LOUISIANA HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMISSION NEWS RELEASE
February 24, 2022

Mardi Gras will be no holiday for impaired drivers

Feb. 24, 2022 – The Mardi Gras season is a deep-rooted tradition in Louisiana, a time to eat, drink, and party before Lent, a season of fasting and repentance. But those who drink and drive will find no forgiveness as a statewide Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over campaign is in place through March 1 to arrest drunk drivers to get them off the road.

"Mardi Gras is a time to celebrate, but nothing ruins a good time more than an impaired driver," said Lisa Freeman, executive director of the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission. "Our law enforcement partners are protecting people who want to celebrate safely. They're doing that by looking for and arresting impaired drivers to keep the roads safe."

From 2016 through 2020, crashes involving a driver who had been drinking killed 22 people and injured 531 people in Louisiana during the Carnival season, according to data from the Center for Analytics and Research in Transportation Safety at LSU. Of all the holidays in Louisiana, the Mardi Gras season, Halloween, and New Year's Eve usually have the highest number of motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and deaths.

LHSC is funding this statewide Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over enforcement wave that will pay for extra officers to patrol the roads to find and arrest impaired drivers. Freeman noted that drivers who are impaired by drugs, even prescription drugs, also are subject to being stopped and arrested.

"When people hear about drug-impaired driving, they may think the law only applies to illegal drugs," Freeman said. "Even if you have a valid prescription, if that substance alters your senses or your reactions, or if it makes you sleepy or affects your judgment, you should not be driving a vehicle. If you drive under those conditions, you are putting yourself and others at great risk, and you could be and ought to be arrested."

Freeman also urged everyone to watch out for friends or family members who've been drinking and are trying to operate a vehicle, by offering them a ride.

Catching beads, not handcuffs, is the only way to celebrate the Mardi Gras holiday.

For more information, contact:
Mark Lambert
225-937-8113
mark@lambert-media.com
www.lambert-media.com