



## ROANOKE COUNTY NEWS RELEASE

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### For Immediate Release

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## Roanoke County Police Promote Safe-Driving Campaign

*Enforcement and education are focus of the holiday campaign*

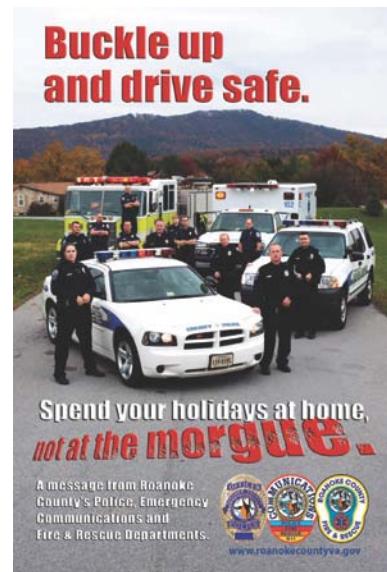
**ROANOKE COUNTY, VA (November 21, 2012)** – Roanoke County police will be conducting numerous sobriety checkpoints and high visibility traffic patrols now through the end of the year as a means of keeping impaired and other unsafe drivers off the streets this holiday season.

Two sobriety checkpoints are planned this week and will be followed by a series of checkpoints in different areas of the County through the New Year. From 2002 to 2011, 44 people died and another 723 were injured in alcohol-related crashes in Roanoke County. During 2010 and 2011, Roanoke County had its lowest number of alcohol-related crashes – a number the department hopes will continue to decrease with efforts such as these.

Checkpoints and increased patrols also provide officers an opportunity to remind drivers and passengers to buckle up and drive safe. Indeed, education and public awareness will also be integral to the holiday campaign, especially with regard to younger drivers. “Increased enforcement is an excellent deterrent and the Police Department will continue these efforts but it isn’t a long-term solution. We as a community need to talk to our youth, children and grandchildren. We need to educate them about safe driving techniques and the importance of buckling up and paying attention before it’s too late,” explained Roanoke County Police Chief Howard Hall.

According to data from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, fatal crashes among teens in Virginia are up 10% over last year. Roanoke County Police Sgt. Tim Wyatt and his colleagues in the department’s Traffic Safety Unit regularly address high school students and know it can be challenging to get young people to understand that one wrong decision behind the wheel can have serious life or death consequences. “I’m often asked “what will it take” to get people talking about traffic safety before another young life is lost. I tell them it takes a community that isn’t afraid to make discussion of this issue a priority. It doesn’t matter whether that dialogue takes place in school, on social media or around the dining room table – just talk about it.”

To spark discussion and get people involved, Roanoke County has created a holiday safe-driving poster and informational video as part of its public education campaign. Both are available for view on the Roanoke County Police Department website and Facebook pages. To view the video, visit <http://roanokecountyva.gov/index.aspx?nid=1305>. To share the poster, visit the Roanoke County Police Department Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Roanoke-County-VA-Police-Department/177031865688661?ref=hl>.



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Sgt. Wyatt hopes the community will share these resources with others. “What will it take to become involved by demanding increased education, enforcement, and public awareness? What will it take for you to promote the inherent risks associated with teen driving on your Facebook, Twitter, or other electronic means? What will it take for you to help prevent such tragic losses? It takes a community that’s involved to keep our teens safe behind the wheel. Together we can make a difference! We just have to start.”

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# Buckle up and drive safe.



Spend your holidays at home,  
*not at the morgue.*

A message from Roanoke  
County's Police, Emergency  
Communications and  
Fire & Rescue Departments.



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