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Sheriff, cited for speeding, vows to slow

By Tom Beal

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Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik promises he'll obey the speed limit after being ticketed for speeding on South Kino Parkway a couple of weeks back.

Dupnik said he was driving from one meeting to another on Feb. 1, heading to his office on East Benson Highway just off Kino, when an unmarked Tucson police car pulled him over.

Dupnik said that, contrary to what some may think, "there is not a professional courtesy" that keeps cops from getting tickets. He didn't mention that he was the sheriff to the officer who stopped him, he said.

"I have no idea whether (the policeman) knew who I was or not," Dupnik said.

Dupnik was cited for doing 55 mph in a 40-mph zone.

Dupnik pleaded guilty by mail and paid a \$181 fine to Tucson City Court. He did not choose the option of traffic school. "I don't think the 2 points will affect my insurance," he said.

"The worst part of the whole thing is the woodshed incident that I had to undergo when I went home and told my wife."

The sheriff was an easy traffic stop, according to Tucson Police Sgt. Mark Robinson, who supervises the South Side motorcycle police.

Robinson said the officer who stopped Dupnik was in one of the department's unmarked "road rage" cars, and used a laser gun to determine Dupnik's speed. Robinson said "road rage" officers follow cars they clock over the speed limit and watch for lane-changing and other signs of "aggressive driving." In the sheriff's case, "it was just a speeding situation," Robinson said.

He complimented Dupnik for not arguing the ticket.

"God bless Clarence, he took it like a man," said Robinson.

Robinson said Dupnik was caught on a stretch of the parkway that is divided by a median and has three lanes in each direction. It seems to attract speeders, he said.

But residential streets feed into it, Robinson said.

"It's tough getting across six lanes and people just fly through there at 50 to 60 mph. Those are interstate speeds and this is not an interstate highway," he said.

"Speeding is never a good thing," Dupnik said.

"I promised my wife and I promise myself and everyone who reads your article that I will obey the speed limit."

• Contact reporter Tom Beal at 573-4158 or tbeal@azstarnet.com.

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