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LOCAL ANTI-DUI GROUP CALLS FOR SAFETY **DURING THIS SATURDAY'S 'PERFECT STORM'**

NUMBER OF ALCOHOL-FOCUSED EVENTS THIS WEEKEND EARN PUBLIC CALL FOR SAFETY

Washington, DC, May 3 – Calling the combination of this Saturday's Cinco de Mayo, Virginia Gold Cup Races, Kentucky Derby and Crown Royal 400 (Richmond, VA) events as having the makings of a 'perfect storm' when it comes to the potential for drunk driving, a Washington-metropolitan alcohol education group is urging area residents to be aware of the threat of impaired drivers this weekend.

"The confluence of this weekend's too-often alcohol-focused events has all the makings of a perfect storm when it comes to drunk driving," warned Kurt Gregory Erickson, President of the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration figures and since 1999, 43-percent of all U.S. traffic fatalities occurring on the evening of May 5th were caused by drunk drivers.

As a means of reducing what WRAP labels as "100-percent preventable," alcohol-related traffic incidents this weekend, the organization is urging residents this weekend to:

- **Plan ahead and designate a driver** if you're celebrating with alcohol.
- **Use alternative transportation** like taxi cabs.
- **Be a responsible host by:**
 - ✓ **Not serving anyone who appears to be impaired.**
 - ✓ **Serving food with alcohol** (like high protein foods like meats and cheeses which stay in the stomach longer thereby slowing the body's alcohol absorption rate).

- ✓ **Using a non-carbonated base in alcoholic punches** (as the body absorbs alcohol faster when mixed with carbonization).
 - ✓ **Serving non-alcoholic beverages** as an option.
 - ✓ **Never serving minors.**
 - ✓ **Closing the bar at least an hour before the event's end.**
 - ✓ **Designate a bartender / don't let guests mix their own drinks.**
 - ✓ **And never allowing impaired guest to get behind the wheel.**
- **Report drunk drivers.** *(Maryland and Virginia law enforcement professionals both encourage the use of the “ #77 feature ” on wireless telephones for motorists to report suspected drunk drivers. In D.C., dialing “ 311 “ is encouraged for the same.)*
 - **Wear your seatbelt.**

“Wearing a seatbelt may not be widely viewed as a tool in this effort but the wearing of a seatbelt may be your best defense against a drunk driver,” said Erickson. ***“The bottom-line is that the routine wearing of seatbelts is the single most effective measure to reduce crash-related deaths and injuries.”***

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 .