Spring is upon us and with the warmer weather our attention often turns to getting outdoors for some physical activity and exercise. When considering places to go for a walk or run in Trent Woods, citizens may choose to use the roads or streets simply because they are convenient and easily accessible to them. As a result, our roads may become busy with pedestrian traffic. When deciding to take to the road for exercise there are a number of safety and legal factors to consider, both for pedestrians and motorists. In this article we will be sharing some important information regarding pedestrians and motorists in North Carolina.

 The safety of the pedestrian is always of extreme importance. Statistics indicate that more than 2000 pedestrians are injured or killed each year by vehicles. These are alarming numbers but they are numbers that can be reduced when both pedestrians and motorist are cautious and responsible. Because it is perfectly legal for both pedestrians and motorist to use and enjoy our roadways North Carolina has enacted several laws pertaining to the safe use of public roads. People often believe that because they are walking or running motorists must yield to them, but this is not always the case. Therefore, you should be familiar with the dos and don’ts before taking to the road. Here are some key points to remember. Under North Carolina law, pedestrians have the right of way at all intersections and driveways but must yield to motorists when crossing at any place other than a marked crosswalk. Pedestrians must act responsibly, using pedestrian signals where they are available. When crossing the road at any other point than a marked or unmarked crosswalk or when walking along or upon a highway, a pedestrian has a statutory duty to yield the right of way to all vehicles on the roadway. It is the duty of pedestrians to look before starting across a highway, and in the exercise of reasonable care for their own safety, to keep a timely lookout for approaching motor vehicle traffic. On roadways where there is no sidewalk, pedestrians should always walk facing traffic. Also, pedestrians must stay to the extreme left side or on the shoulder when practicable while walking or running facing traffic.

In addition to the aforementioned laws, there are some pedestrian safety tips to remember to protect you and reduce the possibility of being struck by a vehicle. Even though every driver of a vehicle shall exercise due care to avoid colliding with pedestrians upon the roadway, you should never assume that a motorist will see you or even take care to avoid you. When walking or running you should look for cars in all directions before crossing the street. Always be aware of your surroundings. Wear bright clothing to increase your chances of being seen by motorist, especially in low light conditions. Never dart out into traffic or challenge a motorist by walking or running into traffic. If you are out on the road at night as a pedestrian stay in well-lit areas, carry a flashlight, and wear reflective clothing or a safety vest. Walk on the shoulder and away from travel lanes when possible. Be safe and responsible!

Lastly, if you enjoy walking or running outdoors then I am happy to inform you that the Town of Trent Woods is constructing Cottle Park for this very purpose. This new addition in Town will have a paved and lighted walking track that will be easily accessible and available to the public. Walking tracks are a great alternative to using roadways for exercise and are intended to provide a safe environment for those who want to get outside and exercise. In the interest of your safety, I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this alternative to walking on the roadway and I hope to see you out there!

-Tony Lee, Police Chief

Trent Woods Police

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