



## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SAMHSA SURVEY: IMPAIRED DRIVING PREVALENT IN MINNESOTA**

*Enhanced DWI Enforcement Cited for State's Low Alcohol-Related Fatality Rates*

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ST. PAUL — State traffic safety officials are underscoring the dangers of impaired driving following a survey from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration that identifies Minnesota among the leading states for impaired driving.

“Impaired driving is one of the most common crimes committed in Minnesota and remains a serious threat to the safety of our roads,” says Cheri Marti, director of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety. “Minnesota must take impaired driving seriously and make a habit of planning for safe and sober rides.”

DPS adds that while the survey indicates high levels of impaired driving, enhanced DWI enforcement campaigns have resulted in record-high DWI arrest totals — nearly 42,000 motorists were booked for DWI in 2006. Officials say heightened DWI enforcement activity has been a factor in the state recording one of the nation’s lowest alcohol-related fatality crash rates. Around 30 percent of the state’s annual traffic deaths are alcohol-related, compared to around 40 percent nationwide.

“Minnesota law enforcement agencies recognize impaired driving as a major safety issue in their communities and put DWI enforcement as a top priority,” says Marti, referencing that one in three fatal traffic crashes involve an impaired driver. She says Minnesota will continue DWI enforcement and education efforts to prevent these needless traffic fatalities and injuries. “Law enforcement can’t do it alone; we are calling on every citizen to be our partner in this effort.”

Each year in Minnesota, about 200 motorists are killed in alcohol-related crashes.

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