

BILLBOARDS REMIND DRIVERS OF WHITE CANE LAW

Five outdoor billboards in the Cleveland area are posted as a reminder to drivers to heed the White Cane Law. The billboards read: "Respect the White Cane Law. The blind have the right of way. If you don't, it's a crime." The Cleveland Sight Center logo is also on the billboard, along with the name of State Representative Timothy J. DeGeeter, 15th House District, and the name of the Sight Center's Low Vision Group at the Parma Senior Center.

The billboards are located at East 55th Street near Ensign Road, on Fairhill Boulevard, at West 130th & Lorain Avenue, near the intersection of Pearl Road and State Road, and on the West Shoreway at East 58th Street.

The billboard space was generously donated by Clear Channel, an outdoor advertising company. After reading an article in the Sun newspaper about a Cleveland Sight Center client who had nearly been hit by a car while using her white cane and attempting to cross a street, a person who works for Clear Channel and knows the person who was nearly hit, asked if the outdoor advertising company could help. At the same time, State Representative Timothy J. DeGeeter had also been notified and he, himself, paid a visit to the woman at a meeting of the Sight Center's Low Vision Group in Parma. DeGeeter introduced a resolution to Parma City Council to remind motorists about the law. Furthermore, in partnership with his office, Clear Channel and Cleveland Sight Center, the billboard message was created, and the billboards are now up.

It was back in the late 1930s that the Lions Clubs – well known for their support of causes for people who are visually impaired or blind – advocated for the passage of the first White Cane law. In effect, the law states that any person using a white cane has the right of way.

"If there is an accident, the law is very clear on negligence," says Steve Albro, Cleveland Sight Center mobility instructor. "The motorist wouldn't have a leg to stand on."

