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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sept. 7, 2007**

**COUNTY POLICE COMBAT DRUNK AND DISTRACTED DRIVERS**  
**Two recent campaigns make roads safer for all**

Officers from the Westchester County Department of Public Safety arrested 50 motorists on DWI charges in recent weeks as part of a nationwide campaign to combat drunken driving.

In addition, county police took part in a second initiative that targeted distracted driving offenses, which have been found to be a leading cause of traffic accidents. This effort led to 124 summonses.

Both campaigns were aimed at making county roadways safe for all who travel them.

The Safe and Sober campaign, in effect from Aug. 16 to Sept. 3, featured DWI checkpoints and increased patrols to identify people driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The 50 arrests are 16 percent more than the 43 arrests during a similar campaign last year.

“Westchester County has zero tolerance for people who drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs,” said County Executive Andy Spano. “If you are under the influence, you are under arrest.”

Spano has provided county police with increased funding to combat DWI year-round as well as educate young drivers and others about the dangers of drunken or drugged driving.

So far in 2007, county police officers have made 369 DWI arrests, up from 331 arrests in the same period last year – an increase of more than 11 percent.

“Driving while drunk is a crime. The county police will continue to aggressively pursue those who do so,” Public Safety Commissioner Thomas Belfiore said.

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County police also participated in the Distracted Driver campaign, a statewide effort sponsored by sheriffs' departments across New York aimed at getting drivers to keep their attention focused fully on the road.

During the campaign, from Aug. 26-31, county police issued a total of 124 summonses, including 113 for using a hand-held cell phone while driving, seven for driving with a head phone that covers both ears and four for driving without having any hand on the steering wheel.

“For many people, driving is viewed as second nature. It is not. It is an activity that mandates our full attention because the risk of serious injury or death is ever present. Distracted driving is not a safe practice,” Belfiore said.

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