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ANNUAL EFFORT TO COMBAT **DRUNK DRIVING IN GREATER WASHINGTON** **KICKS-OFF TONIGHT**

LOCAL FREE CAB RIDE SERVICE AIMS TO DETER DRUNK DRIVING

Washington, DC, Dec. 11 – Combating that time of year classified by U.S. Government officials as one of the “deadliest and most dangerous times on America’s roadways due to an increase in drunk driving,”* area officials announced today the launch of an anti-drunk driving initiative designed to reduce holiday-oriented, alcohol-related traffic incidents in Greater Washington.

Specifically, a coalition of local law enforcement officials, business professionals and area citizens announced today that free cab rides will be offered throughout the winter holidays to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the annual winter *SoberRide* program operates between **10:00 pm and 6:00 am each evening between tomorrow, Friday, December 11, 2009 and Friday, January 1, 2010** as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk, holiday period.

During the evening hours between today and 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 December, alone, over 2,000 (2,002) Greater Washington residents 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 during just last New Year’s Eve (468), such ridership translates into the removal of a would-be drunk driver from our shared roadways every 62-seconds.”***

(more)

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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 44,635 free cab rides to would-be impaired drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Sponsors of the 2009 Holiday *SoberRide* campaign include Anheuser-Busch, AT&T, Diageo, 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; Yellow Cab of D.C.; and Yellow Cab of Prince William County.

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, 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: NHTSA, see:
<http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/planners/Holiday2008/media/TalkingPts.doc>

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