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NEARLY 550 SOBERRIDES **PROVIDED ON ST. PAT'S**

GREATER WASHINGTON PROGRAM REMOVES 'WOULD-BE DRUNK DRIVER EVERY 79-SECONDS' LAST NIGHT

Washington, D.C., Mar. 18 – The Washington-metropolitan area's *SoberRide* program provided 547 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 yesterday (St. Patrick's Day) 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 79-seconds," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's President.

Last night's ridership figure represents a more than four-percent increase in *SoberRide* ridership from last year's (2010) St. Patrick's Day offering (525 > 547 rides) according to WRAP.

During *SoberRide's* 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 \$ 30 fare), safe way home.

AT&T wireless customers could dial # - 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, Diageo, MillerCoors/Premium Distributors of Washington, D.C., Red Top Cab, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington, Volkswagen Group of America and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association.

In addition, nine of the Washington-metropolitan area's better-known Irish restaurants also united to ensure a safe St. Patrick's Day celebration this year by sponsoring *SoberRide*. These dining establishments included: The Dubliner Restaurant & Pub (DC); Fado (DC); Ireland Four Fields Restaurant & Pub (DC); Ireland's Four Provinces (VA); Kelly's Irish Times (DC); Martin's Tavern est. 1933 (DC); Murphy's Grand Irish Pubs (DC & VA); Ri Ra Irish Pub (VA); and Sine Irish Pub (VA).

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; 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 52,265 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

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

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