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LOCAL SOBERRIDE PROGRAM **IN PLACE FOR JULY 4th**

GREATER WASHINGTON CHARITY RAISES FUNDS TO ENSURE ANTI-DRUNK DRIVING SERVICE THIS INDEPENDENCE DAY

***** 43% OF ALL JULY 4TH TRAFFIC DEATHS CAUSED BY DRUNK DRIVERS *****

Washington, DC, June 29 – The Washington-metropolitan area's free cab ride service to prevent drunk driving will be in place this Independence Day following a successful fundraising effort which threatened the charity-run program.

The nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program's (WRAP) July 4th anti-drunk driving effort was threatened by SoberRide's 60-percent (60.39%) *increase* in ridership between 2008 and last year in concert with a nearly 35-percent (34.47%) *decrease* in support for the same. Such recently sent the 28-year-old charity scurrying for financial support and in an effort to both ensure its Independence Day SoberRide program while also bridging a \$31,000 gulf in current year funding.

WRAP's popular SoberRide program which offers free cab rides to would-be drunk drivers throughout Greater Washington will be in operation beginning at 10:00 pm this Sunday, July 4th and continue until 6:00 am the following day (7/5) as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk, holiday period.

Recognizing the pressing need to help prevent drunk driving during the July 4th holiday, more than \$ 31,000 in new support was donated by MillerCoors contributing \$ 15,000; GEICO and The Century Council each contributing \$ 5,000; the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington contributing \$ 2,000; the Beer Institute, Capitol Outdoor and Washington Wholesalers each contributing \$ 1,000; and a number of foundations and individuals making what WRAP called "equally integral" donations.

WRAP's 2010 and or Independence Day SoberRide sponsors include: **AT&T, Anheuser-Busch, Diageo, Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation, ExxonMobil, GEICO, Red Top Cab of Arlington** and the **Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association**.

During this eight-hour period, area residents 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 dial **#-TAXI** for the same service. Local taxicab companies throughout the Washington-metropolitan area provide this no-cost service to local residents age 21 and older who otherwise may have attempted to drive home after drinking.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 43-percent of all U.S. traffic deaths occurring over the Independence Day holiday are alcohol-related.*

"When asked whether the Washington-metropolitan area could afford 300 drunk drivers on its streets this July 4th, major corporations and the local community responded with a resounding 'no'," said Kurt Gregory Erickson, WRAP's President. Last July, 331 persons in Greater Washington used WRAP's Independence Day SoberRide program as opposed to possibly driving home drunk.

SoberRide is 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.

Participating taxicab companies include: 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.

Since 1993, WRAP's *SoberRide* program has provided 48,338 free cab rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

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-metropolitan area. 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. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free cab ride service for would-be drunk drivers, *SoberRide*. For more information, visit WRAP's web site at www.wrap.org.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, see:
<http://www.stopimpaireddriving.org/planners/July4th10/em/FactSheet-enf.docx>