

St. Patrick's Day Enforcement Efforts
News Conference at MillerCoors
Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr.
Tuesday, March 15, 2011 @ 1pm

Good Afternoon

Thursday is St. Patrick's Day and the celebration of this popular holiday for many will be done with the consumption of alcohol. Most people will participate in this celebration responsibly; however, some simply will not. They will engage in the irresponsible and dangerous behavior of drinking too much alcohol and then getting behind the wheel of an automobile. This poses a serious threat to the safety of all citizens.

Last year on St. Patrick's Day, the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and the Southeast Multi-Jurisdictional OWI Task Force arrested **77** motorists for drunk driving. Drunk driving is not a mistake. Let me say that again... Drunk driving is not a mistake. People make a conscious decision to drink too much alcohol and then drive. Drunk driving is a preventable crime.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2009, **10,839** people were killed in alcohol-related crashes in the United States. In Wisconsin, alcohol-related crashes killed **234** people and injured **more than 4,000** in 2008 according to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

The Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and the Southeast Multi-Jurisdictional OWI Task Force will be fully deployed on St. Patrick's Day. Our joint enforcement efforts will begin at 6 a.m. Thursday and continue through 4 a.m. Friday. A total of **137** personnel will be deployed to detect and *stop, test* and *arrest* drunk drivers. 41 squads from MCSO and 96 from participating law enforcement agencies.

Our targeted drunk driving enforcement deployment will concentrate its efforts in "Death Valley" and the major thoroughfares that run adjacent to the freeway system. "Death Valley" runs along I-94 east and westbound between the lake and Waukesha County line. 65% of our drunk driving arrests occur in this stretch.

We are not discouraging the celebration of St. Patrick's Day. However, you need to have a plan in place, **before** you start drinking. For instance:

- Choose a sober designated driver.
- Utilize a taxicab or mass transit.
- The Milwaukee County Transit System will be offering free rides through the Miller Lite Free Rides Program starting at 6 PM on St. Patrick's Day until the end of regular service.
- Also, some taverns and restaurants have programs to provide patrons with a safe ride home

I would like to thank the Milwaukee County Transit System and MillerCoors for their ongoing community awareness effort towards drunk driving prevention and free alternative transportation. Since the Free Rides program began 24 years ago, lives have no doubt been saved, and injuries and property damage have been avoided.

I want to thank all of the participating agencies of the Southeast Multi-Jurisdictional OWI Task Force who have teamed up with us in this public safety effort. This task force is the first of its kind in the State to combat drunk driving and would not be successful without their support and the involvement of...

- Bayside Police Department
- Cudahy Police Department
- Franklin Police Department
- Greendale Police Department
- Milwaukee Police Department
- South Milwaukee Police Department
- St. Francis Police Department
- Wauwatosa Police Department
- West Allis Police Department
- Wisconsin State Patrol
- City of Brookfield Police Department
- Town of Brookfield Police Department
- Village of Elm Grove
- City of Menomonee Falls Police Department

Unlike some, we in law enforcement have not and will not forget the lives that have been lost due to the reckless behavior of impaired drivers.

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