



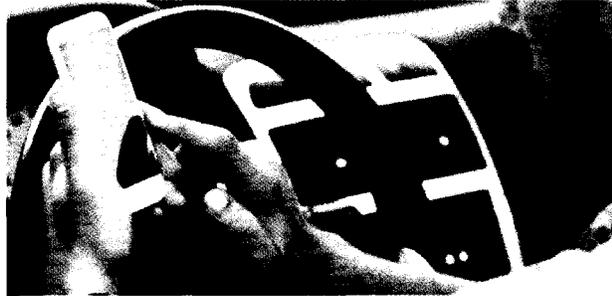
Welcome to Woodlands Online

New phone apps designed to prevent phone usage while driving

Xpress Lube urges drivers to make a pledge.

by WOL Staff
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THE WOODLANDS, Texas—Back to school traffic presents a big enough challenge without holding a phone with one hand leaving just the other to navigate an automobile in heavy traffic. Xpress Lube is concerned enough for their customers and residents of the community that they've proposed their own challenge.



Jeff Early, owner of three Xpress Lube locations in The Woodlands, is distributing information on three phone apps designed to prevent phone usage while driving, and encouraging drivers to take the pledge not to drive and use their phone.

"We're concerned about the safety of our customers," Early said. "We see to the welfare of their cars, but we're concerned about their welfare too."

Three apps are available to block incoming messages, and will even send return messages to alert the sender that the driver is not available.

The Phone Guard app automatically turns on when the vehicle exceeds 10 miles per hour on the speedometer, blocking the phone's keypad. The driver is unable to read or answer texts. A response is automatically dispatched to the sender with a message that you're driving and unable to respond to the text. The message can be customized, and the app is free.

Drivesafely will read aloud incoming emails, text messages, Facebook chats, and Twitter tweets. The driver can decide which messages are important and responsibly return them by pulling off the road. Calls not returned are sent a customizable message, and likewise, this app is free.

The Text Toggle is a manually activated app which blocks all phone calls, emails, and text messages. When the app is turned off, the messages are received. Like the previous two apps, an automated response is sent. This app could not be located on the iPhone app store, nor could information about it be located on Google, so it's uncertain whether this app is easily accessible and free.

It's this concern for the community that differentiates Xpress Lube so much so that the organization received the Small Business Administration's Small Business of the Year award in Montgomery County in 2009.

Xpress Lube has thrown down the challenge to take the pledge not to text and drive - the real challenge will be convincing drivers to use the apps to help people stand behind this pledge.