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California Kicks Off December DUI Crackdown With “Red Carpet” VIP Treatment for Designated Drivers

SACRAMENTO—In an effort to increase safety on our roads and highways, the California Office of Traffic Safety today joined the California Highway Patrol and the California State Transportation Agency to promote and honor designated, sober drivers and launch the start of a holiday crackdown on drunk driving.

“Sober drivers in California are making a wise decision to help keep their friends and family safe this holiday season,” California State Transportation Agency Secretary Brian Kelly told gatherers at a “Designated Sober Driver VIP” (DDVIP) event in downtown Sacramento. “These red-carpet, VIP events help promote and honor the designated sober drivers who play such an important role in saving lives each time they take the driver’s seat.”

The “RUOK?” anti-DUI campaign promotes opportunities for sober drivers to help keep their friends and family safe on California’s roads this holiday season. A free, Web-based mobile app, “DDVIP Bar-Finder,” identifies a network of local bars and restaurants that offer free, non-alcoholic drinks for designated drivers.

Additional VIP red-carpet events will be held in popular nightlife areas in Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Diego. During these events, designated sober drivers will have the opportunity to walk down a red carpet event entrance and pose for photographs in front of DDVIP celebrity backdrops. Specially trained staff will assist bar-goers with downloading the new web application to identify other participating bars and restaurants.

Today’s events also kick off the annual “December DUI Crackdown,” a DUI enforcement period from December 13 to January 1, sponsored by OTS and involving CHP and local law enforcement across California.

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“As you head out on holiday celebrations this month, know that the CHP and other law enforcement agencies will be out on the road keeping motorists safe by removing dangerous drunk drivers from our roadways before they can injure or kill someone,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Make your holiday celebration a safe one; designate a driver before the festivities begin.”

For the 2013 Crackdown, in coordination with the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and participating law enforcement agencies throughout California, OTS funded DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols through January 1. These enforcement efforts, along with the public service announcements and sober driver promotion events, encourage the use of designated sober drivers and reinforce the *Report Drunk Drivers – Call 911* and *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* messages, which are aimed at keeping drunk drivers off the roads.

According to the latest data from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, deaths in crashes involving impaired drivers increased 4.6 percent in 2012, taking 10,322 lives. Last year, drunk driving was responsible for 802 fatalities in California.

“Californians should all work together to keep drunk drivers off our roadways, especially during the holiday season when celebrations are at their peak,” said Russia Chavis, Acting Director of OTS. “The public can help by making sure no one drives impaired and by calling 911 to report a suspected drunk driver.”

This year’s public awareness efforts also include the next phase in OTS’ popular “RUOK?” anti-drunk driving campaign, which encourages drivers to not drive impaired. OTS launched its newest anti-drunk driving PSA “One Sober Moment” which further emphasizes the “RUOK?” message that if you’re feeling even slightly “buzzed,” you’re likely not okay to drive. The message will be seen on television and online throughout the state during the campaign and after.

To download the new WAPP to your mobile device, visit www.ddvipca.com. For more information on the RUOK? campaign or the DDVIP program, please visit the OTS Facebook at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS or follow OTS on Twitter @OTS_CA. For more information on all OTS efforts, visit www.OTS.ca.gov.

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