



Sergeant Robert Davis of the Natick Police Department, stands in one of several local crosswalks sporting the latest in pedestrian safety technology-pedestrian warning cones.

Natick Continues to Tackle Traffic Safety

The number of automobile crashes and personal injury in the town of Natick last year fell eight percent from the year before. But despite the steady decrease, Sgt. Robert Davis is not satisfied.

Although the Department has made significant improvements in traffic safety efforts in recent years, until the incidents no longer occur, Sgt. Davis will continue to fight a battle to ensure safe streets within his community.

"Three major routes intersect Natick," said Sgt. Davis. "So, in that respect, it is probably unrealistic to think that crashes will never occur. But that doesn't mean we can't do everything we can to limit

those occurrences as much as possible."

It has been one year since AAA honored Natick with a national citation for superior efforts in community traffic safety. The community was lauded for no pedestrian fatalities during 1998. The town maintained that record in 1999.

Natick is among the municipalities seeking recognition through the Community Traffic Safety program again this year. Although the town did not achieve its goal of a 10 percent reduction in traffic crashes for 1999, at eight percent, the reduction in crashes is certainly commendable.

As a means of addressing traffic safety in the community, officials have directed patrols in high crash locations looking for specific motor vehicle violations which have been determined to be significant factors in previous crashes; motorists education using an electronic visual speed sign board, traffic safety citation folder with traffic facts, child safety checkpoints, and child seat installations; and implementation of saturated OUI/Speed patrols.

Last year, Natick also became the first community in the nation installing pedestrian warning cones in several high-traffic crosswalks in town. The cones, which stand some 12 inches high, have been strategically placed along the outer perimeters of

the crosswalk, allowing safety to a pedestrian by preventing motorists from attempting to drive around other vehicles which have stopped for individuals attempting to cross the road.

"There has been a significant decrease in any incidents occurring within the crosswalks where the cones are stationed," said Sgt. Davis. "The goals we have set for the installation of the cones has already been met."

The cones were removed during the winter months and were not reinstalled until after the Boston Marathon, which passed through the center of Natick on April 17. According to Sgt. Davis, the department does have plans to install more cones throughout the community as the year progresses.

Despite the department's best efforts, Sgt. Davis said he realizes all traffic-related incidents occurring in his community will never be eliminated.

"But, if we continue to work together with the town and try our best to educate the people who live here, Natick will be the safest community it can be," he said.

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Vacation Costs Remain Unchanged in 2000

Warmer temperatures and school vacation make summer the most logical time to embark on a family vacation. If you're planning to take advantage of the remaining summer months, you must also take into account the costs you will incur while on your family adventure.

For the fourth time in 50 years, the average cost of lodging and meals has not increased from the previous year, according to Carl Richardson, Director of Auto Travel for AAA Southern New England.



The annual vacation cost survey shows that a family of two adults and two children can expect to pay an average of \$213 per day for food and lodging. Lodging rates will average \$108 per night, down \$2 from last year, while meals will cost \$105, up \$2.

Staying at home may not be the most practical decision in terms of saving money on your vacation. The states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts have been identified as the second and fourth most expensive vacation states, respectively. That's up from the designation of eight and nine last year. Lodging and meals in Rhode Island are estimated at \$271 daily, and \$261 per day in Massachusetts.

Hawaii remains the most expensive vacation state at \$443 per day. North Dakota is the least expensive at \$164.

AAA recommends vacationers traveling by car should budget \$12.20 for gasoline every 100 miles, based on an average price of \$1.34 per gallon and a vehicle traveling 23 miles per gallon. It is also important for families to budget money for entertainment, souvenirs, and unexpected expenses.

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*Southern New England Public Affairs
Assistant Allison Chown fulfills a
childhood dream as she takes a ride
atop Ruthie, with the help of Zoo
Elephant Trainer Bill Sampson.*

Time Heals All Wounds

Buttonwood Zoo prepares to Reopen in New Bedford

Its presence in the New England seaside city helped create a name for New Bedford. And, just as the majestic mill buildings are evidence of the humble beginnings of the Industrial Revolution, so, too, was Buttonwood Park and Zoo evidence of a simpler time of life in southeastern Massachusetts.

What child didn't pay a visit to the Whaling City's zoo and say hello to Emily the Elephant, quite possibly among the more famous ladies of the area, an icon in her own right.

But time was not kind to the park, or the zoo. Hard economic conditions, neglect, and disrepair slowly

contributed to the transformation of the once beautiful family gathering place into little more than an eyesore. Something needed to be done.

This summer will mark the emergence of Buttonwood Park and Zoo from a dark cocoon in which it has been hidden for the past decade. Through the vision of the Friends of Buttonwood Park and Zoo, the hard work of countless volunteers, and the willingness of local students to continue the tradition, Buttonwood Park and Zoo are ready to reintroduce themselves to southeastern Massachusetts once again.

"We always knew we had something here, something that is really special," said Hank Rudin, Executive Assistant with the Buttonwood Park Zoological Society, and among those spearheading the revitalization. "It was a point of coming together, working together and making the Zoo great, again."

The renovation, once complete, will cost about \$10.5 million, much of which has been raised through fundraising efforts by the Friends.

It is hailed as the "Berkshires to the Sea." This 10-acre gem is home to a number of animals, fowl, fish, and amphibians common to the northeast. Black bear, cougars, otters, and Emily the Elephant are ready to greet visitors who seize the opportunity to return to the Zoo to embark on a New England safari.

The region's agriculture comes to life in the Zoo's new Domestic Animals Complex, constructed with the assistance of students from the New Bedford Vocational Technical High School. Here visitors will see oxen, draft horses, a working sheep dog and other farm yard favorites.

In the new Aquatics Building, glass walls will allow visitors to walk along an icy trout stream while observing upland wildlife on a wooded hillside. Take a close look at the coast where fresh water

turns to salt water in a special exhibit featuring one of the Bay State's endangered species, a Diamondback Terrapin turtle.

Guests may also examine an exciting collection of salt water creatures living in a salt marsh tidal pool, and explore Buzzards Bay in a 10,000 gallon marine habitat featuring crustaceans, fish, and other animals common to this area.

Buttonwood Zoo has launched an effort to save and preserve many of America's endangered species and has secured piping plovers, bald eagles, Plymouth red-belly turtles, and other animals, which can now call the sanctuary of Buttonwood Zoo home.

Because every modern zoo is a center for wildlife conservation, the new Buttonwood Park Zoo includes a Wildlife Education Center.

WHEN YOU GO:

Buttonwood Park Zoo is open daily 10 a.m.-5 p.m. To get there, take I-195 West to exit 13A onto Route 140 South. Cross Route 6 and continue south on Brownell Avenue. Turn left onto Hawthorn Street, and left into the Zoo.

Two classrooms open into an auditorium and these, coupled with a lobby, public dining area, and restrooms, enhance the service center. Zoo educators will work in cooperation with local teachers to create an unique learning environment.

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