Drunk Driving Problems Can Be Curbed Locally

BY NANNETTE RUSSELL
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Louisiana’s drunk driver problem might be curbed with mandatory sentencing penalties, raising the legal drinking age and educating the public, said Candy Lightner, organizer of Mothers Against Drunk Driving Wednesday.

Mrs. Lightner of Sacramento, Calif., told reporters and local officials at a press conference that she would also encourage a parish task force to work on the problem.

Visiting Lafayette at the invitation of the Acadiana Safety Association, Mrs. Lightner also spoke at the ASA’s annual banquet Wednesday night.

Mrs. Lightner organized MADD in 1969 only a few days after her daughter was killed by a repeat offender drunk driver. Since then the group has focused in 1 states and been instrumental in passing legislation to strengthen drunk driving laws.

“Drunk driving hasn’t been treated as a crime. We’ve got to provide punishment for these people,” Mrs. Lightner said. “It shouldn’t take the loss of a loved one to get people involved.”

State Road High

Louisiana has an increasingly serious drunk driving rate. Rep. Dave Davis, a executive director, called drunk driving the most pressing issue here and said to that 78 percent of all fatalities in Acadiana are alcohol-related. So far this month drinking while intoxicated citations have been issued by State Police Troop Z.

Mrs. Lightner commended Gov. Dave Treen’s move Tuesday to appoint a 15-member task force to look into the problem.

“I urge him to appoint MADD members to that task force,” she said. “It’s the encouragement parish task forces because they each community...”

“I don’t know if he has a daughter,” Mrs. Lightner said she also has discussed with President Reagan establishing a Blue Ribbon Commission, composed of various individuals throughout the nation.

“Any plan will not set up guidelines in just legislation, but administrative and educational guidelines,” Mrs. Lightner said. “I’ve been told by the White House that the president will appoint this task force by the end of January.

Although Mrs. Lightner is pleased with Reagon’s move, she appeared frustrated with local officials. She told ASA members, attending the banquet that she was discouraged by a lack of follow-through on “drunk drivers.”

A particular judge kept bringing up reasons why he couldn’t handle the cases (about drunk drivers),” she is a solution-oriented person and I left there depressed,” Mrs. Lightner said. “It reminds me of the first time we tried to do something about it in California. Everybody admits there’s a problem, but nothing’s being done as a solution.

Problems Evident

Many of the problems Mrs. Lightner encountered, such as resistance in legisla-

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