



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 16, 2008

**CONTACT:**

Nathan Bowie, 651-201-7571

Lisa Husom, 651-201-7570

## **GIVE THE GIFT OF A SAFE LIFT WITH A DESIGNATED DRIVER GIFT CARD**

*State Recommends Cards as an "Early Gift" in Advance of Historically Busy DWI Weekend*

ST. PAUL — Minnesotans, shop no more: *Designated Driver Gift Cards* are now available. The gift cards, distributed by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS), are supporting a statewide, December-long DWI enforcement campaign. The cards serve as an informal contract for Minnesotans to give the gift of a safe lift so that special someone can avoid a holly-jolly night in jail. *Designated Driver Gift Cards* can also be sent electronically at [www.minnesotasafeandsober.org](http://www.minnesotasafeandsober.org).

DPS and its law enforcement partners, Minnesota Beer Wholesalers Association, Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association, and the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association, will distribute the cards statewide to liquor stores, bars and other retailers. Other venues, such as First Avenue and the Metrodome will display the cards at concerts and sporting events.

"These gift cards can be so effective because they set in place a firm plan for a safe and sober ride," says Cheri Marti, director of the DPS Office of Traffic Safety. "In many cases, lacking a plan is why many people end up behind the wheel after drinking."

Marti adds that volunteering and assigning designated drivers are especially important now as holiday parties and other festivities ramp up. The weekend prior to Christmas is historically one of the biggest times of the year for DWI arrests, second only to St. Patrick's Day.

*Designated Driver Gift Card*-givers agree to "merrily offer their designated driver services" to the recipient on a given date. When sent online, recipients are asked to return the favor of a safe ride.

Around 400 Minnesota law enforcement agencies are enhancing patrols during the holiday season. 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. Each year in Minnesota, alcohol-related crashes account for around 200 deaths while nearly 40,000 motorists are arrested for DWI.



- Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement
- Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
- Driver and Vehicle Services
- Emergency Communication Networks
- Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Minnesota State Patrol
- Office of Communications
- Office of Justice Programs
- Office of Traffic Safety
- State Fire Marshal