



SHERIFF KOOTENAI COUNTY



SHERIFF **BEN WOLFINGER**

UNDERSHERIFF **DAN MATTOS**

Media Release

March 10, 2017

Kootenai County Sheriff's Office and ITD urge drivers to avoid driving impaired during St. Patrick's Day

Kootenai County - St. Patrick's Day has become one of the nation's most popular times to celebrate and party. But unfortunately, too many people are taking to the roads after drinking alcohol, making the holiday one of our most dangerous. In fact, 30 people were killed in drunk-driving crashes across the nation during the St. Patrick's Day holiday period in 2015.

The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office is teaming with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Idaho Transportation Department **March 10-17** on extra patrols to curb these needless tragedies. These groups also want to share the message that *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

According to NHTSA, 252 people lost their lives in drunk-driving-related crashes during the St. Patrick's Day holiday period from 2011-2015. More than a fourth of them were killed in drunk-driving crashes that occurred in the early morning, post-party hours after midnight.

If you plan to celebrate this St. Patrick's Day, please follow these tips to stay safe:

- Before celebrating St. Patrick's Day, decide whether you'll drink or you'll drive. You can't do both.
- If you're planning on driving, commit to staying sober. If you've been out drinking and then get behind the wheel, you run the risk of causing a crash or getting arrested for a DUI.
- If you have been drinking, call a taxi or sober friend or family member, or use public transportation.
- Also, try NHTSA's SaferRide mobile app, which helps users call a taxi or a friend for a ride home and identify their location so they can be picked up.
- Walking while intoxicated can also be deadly, as lack of attention could put you at risk of getting hit by a vehicle.
- Help those around you be responsible, too. If someone you know is drinking, do not let them get behind the wheel and help them find a sober ride home.
- If you see someone who appears to be driving drunk, call the police. Your actions could help save a life.

Impaired driving causes tragedies all year round. According to NHTSA, 35,092 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2015, and 10,265 (29 percent) of those fatalities occurred in drunk-driving-related crashes.

Remember this St. Patrick's Day: Plan Before You Party! Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving.

Sheriff Ben Wolfinger
By Lt. Joe Jovick

