



Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. announces his New Year's Eve Drunk Driving Enforcement Plan. Judy and Paul Jenkins, Meghan Arnold of MCTS, and Diane Wagner of MillerCoors joined the Sheriff.



The interior of the new van (above) to transport up to 12 individuals after OWI arrest.

Good afternoon. As always, I want to make it very clear that as people celebrate the New Year – and it's okay to do that - we will have zero tolerance for drunk driving. There is one thing that is not okay to do, and that's to drive impaired.

I'm joined today by Diane Wagner of MillerCoors, and Meghan Arnold of the Milwaukee County Transit System, who are partnering on free bus rides. Also with us are Paul and Judy Jenkins, who were personally affected by impaired driving.

It's part of the culture to wrap just about everything we do in Wisconsin, around alcohol consumption. That's not a bad thing outright, but the fact that people have to drive back home from those events is where the problem lies. We've been named "America's Watering Hole" by *USA Today* newspaper. It's embarrassing to hear on the news today that Milwaukee received the distinction of the "Number One Drunkest City."

I'm not naïve enough to believe that people are going to change their drinking behavior overnight. What I **am** here to state is that we're going to attach **certain** and **swift** consequences to people who drive impaired. The easiest way for me to convey the law enforcement message is in three words: **Don't do it.**

We will deploy 41 squads at various times throughout this initiative, and our multi-jurisdictional task force – which includes 19 police agencies and law enforcement offices in Milwaukee and Waukesha County. They will deploy another 67 squads beginning at 8pm on New Year’s Eve, creating a blanket of 108 law enforcement personnel over the freeway system and major intersections on local streets, making it virtually impossible for drunks to get away with driving drunk. We will also have drug recognition experts (DRE) to test drug-impaired drivers.

Our message is simple. There are no warnings. If you get caught driving drunk, you **will** be arrested.

Our data show an area of major concern that I call “Death Valley.” This is the stretch of freeway that includes I-94, I-794, and I-894 from the lake to 124th Street, and since 2007, has seen the highest number of drunk driving fatalities.

In January 2008, I ordered the creation of an OWI Task Force in an effort to **reduce** the carnage on the Milwaukee County freeway system. Our ten-person task force has received specialized OWI training that helps them to stop, quickly test, and arrest drunk drivers in a way that will be upheld in court. Since this OWI task force was implemented, 4,233 impaired drivers have been removed from the freeway system.

That means over 4,200 people were arrested before they could kill or severely injure an innocent motorist. This year to date, 1,304 drunk drivers have been arrested. In 2008, Milwaukee County Sheriff’s deputies arrested 1,513 drunk drivers. In 2009 we arrested 1,416 drunk drivers.

Sometimes law enforcement officers wonder if they are making a difference. I’m reminded of an email I received after one of our task force deployments. An anesthesiologist from Children’s Hospital, Dr. Todd Troshynski, wrote: “As I was driving home from work this morning between 0100 and 0130 on I-94, I saw no less than 5 traffic stops ongoing and several other Milwaukee County Sheriff’s vehicles on patrol. Outstanding work!!! It made me feel good to know that you and the fine men and women who work in your department have such a high level of commitment to the

enforcement aspect of the serious drunk driving problem we have here in Southeast Wisconsin. Keep up the good work.”

When members of my OWI task force stop a drunk driver, we’ve found that the average Prohibited Alcohol (breath) Concentration is .15. This is almost twice the legal limit of .08. Impairment (inability to perform) starts at .03. The average P.A.C. in the state of Wisconsin is .17.

Out of the 1,304 OWI arrests to date, 9 OWI incidents led to crashes. Here’s another disturbing statistic, according to the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration, a motorist drives drunk 87 times before he or she is caught.

We will be out in force to keep the public safe from those who engage in the dangerous behavior of impaired driving. Please celebrate ringing in the New Year in a safe and responsible way.

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