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LOCAL SOBERRIDE PROGRAM **GEARS-UP FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE**

NEARLY 70% OF ALL NEW YEAR'S TRAFFIC DEATHS ARE ALCOHOL-RELATED

Washington, DC, Dec. 27 – Combating a holiday period when nearly 70-percent (68.9%) all U.S. traffic fatalities are alcohol-related*, area officials have announced that that free cab rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout Greater Washington this New Year's Eve.

Offered by the Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the annual winter *SoberRide* program operates between **10:00 pm and 6:00 am each evening now through January 1st, 2008** as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk, holiday period.

During the evening hours now through January 1st, Washington-metropolitan area residents celebrating with alcohol may call the toll-free *SoberRide* phone number **1-800-200-TAXI** and be afforded a no-cost (up to \$50 fare), safe way home. (AT&T wireless customers can dial **#-TAXI** for the same service.)

“Last New Year’s Eve, 697 persons in Greater Washington did the right thing and availed themselves of this lifesaving service rather than possibly driving home impaired,” said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP’s President. ***“For SoberRide’s hours of operation last New Year’s Eve, such ridership translates into the removal of a would-be drunk driver from our shared roadways every 41-seconds.”***

SoberRide is 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**. In these areas, local taxicab companies will be providing this no-cost service to local residents age 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking.

Since 1993 alone, WRAP's *SoberRide* program has provided 38,116 free cab rides to would-be impaired drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Sponsors of the 2007 Holiday *SoberRide* campaign include Anheuser-Busch, AT&T, Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation, GEICO, Giant Food Inc., Red Top Cab and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association.

Participating taxicab companies include: 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.

Alcohol-related traffic fatalities, injuries and crashes are all back on the rise in the Washington-metropolitan area following a recent, consecutive two-year decline in the same according to a preliminary report recently released by WRAP (and viewable online at http://www.wrap.org/newsroom_drunk_driving_report_1207.pdf).

Founded in 1982 and commemorating its 25th anniversary this year, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region. 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.

More information about WRAP's *SoberRide* initiative can be found at www.soberride.com.

** Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 68.9% of all 2004 New Year's Day traffic fatalities were alcohol-related.*

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