

Media Advisory – Dec. 2, 2009

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County's extra patrols prove useful during weekend

Snohomish County's first DUI emphasis patrols following a \$70,000 state grant to pay for overtime nabbed 11 impaired drivers.

Officers from state, county and local law enforcement offices worked nearly 100 overtime hours Saturday, Nov. 28. In addition to stopping 11 impaired drivers, officers made one felony drug arrest, two misdemeanor drug arrests and gave out 46 citations (21 of which were for speeding drivers).

Officers focused on Highway 204 from the trestle to Frontier Village, Highway 9 at Frontier Village to the Paine Field Airport, Highway 2 from the trestle to Monroe, and Highway 522 from Monroe to the King County line.

"These highly visible, multi-jurisdictional emphasis patrols are a great success," said Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon. "Extra efforts by our law enforcement to prevent impaired drivers from hitting the roads is always welcome. Traffic safety is one of our highest priorities.

"Sadly, however, less than 24 hours after the start of this patrol, an alleged impaired driver took the lives of four people on Highway 9, north Marysville," Reardon continued. "Our deepest sympathies go to the families of those killed."

"Since taking this position in 1995, this is the highest number of lives lost in a single alcohol-involved crash in Snohomish County on record," said Tracy McMillan, Snohomish County's DUI & Target Zero Task Force manager. "Back in 1998, there was another horrific crash just a half mile from this intersection on Highway 9. It took the lives of five people but it was not alcohol-related."

In Snohomish County, there were 95 impairment-involved fatal crashes between 2004 and 2008. These crashes resulted in a total of 100 deaths, or an average of 20 deaths per year. This accounts for just under half of all Snohomish County traffic deaths during the five year period (100 of 216). Exactly one-fourth of impaired driver-related deaths occurred on Sunday.

The purpose of the grant is to remove impaired drivers from roads. Officers also are on the lookout for people who speed, drive aggressively or violate other traffic laws. "Please do your part by planning ahead if you will be out celebrating. Take a taxi or have a designated driver," McMillan said. "If you see someone that appears to be driving impaired, please have your passenger call 911 with the make, model, direction of travel, and license plate number."

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