

**CONTACTS:** Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP  
W. 703 / 893-0461

Jeanne Saddler, MWCOG  
W. 202/962-3250

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 5, 2008**

# **DRUNK DRIVING INCIDENTS DECLINE** **IN GREATER WASHINGTON**

## ***NEW REPORT CITES DIPS IN LOCAL DUI FATALITIES, INJURIES & CRASHES***

**Washington, D.C., Dec. 5** – For the first time in two years, the number of alcohol-related traffic fatalities, injuries and crashes all declined in the Washington-metropolitan area in 2007 according to a preliminary report released today by the non-profit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

***“The report’s findings appear to show the dividends of both highly-visible law enforcement deterrent efforts like the region’s Checkpoint Strikeforce campaign as well as increased public attention to the threat of drunk driving,”*** said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP’s President.

Today’s data will be contained in WRAP’s 16<sup>th</sup>-annual report, “How Safe are Our Roads?, A Data Report on the Impact of Drunk Driving on Highway Safety in the Washington Metropolitan Region” scheduled for full release later this month. The report was prepared by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) for the McLean, Virginia-based alcohol-education group.

Findings in the 2008 report include:

- **FATALS...**Local alcohol and or drug-related traffic deaths **decreased** by two-and-a-half-percent (2.5%) between 2006 and 2007 (and from 119 to 116 such fatalities). This counters both the previous year’s (2006) spike in such deaths in Greater Washington as well as the three consecutive year (2005, 2006 & 2007) increase in such deaths at the national level.

(more)

- **CRASHES...**Area traffic crashes attributed to alcohol and or drugs **decreased** by more than five-percent (5.8%) between 2006 and 2007 (and from 5,321 to 5,015 such crashes). This counters the previous year's (2006) spike in such deaths in Greater Washington.
- **INJURIES...**Local alcohol and or drug-related traffic injuries also **decreased** by over five-percent (5.4%) between 2006 and 2007 (and from 2,988 to 2,827 such injuries).
- **ARRESTS...**(PENDING: Information not yet available at today's release of preliminary report. Will be available in pending, final version. [See web address on last page of this release for future updates.]

Of the Washington-metropolitan area's 351 total traffic fatalities last year, 33% (116) of these roadway deaths were alcohol and or drug-related. 2007 national statistics (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration or NHTSA) show that 45-percent of total U.S. vehicular fatalities were reported as alcohol / drug-related.

While WRAP and COG officials pointed to high-profile law enforcement deployments like local sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols – and the voluntary compliance gained from the same – as a principal catalyst in Greater Washington's recent downward DUI numbers, they also stressed the need to resist complacency.

***“When someone is still arrested for drunk driving every 45-minutes in the Washington-metropolitan area, vigilance in combating this completely preventable killer is needed now more than ever,”*** said David Robertson, COG's Executive Director.

WRAP's timing in releasing its preliminary report is in tandem with this country's most deadly time of year when it comes to drunk driving. According to NHTSA, historically, more people are killed in alcohol-related traffic crashes between Thanksgiving and New Years than during any other period of the year.

(more)

12.5.08 wrap release;  
page three

Founded in 1982, the Washington Regional Alcohol Program is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking. For more information, visit [www.wrap.org](http://www.wrap.org). COG ([www.mwcog.org](http://www.mwcog.org)) is the association of 19 local governments working together for a better metropolitan region.

WRAP's 2008 "How Safe are Our Roads?" report  
can be found later this month as a pdf file at:

**<http://www.wrap.org/highwaysafety08.pdf>**

□□□□

*(WRAP's holiday free cab ride service for would-be drunk drivers, SoberRide, operates between 10:00 pm and 6:00 am each day during the period of December 12, 2008 through January 1, 2009. During these evening hours, Washington-metropolitan area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may 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 customers can call #-TAXI for the same service. See [www.soberride.com](http://www.soberride.com) for more details.)*

#