



DAKOTA COUNTY



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NEWS RELEASE

Dakota County Attorney Backstrom and Sheriff Bellows Support December as National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

Now that the holiday season is here Americans across the country will soon be involved in holiday activities and travel. For some however, the season won't be free of disaster. That's why Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom and Dakota County Sheriff Dave Bellows are joining highway safety organizations and law enforcement partners across the nation to remind people during December and throughout the year that *Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving* and that drinking and driving don't mix.

December is designated **National Impaired Driving Prevention Month**. It is a time to raise awareness about the dangerous consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. On average, 25 people are killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes each day in America during the month of December. County Attorney Backstrom and Sheriff Bellows want to remind people that drinking and driving can quickly turn a holiday celebration into a tragedy.

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom commented: "When you drink alcohol or use drugs and drive, you are putting your life and the lives of others at risk. Be responsible, and don't let your holiday celebrations end in tragedy. Plan a sober ride."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2010 over 32,500 people were killed in crashes. Thirty-one percent (10,228) of those fatalities involved a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol-impaired concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher, which is above the legal limit and 70 percent of these driver-impaired crashes involved persons with a BAC of .15 or more. Statistics tell us that fatal crashes involving impaired drivers increase in the month of December.

"Fortunately, citizens in Dakota County can rest assured that law enforcement will be even more vigilant this month in our lookout for impaired drivers as we work to keep our roads as safe as possible, but we need everyone's help in doing so," Sheriff Dave Bellows noted. "The holidays should be a time for celebration, not tragedy," County Attorney Backstrom added.

County Attorney Backstrom and Sheriff Bellows ask everyone to do their part in keeping our roadways safe by never driving after drinking or using drugs. Remember, "*Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving*."

For more resources on this topic, go to www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov. If you have questions, contact James Backstrom at 651-438-4440.

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