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N e w s R e l e a s e

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SHERIFF CHAMPAGNE CALLS FOR NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY SAFETY

For St. Charles Parish residents, as for adults across the nation, New Year's Eve is a joyous and festive event. Parties and get-togethers abound, and people celebrate with good food and good cheer. But too much "cheery" alcoholic beverages can lead to a tragic alcohol-related traffic accident when the party is over and guests and family drive home.

"Busy roadways throughout the holidays always increase the risk of more drunken drivers," said Sheriff Champagne. "Impaired driving is the most frequently committed crime in America. In order for the roadways to become a safer place, it is crucial for people to know their individual limits when it comes to celebrating this festive season. Prior to making the decision to drink, people must consider the possible outcome for their actions. You can help reduce traffic accidents," stated Sheriff Champagne. "Promote the designated driver program, respect each designated driver and don't let friends drive drunk." There is no way to predict when an alcohol-related accident will happen. However, there are numerous precautions drivers can take to reduce their chances of becoming a victim of an alcohol-related traffic accident, according to the Sheriff.

Precautions to take if you are hosting a holiday party:

- Encourage guest to car pool with other guests and ask them to designate a driver who will agree to abstain from alcohol.
- Serve non-alcoholic beverages for designated drivers to make them feel as though they are still part of the festivities.
- Serve a large amount of light foods. Some foods, particularly those high in fat (such as meat and cheese) retard alcohol absorption.
- Prior to the party, encourage guests who plan on celebrating with holiday "cheer" to spend the night.