

# PRESS RELEASE

**CONTACT:** Bev Ward, Jackson Traffic Safety Director  
(517) 768-6704

Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition  
536 N. Jackson Street  
Jackson, MI 49201  
(517) 796-5133 (fax) 784-2430 khaynes@uwjackson.org



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 9, 2009**

## **SAFE AND SOBER THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

### **How to Keep Yourself, Your Family and Your Guests Safe**

**Jackson, Michigan** - The holiday season is upon us and preparations are underway for joyful times associated with Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's Eve to name a few. Christmas shopping, children's band performances, dining with friends, holiday parties and family gatherings are some of this season's events. Although this is a joyous time, the time between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve can be one of the most dangerous times of the year for driving due to impaired drivers. We would like to remind residents that the use of alcohol, drugs and *driving* is not a good party mix.

The Michigan Drunk Driving Audit shows that in Jackson County there were seven, alcohol-related fatalities, out of 17 total vehicle deaths in 2008. To date in 2009, Jackson County has had 12 fatalities, six of which were alcohol related. This is the lowest number of traffic fatalities in Jackson County in five years. Please help keep our numbers low and residents safe by driving "Safe and Sober."

Drivers should know that there will be special police enforcement in Jackson County starting December 23 and running through January 2. Knowing and sharing with others the consequences about drinking and driving can reduce drunk driving. Below are the penalties for first time offenses; however, consequences for multiple offenses increase dramatically.

A first-time drunk-driving conviction carries heavy penalties including:

- Up to 93 day in jail;
- Up to a \$500 fine;
- Up to 360 hours of community service;
- Six points on a driver's license; and
- Up to 80 days' license suspension.

If you are hosting a holiday party this season, you can help by controlling access to alcohol supplied; providing guests alternative non-alcoholic drinks; having plenty of appetizers, snacks and other food available; by making sure no one under 21 is permitted to drink alcohol; and by making sure that any impaired guest does not drive.

An available alternate on New Year's Eve is Jackson's Dial-a-Ride program which is available to County residents on a first come, first serve basis. The program is available from 11:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. on New Year's Eve by calling (517) 788-8410. This service is co-sponsored by the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition.

The Jackson Traffic Safety Commission and the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition want everyone to have a safe and enjoyable holiday season. Please drive safely, always wear your seat belt, do not allow anyone under 21 to drink alcohol and never drink and drive.

#### **More information about:**

Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition and its activities, please contact Kelsey Haynes at (517) 796-5133 or via email at [khaynes@uwjackson.org](mailto:khaynes@uwjackson.org)  
Jackson Traffic Safety Program, Bev Ward, Traffic Safety Director, (517) 768-6704