



NEWS RELEASE

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Alcohol
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NIGHTCAP TO TARGET IMPAIRED DRIVING IN TWIN CITIES AREA ALL SUMMER LONG

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota Department of Public Safety today announced a major impaired driving crackdown to be conducted throughout the summer in Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin and Ramsey counties — the top four counties in the metro for impaired driving deaths. In the last three years, these counties have accounted for about one-quarter of the state's alcohol-related traffic deaths and 40 percent of Minnesota's DWI arrests.

Officers from 23 law enforcement agencies will dedicate 4,700 hours of patrol time specifically to target impaired driving through the state's Operation NightCAP (nighttime concentrated alcohol patrol) program. The enhanced enforcement effort is strategically launched to attack impaired driving behavior during the summertime, the state's deadliest period on roadways.

"These counties carry the brunt of alcohol-related traffic deaths in the state," says Col. Mark Dunaski, chief of the Minnesota State Patrol. "High-visibility patrols aim to not only prevent unnecessary tragedies but serve as a cue for those celebrating the summer to plan for a safe ride home."

During 2004–2006 in Minnesota, there were 540 alcohol-related traffic deaths. Nearly 24 percent (129) of these deaths occurred in Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin and Ramsey counties. More than 46,000 DWI arrests were made in these four counties during the same period — nearly 41 percent of all statewide DWI arrests made during that time.

Last year, a similar NightCAP effort targeted Hennepin and Ramsey counties that resulted in 1,050 DWI arrests, more than 7,400 citations for traffic- and equipment-related offenses, and more than 12,300 vehicle stops.

NightCAP is funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. The program combines city, county and state law enforcement agencies to saturate roadways where impaired driving is likely.

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