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OVER 400 SOBERRIDES PROVIDED ON ST. PAT'S

LOCAL PROGRAM REMOVES 'WOULD-BE DRUNK DRIVER EVERY TWO MINUTES' LAST NIGHT

Washington, DC, Mar. 18 – The Washington-metropolitan area's *SoberRide* program provided 403 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers this St. Patrick's Day.

Provided by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the St. Patty's Day *SoberRide* program began on St. Patrick's Day (yesterday, Tuesday, March 17th) 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.

"For SoberRide's hours of operation this St. Patrick's Day, this translates into the removal of a would-be drunk driver from Greater Washington's roadways every two minutes," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's President.

Last night's ridership figure represents a nearly 85-percent (84.86%, 218 > 403 rides) increase in SoberRide ridership from last year's (2008) St. Patrick's Day offering according to WRAP.

(more)

3.18.09 wrap release;
page two

During *SoberRide's* 12-hour period this St. Patty's Day, 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 users could call # - TAXI for the same service. Local taxicab companies throughout the Washington-metropolitan area provided this no-cost service to local residents age 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking.

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 St. Patrick's Day *SoberRide* offering included Anheuser-Busch, AT&T, Baileys & Bushmills, Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation, Red Top Cab and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association.

In addition, eight of the Washington-metropolitan area's better-known Irish restaurants have also united to ensure a safe St. Patrick's Day celebration this year by sponsoring *SoberRide*. These dining establishments include: **Daniel O'Connell's Restaurant** (VA); **The Dubliner Restaurant & Pub** (DC); **Fado** (DC); **Irish Channel Restaurant** (DC); **Irish Inn at Glen Echo** (MD); **Kelly's Irish Times** (DC); **Martin's Tavern est. 1933** (DC); and **Murphy's Grand Irish Pubs** (DC & VA).

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.

Since 1993, WRAP's *SoberRide* program has provided 43,789 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

For more information, visit **www.soberride.com**.