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By Jason Holder

## Drunk Driving Deaths Down



SYRACUSE -- There were 22 fewer drunk driving deaths in 2006 than there were in 2005 in New York State. That's the finding of a new report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. There were 580 drunk driving deaths in New York State in 2005 and 558 in 2006. That's a two percent decrease, and while small, it is the first time in years there has been a decline in drunk driving fatalities.

"The message keeps getting out particularly to young people this is not a habit to get into," says Sheriff Kevin Walsh. "You can ruin your life as well as somebody else's simply by the fact that you decided to drink and get behind the wheel of a car."

Sheriff Walsh says the increase in D-W-I education programs and in enforcement are paying off, "The enforcement efforts through the stop DWI program has allowed us to put more patrols out on the street each one of those patrols is basically giving the message you see a sheriff's deputy there is a pretty good chance you are going to get arrested. "

However, the news is not all good. Forty percent of the nearly 1,500 alcohol-related accidents in New York State last year were fatal. Police say that proves there is more work to be done.

Here are some other statistics from the study:

### THE NUMBERS

- 13,470 deaths, both drivers and motorcyclists.
- Down 112 from 2005 (13,582).
- Fatalities up in 22 states in 2006, down in 28 states.
- Number of alcohol-related crashes actually rose slightly.

### THE BEST, THE WORST

- Florida, Missouri, Pennsylvania: greatest death decreases.
- Arizona, Kansas, Texas: greatest increases.
- Texas had highest number of drunk driving deaths: 1,354.
- District of Columbia had fewest: 12.

### NEW CAMPAIGN

- For Labor Day weekend, \$11 million nationwide.

-- Slogan: "Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest."

To read the entire National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Report go to:

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/>



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