

PRESS RELEASE

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SUPER BOWL WEEKEND ENFORCEMENT ON ROUTE 40 NETS MORE THAN 80 DUI AND CRIMINAL ARRESTS

Massive enforcement operation helps eliminate DUI-related fatalities.

Columbia, MD – This past weekend in Santa Clara, CA, the Denver Broncos defeated the Carolina Panthers in Super Bowl 50. The game brought crowds into bars and restaurants around the country, and was the focal point of many parties in people’s homes. In Maryland, police agencies prepared for the possibility of the increased risk of people driving impaired as a result of those celebrations with a massive education and enforcement operation known as “40 on 40”.

A stretch of Route 40 spanning approximately 60 miles from Howard County to Cecil County was selected for the operation based upon historical data that showed a high number of DUI-related crashes. The enforcement consisted of DUI patrols and sobriety checkpoints, and netted at 62 DUI arrests, with another 19 arrests made for criminal offenses such as drug possession or outstanding warrants. Funding for the “40 on 40” initiative was provided by the Maryland Department of Transportation through grants from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

“Effective DUI enforcement is critical to keeping people safe on our roadways,” stated Larry Harmel, Executive Director of the MCPA. “Our mission this weekend was to see zero fatalities along that roadway and I am happy to say that our mission was accomplished. I want to thank every one of the men and women that worked this operation for sacrificing time away from their families and helping to save lives.”

Driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol is a major contributing factor to crashes and roadway deaths in Maryland. Over the past five years, more than 850 people have died as a result of impaired driving and more than 20,000 people have been injured. A third of all statewide fatal crashes and 34 percent of all motor vehicle fatalities involve an impaired driver.

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“Maryland law enforcement is committed to eliminating drunk and drugged driving,” stated Harmel. “There is no excuse for getting behind the wheel if you’re under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Call a taxi or rideshare, designate a sober driver at the start of the night, or use public transportation. Whatever you do, do not get behind the wheel. Ultimately, you’re taking a chance with someone else’s life.”

The penalties of an impaired driving arrest are severe even when an impaired driver does not hurt or kill another person. Those penalties may include: thousands of dollars in fines and legal costs; lost wages from time off work; the loss of a license; fees for classes and administrative costs; and the likelihood of having your vehicle fitted with an ignition interlock device. Nearly 23,000 people were arrested for impaired driving last year in Maryland.

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NOTE: Earlier this year, Maryland launched a campaign called “Beautiful” that highlights the need to have a sober ride home at the end of the night. Backed by a marketing campaign that spanned social media, and radio and television spots, “Beautiful” showcases the fact that impaired driving can be stopped with one simple solution – always having a sober ride home. For more information on the campaign, please visit www.towardzerodeathsmd.com.