

## Holiday DUI Safety Message from ABC Director Hardy

On behalf of the California Alcoholic Beverage Control, I wish to take a moment and send a happy holiday season greeting full of good time spent with family and friends to all Californians.

The holidays should be a happy time for all of us but we need to be wary of drinking drivers. Recently, I had the honor of speaking at two separate California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) news conferences. The Office of Traffic Safety announced the California State Holiday DUI Enforcement effort. OTS Director Chris Murphy announced \$5.2 million in grants to 111 law enforcement agencies to conduct a concentration of sobriety checkpoints. ABC is one of the agencies that has received funding and we intend to put it to good use to prevent DUI crashes and save lives. We have put several of our officers through extensive Field Sobriety Training so we can assist our allied law enforcement agencies with DUI prevention efforts. This will be in addition to all the hard work our officers do cracking down on alcoholic beverage violations at ABC licensed businesses.

We are pleased to inform you that for the first time since 1998, the number of Californians killed in alcohol-related crashes decreased. DUI related deaths are down 8.3%. It is encouraging to see that number drop, but there is a lot of work to do.

There are still too many people dying on California roads, streets and highways because of alcohol-related crashes. 188 young people under the age of 21 died in these DUI crashes in 2007. Although the number is lower than the previous year, it represents far too many tragedies involving young people.

If you are planning celebrations with friends and family, be responsible and don't drink and drive. Plan ahead of time and designate a non-drinking driver or take public transportation.

ABC Investigators have been running Minor Decoy, Shoulder Tap and Task Force Operations with many different law enforcement organizations throughout the State to help try to reduce alcohol-related deaths and injuries. They will continue those efforts right through January 1, 2009 and beyond.

We also ask the business community for help. We need the 80,000 ABC licensed premises to help by checking ID's, saying no to minors and not serving obviously intoxicated persons. It might take a little extra time to be cautious, but it's worth it if it saves one life.

If we all work together and talk to our families and friends, and make good choices, the holidays can be safe, happy and a time to cheer. Thank you and have a terrific holiday season.