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WEATHER DAMPENS LOCAL **JULY 4TH SOBERRIDE EFFORT**

PROGRAM STILL SUCCEEDS IN REMOVING WOULD-BE DRUNK DRIVER EVERY FOUR-AND-A-HALF MINUTES OFF OF GREATER WASHINGTON'S ROADWAYS LAST NIGHT

Washington, DC, July 5 – This weekend's weather not only dampened many of last night's local firework displays but so too the Washington-metropolitan area's July 4th *SoberRide* program.

The local *SoberRide* program provided 166 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers this Independence Day – far below the more than 300 average riders for this annual Independence Day, anti-drunk driving effort.*

Provided by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the Independence Day *SoberRide* program began on Independence Day (yesterday, Friday, July 4th) at 4:00 pm and continued until 4:00 am today as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

“Even with last night's below average ridership and for its hours of operation this July 4th, SoberRide proved successful in removing a would-be drunk driver every four-and-a-half minutes from Greater Washington's roadways,” said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's President.

During this 12-hour period, area residents celebrating with alcohol could call the toll-free *SoberRide* phone number **1-800-200-TAXI** and be afforded a no-cost (up to a \$ 50 fare), safe way home. AT&T wireless customers can dial **#-TAXI** for the same service. Local taxicab companies throughout the Washington-metropolitan area provide

this no-cost service to local residents age 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking.

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SoberRide was offered in the: District of Columbia; throughout the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's; and throughout the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, (eastern) Loudoun and Prince William.

Sponsors of this year's Independence Day *SoberRide* offering included AT&T Anheuser-Busch, Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation, ExxonMobil, GEICO and Red Top Cab of Arlington.

Participating taxicab companies included: Alexandria Yellow Cab, Barwood; Fairfax Yellow Cab; Loudoun Yellow Cab; Manassas Cab Company; Red Top Cab; Silver Cab of Prince George's County; Taxi Transportation Services; and Yellow Cab of Prince William County.

Since 1993, WRAP's *SoberRide* program has provided 41,010 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Founded in 1982, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths consistently lower than the national average.

For more information, visit WRAP's web site at **www.wrap.org**.

** Average Independence Day SoberRide ridership for the last five years (2003 – 2007) = 326 riders.*

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