

Police go-kart used as teaching tool for teen drivers

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By [Anna Lee](#) | Staff Writer

Three Upstate police departments have replaced their beer goggles with a new teaching tool they hope will curb the number of teen drivers who have died as a result of drunken driving.

The tool comes in the form of a go-kart with controls that can simulate the effects of drugs and alcohol on a motorist's driving skills, and it's the first one being used in the state, said Greer Police Chief Dan Reynolds.

"We can talk about impaired driving and what it's like and show videos, but this gives a person that actual experience so they know what it's like to drive impaired," Reynolds said.

The city has partnered with the towns of Lyman and Duncan to purchase the \$18,000 Simulated Impaired Driving Experience (SIDNE) vehicle by pooling together forfeiture money from all three departments.

The cost also included training for six instructors, who were on hand during a demonstration Tuesday at Victor Gym.

Duncan Police Chief Ryan Cothran said SIDNE is more effective than the fatal vision goggles that are normally used with golf carts to mimic intoxication, and it's more interactive for students.

"It's as close as you can get without actually being impaired," Cothran said.

The go-kart will be offered to any who request it, including Alive at 25 programs, church groups, and citizen police academies, Reynolds said.

The teaching vehicle will also be used during the holidays and before prom season at area high schools.

Alive at 25 reported that 172 young drivers were killed in vehicle collisions around the state last year, and nearly one-fourth of the fatal accidents were alcohol related.

"We do have a number of young people who have died in our communities as a result of impaired driving, not including using cell phones or texting and doing other things, and hopefully with this they can understand that it takes all your attention to drive a vehicle," Reynolds said.