



NEWS RELEASE

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December 2, 2008

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STATE UNWRAPS DECEMBER-LONG DWI CRACKDOWN

13 Deadliest Counties for Impaired Driving Announced

ST. PAUL — More than one-half million Minnesotans have a DWI on record, a tally that will unfortunately increase during a December-long, statewide DWI enforcement campaign. Around 400 Minnesota law enforcement agencies will enhance patrols during the holiday season. Extra DWI enforcement efforts will also continue throughout 2009 in the state’s 13 deadliest counties for impaired driving. The efforts are coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS). December is one of the deadliest months of the year for impaired driving in Minnesota. In the last three Decembers, 2005–2007, 41 motorists were killed in alcohol-related crashes and another 10,553 were arrested for DWI. During this entire three-year period, alcohol-related crashes accounted for 553 traffic deaths and 1,253 serious injuries — 117,764 motorists were arrested for DWI.

“There is no greater gift to Minnesotans than putting impaired drivers in jail,” says Michael Campion, DPS commissioner. “DWI enforcement is necessary to prevent needless tragedies.”

Officers will include seat belt enforcement during the effort. Each year, 70 percent of the impaired drivers and their passengers killed in alcohol-related crashes are not buckled up.

DPS announced the state’s 13 deadliest counties for impaired driving that accounted for nearly half of the state’s alcohol-related deaths (272) and serious injuries (663) during 2005–2007. The targeted counties are selected based on the total number of alcohol-related deaths and serious injuries over a three-year period. In 2009, Operation NightCAP (nighttime concentrated alcohol patrols) will direct enforcement in the counties of: Anoka, Blue Earth, Crow Wing, Dakota, Hennepin, Itasca, Ramsey, Rice, St. Louis, Sherburne, Stearns, Washington and Wright. There were 290 NightCAP enforcement efforts in 2008 resulting in more than 3,000 DWI arrests — one arrest per 17 traffic stops.

The statewide DWI enforcement campaign will be supported by a paid media campaign. The enforcement is a component of the state’s cornerstone traffic safety initiative, *Toward Zero Deaths (TZD)*. TZD focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — enhanced enforcement, engineering improvements, education and effective emergency trauma response.

Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.

Editor’s note: Email Nathan.bowie@state.mn.us or Lisa.husom@state.mn.us for: electronic graphic of the 13 counties; maps plotting fatal alcohol-related crashes; and county-specific fact sheets.

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