

Buzzed driving is drunk driving

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MAYES COUNTY - As party-goers celebrate the holidays with friends and family, everyone should heed Pryor Police Department's warning to keep the party off the road. Remember, buzzed driving is drunk driving.

In 2009, there were 160 arrests in Mayes County for driving under the influence. Another 272 public intoxication charges were made for the same year.

Law enforcement has been out in force since Dec. 19, cracking down on anyone caught drunk behind the wheel.

"After hearing about the dangers of drinking and driving time after time, most people have gotten the message that if they're planning on drinking, they should always plan a safe way home," said Detective Doug Barham. "But sadly, millions of Americans still think they are invincible and regularly choose to get behind the wheel after having too much to drink."

Barham said parents should take note that young males were at particularly high risk, with nearly one-quarter admitting to riding with someone who should not have been behind the wheel, due to alcohol use, in the past year.

"We know that the holiday season can be one of the deadliest and most dangerous times on America's roadways due to an increase in drunk driving," Barham reported. "Don't let your 2010 end in an arrest or worse, death. Remember, whether you've had way too many or just one too many, it's not worth the risk."

Mayes County Hope Coalition reports that 38 percent of all Mayes County arrests are alcohol related (OSBI, 2008). Also, in Mayes County, 47 percent of individuals that die in car crashes are alcohol related (FARS, 2006).

Mayes County Hope Coalition recommends these simple tips for a safe holiday season:

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin;
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver;
- If you're impaired, call a sober friend or family member;
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement;
- And remember, friends don't let friends drive drunk. If you know of someone who is about to drive or ride impaired, take their keys and help them make other arrangements to get to where they are going safely.

For more information, visit www.stopimpaireddriving.org.