



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2007

CONTACT:

Dennis Smith, 651-201-7569

Nathan Bowie, 651-201-7571

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES *IMPAIRED DRIVING FACTS* REPORT

Report Provides DWI Arrests, Conviction Rates and Fatalities by County

Alcohol
and Gambling
Enforcement

ARMER/911
Program

Bureau of
Criminal
Apprehension

Driver
and Vehicle
Services

Homeland
Security and
Emergency
Management

Minnesota
State Patrol

Office of
Communications

Office of
Justice Programs

Office of
Traffic Safety

State Fire Marshal
and
Pipeline Safety

ST. PAUL — A detailed summary of impaired driving in Minnesota shows alcohol-related traffic deaths cost the state more than \$310 million and 37,002 motorists were arrested for impaired driving. Persons ages 20–29 represented 44 percent of the arrests. The report, *Minnesota Motor Vehicle Impaired Driving Facts 2005*, is compiled annually by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety.

Nationally, alcohol-related deaths were almost unchanged from 2004 to 2005: 16,919 in 2004 and 16,885 in 2005. However, in Minnesota alcohol-related deaths increased by 11 percent from 177 in 2004 to 197 in 2005.

For the five-year period 2001–2005, Minnesota averaged 216 alcohol-related traffic deaths and 34,033 impaired driving arrests annually. In 2005, males accounted for 76 percent of all DWIs. Most violators were first-time offenders, yet almost 14,500 had two or more DWIs on record. The average alcohol concentration among first-time offenders was 0.157 (the current legal limit of 0.08 became effective Aug. 1, 2005). Second or subsequent violators averaged 0.166 in 2005.

In all, 462,425 — or one in eight Minnesotans — have a DWI on their record. OTS reports that about 40 percent of those who incur one violation will incur a second DWI; one in 20 Minnesotans with a driving record have two or more DWIs.

The report shows that 83 percent of impaired driving incidents on record included a criminal conviction for driving while impaired by alcohol or drugs. Nearly half of the DWI arrests were made on Saturdays and Sundays.

Impaired Driving Facts reports the Twin Cities' metro area and the 80-county greater Minnesota each accounted for about one-half of all 2005 DWI arrests. Yet two-thirds of alcohol-related traffic deaths occurred outside the Twin Cities' metro. In the seven-county metro in 2005, there were 164 traffic deaths and 49 (30 percent) were alcohol-related, whereas in 80-county greater Minnesota there were 395 total traffic deaths, of which 148 (37 percent) were impaired driving-related.

To view *Impaired Driving Facts* online, visit www.dps.state.mn.us/ots.

###