



NEWS RELEASE

Christine M. Krueger, director of Communications

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 5, 2007

CONTACT:

Nathan Bowie, 651-201-7571

Dennis Smith, 651-201-7569

MINNESOTA — AND 15 DEADLIEST IMPAIRED-DRIVING COUNTIES — TO FACE ENHANCED DWI PATROLS IN DECEMBER

ST. PAUL — More than 400 Minnesota law enforcement agencies will give the gift of safer roads to Minnesotans during a statewide, December-long impaired driving enforcement effort. Enhanced patrols also will be conducted in the 15 deadliest impaired-driving counties — which will be the focus of Operation NightCAP (night-time concentrated alcohol patrols) through 2008. The efforts are coordinated by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety and include local police, county sheriffs and the State Patrol.

The statewide effort this month will focus on popular impaired driving periods — holiday season weekends are among the busiest DWI nights of the year. A similar December DWI enforcement in 2006 netted 3,361 DWI arrests. Last December, alcohol-related crashes killed 18 motorists — nearly 40 percent of all traffic deaths for the month. Only July (23) and May (19) were deadlier impaired driving months. More than one half-million Minnesotans have a DWI on record.

The 15 deadliest counties accounted for more than half of the state's alcohol-related deaths (272) and serious injuries (762) during 2004–2006: Anoka, Beltrami, Blue Earth, Cass, Crow Wing, Dakota, Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, Rice, St. Louis, Sherburne, Stearns, Washington and Wright. New to the list are Beltrami, Cass, Olmsted and Rice counties. Itasca and Scott counties made the list in 2007, but were removed after reporting a decrease in alcohol-related crashes. Counties are selected by the combination of alcohol-related deaths and serious injuries. There were 251 NightCAP enforcement efforts last year resulting in 2,541 DWI arrests.

“A DWI is serious crime, and state, county and city officers are serious about taking impaired drivers off the road,” says Col. Mark Dunaski, chief of the State Patrol. “Have a plan for a sober ride, or make plans to face life-changing consequences.”

DWI enforcement efforts are components of Minnesota's Toward Zero Deaths initiative, which encourages local traffic safety stakeholders to address traffic issues through enforcement, engineering, education and emergency trauma care response.

Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.

Editor's note: Email Nathan.bowie@state.mn.us for: electronic graphic of the 15 counties; 15 county maps plotting fatal alcohol-related crashes; Minnesota county-specific fact sheets; and the full county list of deadliest impaired driving counties.

444 Cedar Street, Suite 155 • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-5155 • www.dps.state.mn.us

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