown two months ago. The attack, described as a "sophisticated foreign cyberattack," prompted the closure of online access to documents and other systems. While case management systems for district courts in 28 counties are expected to be back online soon, online document access for the public will be restored later. Cybersecurity experts suggest it had characteristics of a ransomware attack. The restoration process is ongoing, and full electronic functionality is expected to resume gradually.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

01/13/24 - 01/14/24
WICHITA BRIDAL EXPO
WICHITA, KS

01/20/24
TOPEKA BRIDAL FAIR
TOPEKA, KS

02/02/24
BRYCE LUTY JAZZ FESTIVAL
HUTCHINSON, KS

02/13/24
INTERNATIONAL PANCAKE DAY FEST
LIBERAL, KS

02/20/24
DILLON LECTURE SERIES
HUTCHINSON, KS

What's going on?

Happy new year! This month's featured events are bridal fairs, festivals, and the Dillon Lecture Series. There is plenty to do in Kansas! Click the button below for more events in your area.

[EVENTS NEAR ME](#)



Ride Like MADD - Save the Dates!

Mark your calendars for this year's Ride Like MADD events! Ride Like MADD is a charity poker run that we've held for the last several years. Ride Like MADD raises funds and awareness for Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and honors people who have been hurt and families of those who have been killed by drunk or drugged drivers. We are holding **TWO** Ride Like MADD Poker Runs this year. Our Northeast Kansas event is slated for Saturday, May 4th and our Wichita event is scheduled for Saturday, October 5th. We are looking forward to these wonderful events and hope to see you there!



Matt's Monthly Minute

After an accident, you might be wondering if you need a lawyer, and if you do need a lawyer, how to pick a good one. This month's "monthly minute" covers why you should hire a lawyer and how to choose a good, experienced trial attorney.

First, insurance companies pay you more to settle your case when you have a lawyer and pay much more when you have a good lawyer. Varying statistics show that when a lawyer is involved, the average amount paid for medical treatment and the average amount paid for a settlement is between four and seventeen times higher than when no lawyer is involved.

Insurance companies know that from a practical standpoint a person without a lawyer cannot do anything about a lowball settlement offer. Insurance companies know that a person without a lawyer is forced to take their settlement offer and cannot do anything about it not being fair. Insurance companies also know that the unrepresented person cannot conduct discovery, take depositions to establish a claim, subpoena and question witnesses at trial, and so on.

Second, insurance companies know the difference between good lawyers and bad lawyers, and make different evaluations of your claim based on the lawyer you choose. They know which lawyers are ethical, vigorously advocate for their clients, will not take a lowball offer, and will go to trial if a fair settlement offer is not made.

Insurance companies also know which lawyers will roll over and take whatever offer the insurance company makes. Insurance companies call these people "settlement lawyers." Insurance companies do not respect ambulance chasers who constantly appear in loud advertisements on TV and who do not regularly take cases to jury trial. Think about it. An insurance company has nothing to worry about if they know that your lawyer has a reputation of settling and not going to trial.

Martindale Hubbell, established in 1868, is a prominent resource for attorney information, providing profiles and ratings for over 1,500,000 lawyers and law firms globally. Lawyers are assessed in two key areas: legal ability and ethics, represented by the letters AV, BV or CV. A, B, or C ratings align with school-grade equivalents, while the V rating denotes adherence to very high ethical standards. Lawyers with an "AV" rating are considered the best-of-the-best, and there are very few in the entire state of Kansas. The absence of a rating may signify factors such as limited practice duration, below C grade level for legal ability, or ethical standards below par.

Another valuable resource for comprehensive lawyer ratings is [www.avvo.com](#). AVVO relies on reviews from lawyers and clients, issuing a red "ATTENTION" warning for attorneys disciplined by state regulatory agencies. A lawyer's reputation influences the client's claim assessment by insurance companies and judgments from judges or juries. Choosing a lawyer known for integrity and legal excellence enhances the client's credibility in these evaluations, compared to selecting a lawyer associated with advertising clichés or settlement-focused practices.

The third compelling reason to hire a lawyer for a serious injury is their ability to enhance the case's value by identifying all potential parties, claims, and insurance coverage. For instance, in a motor vehicle accident involving a drunk driver rear-ending you, a skilled lawyer can recognize additional claims against the serving bar, the insurer and owner of the vehicle, the car manufacturer for product defects, and even a medical provider for medical errors. Without such legal expertise, identifying and pursuing these potential claims would likely be challenging.

Fourth, an experienced lawyer will be able to collect and present the evidence which is necessary to win your case. The ambulance chaser will collect the medical records and bills. Depending on the requirements of your case, the good experienced trial lawyer will collect the records and bills and will also get reports from doctors about your injuries and anticipated future medical needs, evidence from your employer and a vocational expert about past and future lost income, may retain an expert to reconstruct a collision to prove fault, may retain experts to establish a product defect, etcetera.

By getting all of this evidence and presenting it to the responsible parties and their insurers early on in the case, the experienced lawyer shows those who are responsible that the lawyer has everything that is necessary to win at trial. By being ready for trial the insurance company is much more likely to make a fair settlement. We always tell clients to hope for the best but plan for the worst. Good experienced lawyers will obtain the evidence needed to win at trial so that they can get the case settled without having to go to trial.

Fifth, experienced trial attorneys can advocate for you. They have the ability to analyze the opposition's evidence which is against you, identify and demonstrate flaws in their evidence, and present evidence to support your claims and prove the extent of your damages. This is why some lawyers consistently win cases at trial and obtain significant settlements for their clients, and is why "settlement lawyers" do not. Insurance companies evaluating your claim know the difference.

The long and short of it is that the best cases to handle without a lawyer are minor injury cases with minimal medical treatment and bills, and with no permanent injury or damage. This might be cases worth less than \$5,000.00 where you have plenty of time to fall back and get an attorney if things go south.

But if you have a significant injury, then an experienced, ethical lawyer is absolutely necessary. It is safe to say that the value of a good lawyer increases exponentially with the severity of your injuries and losses.

- Matthew L. Bretz

Community News

Kansas license plate design winner announced



Kansas Governor Laura Kelly has announced the design for the state's new license plate, chosen by public vote. The design features the Kansas Statehouse dome on a cutout of the state against a yellow, white, and blue gradient background, securing 53% of the 270,000 votes cast. Read more [here](#).

Kansas school district revises policy after Native American boy is forced to cut his hair



Girard USD 248 has changed its hair length policy after an 8-year-old Native American boy was forced to cut his hair. The policy, requiring short hair for boys, was removed during a school board meeting following criticism from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The ACLU argued that the policy violated religious freedom and reinforced gender norms. Read more [here](#).

Wichita police collaborate with the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office to establish ALERT



The Wichita Police Department and Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office have launched ALERT, a collaborative initiative for independent investigators to handle officer-involved critical incidents, enhancing transparency and investigative standards. ALERT comprises around 20 trained detectives and operates independently of the involved agencies, reducing reliance on the Kansas Bureau of Investigation in specific cases. Read more [here](#).

December Drawaway Winners



Christmas Lights Giveaway
Winners: Kylie Pitts & John-Bonnie Avila
Kylie won 4 tickets to the Wild Lights at the Sedgwick County Zoo and Bonnie won 4 tickets to the Illuminations at Botanica as well as 4 specially made coffee cups from Bretz Injury Law!



Christmas Light Limo Tour Giveaway
Winner: Dustin MacArthur
Dustin won a Christmas light limo tour for 8-10 people in Wichita! The prize also included a basket of treats and goodies to enjoy during the tour!

Giveaways are posted Mondays on the Bretz Injury Law Facebook page. Visit www.facebook.com/bretzinjurylaw to enter for your chance to win!

Featured Recipe: Chocolate Salted Caramel Bars

Ingredients:

- 2 cups butter, softened
- 1-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 14 ounces caramels
- 1/3 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 12 ounces dark chocolate chips

Directions:

Preheat oven to 325°. Beat butter, sugars and vanilla until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Gradually beat in flour, mixing well. Press 3 cups of dough onto bottom of a greased 13x9-in. pan. Bake until set, 20-22 minutes.



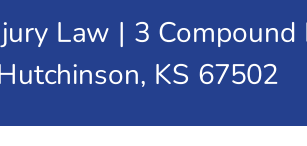
Cool 10 minutes on a wire rack. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, melt caramels with cream over low heat until smooth. Pour over crust. Sprinkle with salt, then chocolate chips. Drop remaining dough by teaspoonfuls over top. Bake until light golden brown, 30-35 minutes longer. Cool completely on a wire rack.

For more delicious winter dessert recipes, click [here](#).

[Full Recipe](#)



Questions? Email the editor at bretzinjurylaw.com.



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