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Governor Debuts *Virginia Faces of Drunk Driving* Site to Combat DUI in Commonwealth

Leads Remembrance Event to Pay Tribute to State's Victims of Drunk Driving

Richmond, VA – Following last year's increase in drunk driving fatalities – the first rise in six years – Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe unveiled a powerful new tool designed to combat drunk driving in the Commonwealth: The [Virginia Faces of Drunk Driving](#) website. The governor dedicated the Tumblr site to those taken by drunk driving, as well as survivors and led a remembrance of their lives with Virginia's top law enforcement and highway safety officials.

With one in three U.S. lives affected by drunk driving, [Virginia Faces of Drunk Driving](#) profiles a variety of individuals whose lives were lost or irrevocably changed by drunk driving. With photos showing victims in joyful times prior to their crashes, complemented by their individual life stories movingly written by survivors, the site's purpose is to deter would-be drunk drivers from getting behind the wheel.

"Given that drunk driving is a 100% preventable crime, even one death is too many," **said Governor McAuliffe.** "Last year's increase in fatalities should be a huge wake-up call to all Virginians that we cannot rest until all of our friends and families are safe from these terrible and unnecessary tragedies.

"I am committed to reducing drunk driving fatalities by continuing our Commonwealth's enforcement efforts, and raising awareness with Virginians that we all have a responsibility to keep our Commonwealth safe. With this new site providing intimate portrayals of individuals lost and impacted by drunk driving and the tragic burden it places on survivors, our aim is to save lives and stop drunk driving before it starts," **Governor McAuliffe said.**

In recent years and on average, drunk driving has taken the lives of approximately two Virginians every three days. But in 2013, Virginia experienced a double-digit percentage (10.48%) increase in drunk driving fatalities as 253 individuals were killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes last year. The increase followed five consecutive years of declining drunk driving deaths in the Commonwealth. Additionally, while the number of all crash fatalities in Virginia was down last year, the percentage of alcohol-related fatalities rose significantly (34.1% in 2013 versus 29.5% in 2012).

Started in 2002, Virginia's *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign is part of a research-based multi-state, zero-tolerance initiative designed to get impaired drivers off the roads using checkpoints and patrols along with education about the dangers and consequences of driving while intoxicated. While aiming to reach all potential drunk drivers, the statewide enforcement and education campaign specifically focuses on males aged 21 to 35, a demographic representing approximately one-third of all persons killed in Virginia's alcohol-related traffic crashes last year.

In addition to a significant multimedia campaign featuring more than 40,000 campaign ads running on nearly 80 television, cable and radio stations in Virginia, *Checkpoint Strikeforce* incorporates a stepped-up law enforcement effort to promote a multijurisdictional fight against drunk driving. State and local police increase visibility through sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols. Last year, 27,333 people were convicted of DUI in Virginia.

MWR Strategies, a Richmond-based research firm that has conducted *Checkpoint Strikeforce* campaign surveys since 2002, conducted a public opinion survey of 800 drivers in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia in August 2014 (including an oversample of 300 area male drivers ages 21-35). Key findings include:

- Drunk drivers remain one of the leading “serious dangers” facing both all age (64%) and 21-to-35-year old (63%) drivers.
- By far, the most-feared drunk driving consequence of 21-to-35-year old drivers (76%) is the “killing or injuring someone else.” The next most-feared consequence – “getting arrested/facing jail or fines” – was cited by only 15% of the target audience.
- “Stricter laws” are viewed by 21-to-35-year old drivers (22%) as “most effective at preventing people from driving drunk.”
- Only 71% of 21-to-35-year olds say they make a conscious decision of how to get home safely after going out partying.
- 21-to-35-year olds who say they do not drink and drive “get home safely” by the following mean: designating a driver (75%); sleeping at a friend’s place (69%); taking cabs (54%); sticking to “bars that are walkable” (39%); and taking transit (47%).

Virginia traffic data:

https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/safety/crash_data/crash_facts/crash_facts_13.pdf

For more information on Checkpoint Strikeforce, please visit: www.checkpointstrikeforce.net.

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