



Ortonville Police Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ZERO ARRESTED DURING END-OF-SUMMER DWI ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN

Ortonville Police Department officers arrested zero drunk and impaired motorists during a nationwide end-of-summer DWI enforcement effort, Aug. 19 – Sept. 5. Around 400 law enforcement agencies across Minnesota participated in the state’s effort conducted by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) Office of Traffic Safety.

On average in Minnesota, 30,000 motorists are arrested for DWI each year — there were 24 arrests in Big Stone County in 2010. During the last three years in the state, 2008–2010, there was an average of 145 alcohol-related deaths and 300 alcohol-related serious injuries. In Big Stone County during this period, there were zero alcohol-related deaths.

“Every motorist needs to make roads safer by planning for a sober ride to avoid the dangers of driving impaired,” says Ortonville Chief of Police Jason Mork. “A big part in making progress is for everyone to truly understand the very bad consequences of a DWI, including the embarrassment, costs and potential job loss and more.”

A DWI offense can result in loss of license for up to a year, thousands in costs and possible jail time.

Another new consequence for DWI in Minnesota is use of ignition interlock. First-time Minnesota DWI offenders with a 0.16 and above alcohol-concentration level, and all repeat DWI need to use ignition interlock, or face at least one year without a driver’s license. Interlock is installed under the dashboard of the vehicle and connected to its starter. Users must provide a breath sample into the interlock with an alcohol concentration below 0.02 in order for the vehicle to start.

Minnesota has made progress to limit alcohol-related crashes and resulting deaths and injuries in recent years. In 2010, the 131 alcohol-related deaths was the lowest annual number since this statistic was first measured in 1984. Traffic safety officials attribute this to increased enforcement and education efforts, and important legislation.

Despite the drop in deaths in recent years, impaired driving still accounts for one-third of all traffic deaths annually in Minnesota. During 2008–2010, there were 1,287 traffic deaths statewide of which 435 were alcohol-related. During that same time period 98,468 motorists were arrested for DWI — 29,918 last year alone.

The Ortonville Police Department encourages people to:

- Plan for a safe ride — designate a sober driver, or stay at the location of the celebration. Families should let each other know that they will be available to offer a safe ride home.
- Buckle up and wear protective motorcycle gear — the best defenses against an impaired driver.
- Report impaired driving — call 911 when witnessing impaired driving behavior. Witnesses must be prepared to provide location, license plate and observed dangerous behavior.

The enhanced DWI enforcement campaign is a component of the state’s *Toward Zero Death* (*TZD*) initiative. A primary vision of the *TZD* program is to create a safe driving culture in Minnesota in which motorists support a goal of zero road fatalities by practicing and promoting safe and smart driving behavior. *TZD* focuses on the application of four strategic areas to reduce crashes — education, enforcement, engineering and emergency trauma response.



“To Serve and Protect”