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DRINKING AND DRUGS DON'T MIX WITH DRIVING

~ Governor proclaims December as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Alcohol and drugs contributed to 44 percent of Florida’s crash fatalities last year. That equates to nearly four fatalities per day at the hands of impaired drivers. To combat the problem this December, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is teaming up with the Governor’s Office of Drug Control, the Florida Department of Transportation, law enforcement organizations across the state and safety advocates during *National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month* in collaborative efforts to eliminate impaired drivers from Florida’s roadways.

“On behalf of the men and women of the Florida Highway Patrol, we will continue our commitment to educating motorists and enforcing Florida’s aggressive DUI [Driving Under the Influence] laws by removing impaired motorists from the highways,” said DHSMV Executive Director Julie Jones. “The ultimate goal is to save lives, plain and simple. Each and every driver should consider what he or she can do to eliminate the threat of injury and death from impaired driving.”

Office of Drug Control Director, Col. Bruce Grant (U.S. Army Retired) added, “The abuse of alcohol and drugs exacts a terrible and tragic toll on Floridians. Impaired driving puts not only the user at risk, but also everyone else sharing the road. Results can be catastrophic and the economic impact is staggering. Each year, traffic crashes caused by adult alcohol abuse cost the state \$5.4 billion, in addition to crashes caused by underage drinking which cost \$643 million. The Office of Drug Control is pleased to partner in this effort as it supports the Governor’s Drug Control strategy to reduce substance abuse and save lives in Florida.”

To further emphasize the importance of this issue, Governor Charlie Crist issued a proclamation declaring December as *National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month* in Florida.

The Problem

- Alcohol and drugs were factors in more than 23,000 crashes in Florida last year, resulting in nearly 17,000 injuries.
- During the five-day Christmas holiday travel period, 14 people died in alcohol-related crashes.
- The New Year’s Day holiday travel period experienced the highest fatality rate per hour (0.44.) During the four-day period, 62 percent of the 42 fatalities involved alcohol.

*Source: 2008 Florida Traffic Crash Statistics Report (www.flhsmv.gov/html/safety.html.)

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Protect Yourself, Your Family and Friends

During the holiday season and year-round, take steps to make sure that you and everyone with whom you celebrate avoid driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

- Plan ahead. Always designate a non-drinking driver before any holiday party or celebration begins, or take a taxi or public transportation to/from a party if you plan to drink alcohol.
- Take the keys. Do not let a friend drive impaired.
- Be a helpful host. If you are hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate a sober driver, always offer alcohol-free beverages, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.
- Dial *FHP (*347) on your cell phone to report an impaired driver.

The Florida Highway Patrol joins thousands of law enforcement organizations across the nation this month to remove impaired drivers from the roadways. The Patrol, often working in conjunction with our local law enforcement partners, will conduct sobriety checkpoints and aggressively enforce Florida's DUI laws. Specifically, FHP will participate in the national campaign, *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.* (www.stopimpaireddriving.org) between Dec. 16, 2009 and Jan. 3, 2010. To learn more about the Patrol and DHSMV, visit www.flhsmv.gov.

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CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

NATIONAL DRUNK AND DRUGGED DRIVING (3D) PREVENTION MONTH

WHEREAS, alcohol and drugs were factors in more than 23,000 crashes in Florida last year, resulting in nearly 17,000 injuries; and

WHEREAS, alcohol and drugs contributed to 44 percent of Florida's 2,983 crash fatalities in 2008; and

WHEREAS, the holiday season is traditionally one of the most deadly times of the year for impaired driving; and

WHEREAS, for thousands of families across the nation, this holiday season brings a somber reminder of the loved ones they lost to an impaired driver; and

WHEREAS, education and prevention, effective laws and penalties, and strong enforcement are key components to reducing impaired driving; and

WHEREAS, organizations and agencies from across the United States, to include the state of Florida, are promoting enforcement through the *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.* campaign, as well as prevention through the *You Drink and Drive. You Lose.* campaign; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Office of Drug Control, the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, the Department of Transportation and Mothers Against Drunk Driving have teamed up in a statewide effort to make Florida's roadways safer;

NOW, THEREFORE, I Charlie Crist, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing December 2009 as ***National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month*** and call upon all residents, government agencies, business leaders, hospitals, schools, and public and private institutions in Florida to promote awareness of the DUI problem, to support programs and policies to reduce the incidence of impaired driving, to promote safer and healthier behaviors regarding the use of alcohol and other drugs, and to provide opportunities for awareness during the holiday season and throughout the year.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capitol, this 1st day of December, in the year two thousand nine.

Handwritten signature of Charlie Crist in blue ink.

Governor