



**STOP
DWI** New York



**“OVER THE LIMIT, UNDER ARREST” DWI ENFORCEMENT TO BEGIN
Officials Kick-Off Statewide Crackdown With DWI Demonstration**

Commissioner David J. Swarts of the Department of Motor Vehicles and Chair of the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) along with Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi; Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice; Commissioner Lawrence Mulvey of the Nassau County Police Department; Tom Louizou, Regional Administrator for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; and Captain David Candelaria of Troop L of the New York State Police attended an event at Nassau County Community College today to announce the latest 2009 STOP-DWI enforcement effort.

“Over the Limit, Under Arrest” is a national STOP-DWI mobilization that begins on August 21st and runs through the Labor Day holiday. During the mobilization, State and local law enforcement agencies statewide will be out in force, utilizing sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols to deter drunk driving and ensure the safety of our roadways.

A controlled drunk driving demonstration followed the press conference. Pre-selected subjects consumed specific amounts of alcoholic beverages to reach various blood alcohol content (BAC) levels. Breath testing instruments were then demonstrated and intoxication levels measured. Subjects then drove a closed course to illustrate the negative effects of alcohol. Standardized field sobriety tests, arrest procedures and ignition interlocks were also demonstrated.

Every 40 minutes someone in the U.S. dies in an alcohol-related crash. In 2007 in New York State, 373 people were killed and more than 7,000 injured in nearly 9,500 alcohol-related crashes.

“While there have been significant reductions in the number of alcohol related fatalities, too many lives are still being lost because of crashes caused by drunk or impaired drivers,” Commissioner Swarts said. “I commend our partners in the law enforcement community for their commitment to ensuring the safety of all motorists in New York State.”

“Nassau County has its lowest crime rate in 30 years and is the safest place in the nation with a population of our size,” said County Executive Thomas R. Suozzi. “But we are not immune to drunk drivers and our Police Department has made DWI enforcement a priority. For the last two weeks of the summer season, we will be stepping up enforcement in participation of ‘Over the Limit, Under Arrest.’ I thank the Governor’s Traffic Safety Committee for starting this statewide campaign and look forward to working together with our neighbors to combat drunk driving.”

“We are honored to announce the statewide enforcement event this Labor Day weekend,” said Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice. “Nassau County has refused to stand idly by while drunk drivers hold our roadways hostage, and we encourage all municipalities across the country to follow our example. Drunk driving is a violent crime that kills thousands of people a year. The time has come for us as a nation to rise and say with one voice: Enough is enough.”

Due to the District Attorney’s tough stance on drunk drivers and her push for tougher laws and more comprehensive sentences, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, New York State Department of Motor Vehicles and the Governor’s Committee on Traffic Safety requested that Nassau County be the location for the announcement of the statewide DWI crackdown.

“DWI enforcement has and will continue to be one of my administration's top priorities,” said Commissioner Lawrence Mulvey of the Nassau County Police Department. “The Nassau County Police Department has personally experienced the devastation DWI related crashes cause on our roadways. The County Executive, District Attorney, and this Department all share the same relentless dedication and commitment in our efforts to prevent future tragedies from occurring. This initiative is another opportunity for us to demonstrate and educate the public on the dangers associated with DWI operation on our roadways.”

Thomas M. Louizou, Regional Administrator, USDOT National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - Region 2, said, “New York State continues to be among the top performing States in the war against drunk driving. By combining good laws with highly visible enforcement and adjudication actions that are clearly communicated to the public, the Empire State is among the safest when measuring drunk driving crash risk.”

“The key to improving highway safety is to reduce avoidable crashes. The State Police is committed to educating the motoring public about the risks associated with impaired driving, improper use of safety restraints, and speeding. To ensure the safety of all those who use New York's roadways, we will vigilantly enforce the traffic laws prohibiting these avoidable behaviors,” said Superintendent Harry Corbitt of the New York State Police.

Joanne McGarry, the STOP-DWI Coordinator for Nassau County, said, “The quality of DWI enforcement in Nassau County has always been of the highest standard. Our police officers are the best trained in the State of New York. However, it is estimated that one third of the drivers arrested for DWI have been arrested before. Seventy-five percent of drivers with suspended or revoked licenses continue to drive. Repeat DWI offenders are far more likely to be involved in a fatal crash.

“These statistics provide ample evidence of the need for innovative technologies to be used to support all the efforts that are currently in place to prevent drunk driving and to protect the public safety. Ignition interlock is a valuable tool that is vastly underutilized in our fight against drunk driving.”

The “Over the Limit, Under Arrest” effort is the fifth of seven major STOP-DWI crackdowns targeting popular celebration weekends during 2009. The first four were: January 26-February 2, for the Super Bowl; March 9-17, for St. Patrick’s Day; May 21-25, for Memorial Day weekend; and June 21-July 5, for the Fourth of July holiday. The remaining crackdown periods for

this year are: October 25-31, for Halloween; and November 20-January 2, 2009, for the Thanksgiving through New Year's holiday season.

STOP-DWI, which stands for "Special Traffic Options Program for Driving While Intoxicated," was enacted to coordinate local efforts to reduce alcohol and other drug-related crashes in a comprehensive and financially self-sustaining highway safety program. The STOP-DWI program permits each of the state's counties to establish a STOP-DWI Program that qualifies for the return of all fines collected for alcohol and other drug-related traffic offenses occurring within its jurisdiction.

All 62 counties are participating and each appoints a STOP-DWI Coordinator to work with agencies involved in the prevention of alcohol-related crashes and highway safety. Although the development and implementation of STOP-DWI programs rest with the counties, the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles is responsible for approving county STOP-DWI plans.

Driver safety tips and information are available by visiting the DMV's web site (nysdmv.com) or the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee web site (SafeNY.com).

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