Thursday, August 12, 1982

## **DUI - Serious**

State Highway Patrol Commander, Col. John T. Jenkins, today called on all citizens to "get concerned" and "take personal responsibility for drinking and driving."

In acknowledging sthe seriousness of the DUI problem in North Carolina, Jenkins encouraged Call citizens to discourage drinking and driving. 'Motorists, as well as all citizens, can help prevent the needless slaughter on our highways by taking personal responsibility for not drinking and driving and by eliminating opportunities for their friends and families to drink and drive," Jenkins said.

Jenkins urged every person who drives to take the following steps toward reducing drinking and driving:

Very Little Alcohol Is Needed To Impair Ability. The ability to absorb alcohol is primarily determined by body weight, but it may also be affected by other emotional and physical factors. Actually, very little alcohol is needed to impair driving skills. Many people do not realize that the alcohol content in one, twelve - once beer is the same as that in the average mixed drink.

Drivers who are "legally drunk" are seven times more likely to have an accident than if they had not had a drink at all. The chances of a youthful driver having an accident are even greater as they have not as yet mastered their newly acquired driving skills or the effects of alcohol. (Jenkins pointed out that in those states that have raised their legal minimum drinking age, there has been a substantial decrease in nighttime fatal crashes. According to Patrol figures, drivers under age 25 are involved in approximately 36 per cent of the fatal accidents and constitute 43 per cent of all DUI arrests.)

Don't Be Fooled By The Myths About Alcohol. Time is the only factor when it comes to "sobering up," according to Jenkins. "Although coffee can be a more pleasant way to pass the time away, and a cold shower possible makes you feel refreshed temporarily, neither has any affect on the process. The safe way to sober up is to wait one hour for each drink consumed



stressed.

Jenkins also had words of warning for motorists who can "hold their liquor." "Some people through years of drinking experience may show very few outward symptoms of intoxication at lower blood alcohol levels, yet their judgement is still impaired," he said. "Regardless of a person's drinking experience, a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 per cent will definitely impair the driving ability of some individuals, and as the concentration increases, & progressively higher proportion of such individuals are so affected, until at a blood alcohol concentration of 0.10 per cent all individuals are definitely impaired."

Be A Responsible Host At Your Parties. Jenkins recommended that food and non - alcoholic drinks be served. If alcoholic beverages are served, he suggested the bar be closed early. "Above all, don't allow someone who has drunk too much to drive home. Call a cab, you or a friend drive them home, or invite them to stay the night," Jenkins advised.

According to Jenkins, more DUI arrests are made each year in North Carolina than the previous year. He pointed out that North Carolina's arrest rate for DUI is more than double the national average (1,400 DUI arrests per 100,000 population, compared to 600 per 100,000). "You can help law enforcement in its efforts to reduce the number of drinking drivers on our streets and highways. Just take control over drinking situations by drinking responsibly. Together, we will do a more effective job," Jenkins concluded.