

THE DWI COURT REPORTER

A Publication by the  **NCDC**
NATIONAL CENTER
FOR DWI COURTS

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

April is Alcohol Awareness Month 2

2013 DWI Court Leadership Award Nominations Being Taken 2

Harris County SOBER Courts Commemorate National Impaired Driving Prevention Month 4

Denver County Celebrates First DWI Court Graduation 5

El Paso DWI Court Celebrates with Graduates 6

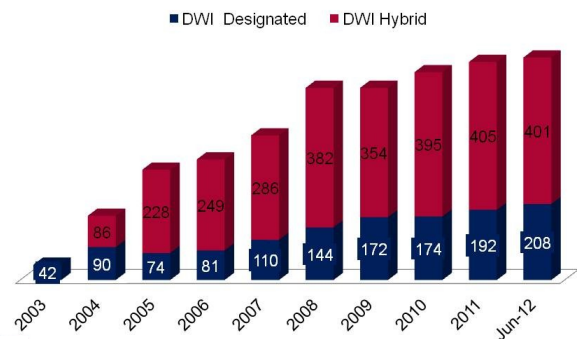
DWI Courts Surpass 600 Nationally

Courts Tout Success Stories During Impaired Driving Prevention Month

The National Center for DWI Courts (NCDC) is pleased to announce that the number of DWI Courts nationwide has eclipsed 600. This milestone illustrates how DWI Courts are on the cutting edge of criminal justice reform, saving taxpayer money and making our communities safer.

DWI Courts across the nation held special ceremonies throughout December for individuals

DWI Courts in the United States



who completed the program, as part of Impaired Driving Prevention Month. Impaired Driving Prevention month is a

time to raise awareness about the dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.

(Continued on page 7)

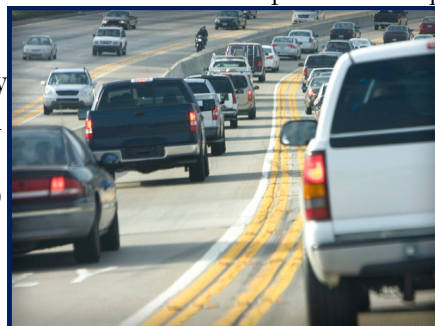
Highway deaths fell to lowest level in more than six decades, down 26 percent since 2005

The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recently released a new analysis indicating that highway deaths fell to 32,367 in 2011, marking the lowest level since 1949 and a 1.9 percent decrease from the previous year. The

updated 2011 data shows the historic downward trend in recent years continued through last year and represent a 26 percent decline in traffic fatalities overall since 2005.

"The latest numbers show how the tireless work of our safety agencies and partners,

(Continued on page 3)



April is Alcohol Awareness Month

Alcohol Awareness Month, held every April, was founded by and has been sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, Inc. (NCADD) since 1987. Its purpose is to increase public awareness and understanding aimed at reducing the stigma associated with alcoholism that too often prevents individuals and families from seeking help. For 2013, NCADD has chosen the theme **"Help for Today. Hope For Tomorrow"**.

The theme is designed to draw attention to the pervasive impact that alcohol, alcohol-related problems and alcoholism have on young people, their friends, families and our communities.

More than 18 million individuals or 8.5% of Americans suffer from alcohol-use disorders. In addition, there are countless millions of individuals, family members and children who experience the



devastating effects of the alcohol problem of someone in their life. In fact, 25% percent of U.S. children have been exposed to alcohol-use disorders in their family.

The economic cost of alcoholism and alcohol abuse has recently been estimated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be \$223.5 billion (\$746 per person) or about \$1.90 per drink.

Researchers found the costs largely resulted from losses in workplace productivity (72%), health care expenses for problems caused by excessive drinking (11%), law enforcement and other criminal justice expenses related to excessive alcohol consumption (9%), and motor vehicle crash costs from impaired driving (6%).

The month of April will be filled with activities on local, state, and national levels in an effort to

(Continued on page 8)

2013 DWI Court Leadership Award Nominations Being Taken

The NCDC is now taking nominations for the 2013 National DWI Court Leadership Award. This award shines a spotlight of commendation on an individual and/or organization who through their tireless efforts have saved countless lives and made communities a safer place through the person's advancement of the DWI Court movement.



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through specific results and public recognition at the local, regional, state, or national level; and

- The nominee has not been honored with this award previously; and
- The person and/or organization must be nominated from three separate DWI Court practitioners, articulating how the nominee meets the foregoing criteria; and
- The person nominated **and** the nominating individuals must be current members of NADCP.
- Posthumous nominations will not be considered.

These three individuals should be well acquainted

(Continued on page 8)

Eligibility Requirements and Guidelines

The nomination must meet these eligibility requirements:

- The nominee contributed to the advancement of the nation's DWI Court effort, and demonstrated significant personal leadership and exemplary performance. This should be demonstrated

Highway deaths fell to lowest level in more than six decades

(Continued from page 1)

coupled with significant advances in technology and continued public education, can really make a difference on our roadways," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "As we look to the future, it will be more important than ever to build on this progress by continuing to tackle head-on issues like seat belt use, drunk driving, and driver distraction."

While Americans drove fewer miles in 2011 than in 2010, the nearly two percent drop in roadway deaths significantly outpaced the corresponding 1.2 percent decrease in vehicle miles traveled. In addition, updated Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) information shows 2011 also saw the lowest fatality rate ever recorded, with 1.10 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2011, down from 1.11 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2010. Other key statistics include:

- Fatalities declined by 4.6 percent for occupants of passenger cars and light trucks (including SUVs, minivans and pickups).
- Deaths in crashes involving drunk drivers dropped 2.5 percent in 2011, taking 9,878 lives compared to 10,136 in 2010.
- Fatalities increased among large truck occupants (20 percent), pedalcyclists (8.7 percent), pedestrians (3.0 percent), and motorcycle riders (2.1 percent). NHTSA is working with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to gather more detailed information on the large truck occupant crashes to better understand the increase in fatalities in 2011.

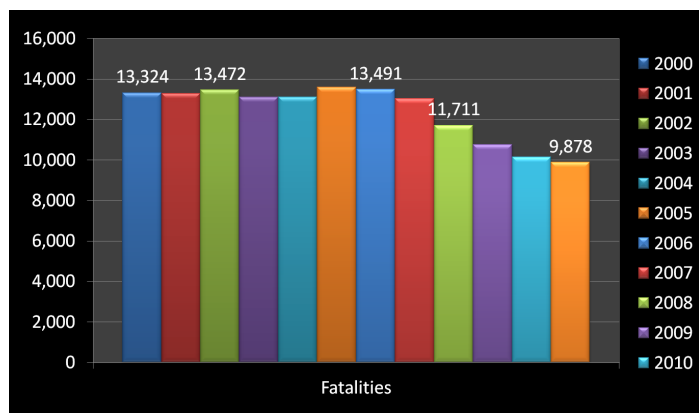
The number of people killed in distraction-affected crashes rose to 3,331 in 2011 from 3,267 in 2010, an increase of 1.9 percent. NHTSA believes this increase can be attributed in part to increased awareness and reporting.

distraction-affected crashes, a seven percent decline from the estimated 416,000 people injured in such crashes in 2010. Thirty-six states experienced reductions in overall traffic fatalities, led by

Deaths in crashes involving drunk drivers dropped 2.5 percent in 2011, taking 9,878 lives compared to 10,136 in 2010.

Connecticut (100 fewer fatalities), North Carolina (93 fewer), Tennessee (86 fewer), Ohio (64 fewer) and Michigan (53 fewer).

"In the past several decades, we've seen remarkable improvements in both the way motorists behave on our roadways and in the safety of the vehicles they drive, and we're confident that NHTSA's 5-Star Safety Ratings Program and nationwide collaborations like 'Click It or Ticket' and 'Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over' have played a key role in making our roads safer," said NHTSA Administrator David Strickland. "Even as we celebrate the progress we've made in recent years, we must remain focused on addressing the safety issues that are continuing to claim more than 30,000 lives each year."



**Alcohol Impaired Fatalities
2000-2011**

An estimated 387,000 people were injured in

Harris County SOBER Courts Commemorate National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

*Article submitted by the Harris County
DWI Court*

The Harris County SOBER Courts (*Saving Ourselves By Education and Recovery*) in Houston, Texas, celebrated National Impaired Driving Prevention Month Texas-style, in a very big way. At the standing room only press conference and graduation ceremony, the entire DWI Court caseload was present, along with TV cameras from five local news stations, numerous elected officials, and invited dignitaries. The keynote speaker was nationally acclaimed expert on problem-solving courts, Helen Harberts.

As part of the celebration, each of the participants created a poster depicting his or her personal journey to sobriety and recovery.

Some posters were lavishly decorated, while others were simple displays. Yet all of them contained powerful messages of recovery. Ms. Harberts judged the posters and awarded the prizes.

Harris County has three SOBER Court dockets with Judge Robin Brown, Judge Diane Bull, and Judge Natalie Fleming presiding. Judge Fleming also presides over a Spanish speaking caseload. It is clear that these judges are passionate about the program and the lives saved. Judge Bull stated, "Nowhere is the problem of alcohol-related fatalities felt more keenly than here in Harris County, which NHTSA has reported is the deadliest county in America. This celebration will raise community awareness about the dangers of impaired driving."



The winning poster depicting a personal journey towards sobriety

On the day after the graduation, the judges appeared before the Harris County Commissioners' Court. They received a proclamation in observance of National Impaired Driving Prevention Month and the contribution of the DWI Court program improving public safety in the community.

The judges acknowledged the NCDC and credited the organization for providing outstanding resources which made planning the events much easier. Judge Fleming remarked, "The response has been tremendous. We plan to celebrate National Impaired Driving Prevention Month every year from now on."



The Harris County DWI Court team with the Harris County proclamation on National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

Denver County Celebrates First DWI Court Graduation during National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

*Article submitted by the Denver County
DWI Court*

The Denver County Sobriety Court celebrated its first graduation on December 5, 2012 during “National Impaired Driving Prevention Month.” Officially beginning on May 24, 2011, the Sobriety Court has grown exponentially and now has 175 active clients. At the graduation ceremony, the seventeen graduates were commended for their commitment and hard work towards meeting both the program’s goals as well as their own.

Under the leadership of Former Denver County Court Presiding Judge Mary Celeste, team members from the District Attorney’s Office, Colorado Public Defender’s Office, Denver County Court Administrator, various Denver County Court Judges, representatives from the Colorado Department of Behavioral Health, Denver Police Department, Probation Department and Crime Prevention and Control Commission collaborated on how to implement a DWI Court. The process took just over one year. Denver County Sobriety Court’s mission is to provide an efficient, judicially-supervised, systemic process to address addiction, offender success, and recovery.

To raise awareness about the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, and ensure a speedy entry into the DWI Court, Denver County implemented new procedures to address the repeat impaired driver. When a DWI

The graduation ceremony is evidence of the tremendous impact the Denver County Sobriety Court has had on the community, and will send a powerful message that DWI Courts are a proven solution that saves both lives and money.

offender is arrested by the Denver Police Department and the person has a prior DWI conviction, the paperwork is sent to the District Attorney’s Office within hours of the arrest. The District Attorney’s Office then reviews the offender’s background in order to determine eligibility for the DWI Court. Pending a resolution of the case, the defendant is required to post bond and the person is placed on a pre-sentence monitored abstinence program that incorporates frequent alcohol and drug testing. It is monitored through Denver Pre-Trial Office.

Planning the graduation event was a unique and momentous experience and the Sobriety Court team wanted to coordinate it with National Impaired Driving Prevention Month. The *NCDC 2012 DWI Field Tool Kit* was instrumental in helping prepare press releases and tips on how to contact the media. The tool kit (along with help from Rhonda Pence from the National Association of Drug Court Professionals) made the graduation a success, and showcased our program to the community, other criminal justice agencies, and graduate’s family and friends.

The graduation ceremony is evidence of the tremendous impact the Denver County Sobriety Court has had on the community, and it will send a powerful message that DWI Courts are a proven solution that saves both lives and money. At this time, no Sobriety Court participant (active or revoked) has been convicted of a new drinking and driving offense.

Editor’s Note: DWI Courts around the country supported National Impaired Driving Prevention Month holding graduations and other events; all designed to demonstrate a commitment to end impaired driving. This article and the one on page 4 are two great examples.

El Paso DWI Court Celebrates with Graduates

*Article submitted by the El Paso
DWI Court*

Once a month, Judge Robert Anchondo and his DWI Court team celebrate as a group of graduates take the next step to recovery. Loving families surround each graduate as emotional speeches explain their varying paths to DWI Court and the pain that each has inflicted because of their addictions. Each of the graduates describe the program as the most difficult, yet rewarding, year of their lives. They then proceed to explain, usually in a very deliberate sober tone, that they recognize the serious life-long battle ahead. Invariably, however, they also then proudly say that the DWI Court has given them the necessary weapons to wage this battle.

October's graduation had three special guests: Judge Alejandro Gonzalez, who briefly addressed the group; and two past graduates, Hector R. and Donald M. Both graduates attended to show their support not just for their old friends but for the program, itself. Judge Gonzalez made sure to attend because graduate James P. had been referred from his court. Judge Anchondo's goal is to not only have the judges present who referred each graduate but to also have the officers who initially arrested the graduate. These

individuals will not only be reminders of where the graduates have been but of the incredible progress and transformation that has been achieved.

The progress of the graduates includes that of Christian L. He earned his high school diploma in the program and he has enrolled in college with plans to become a firefighter. Hector R.'s graduation was delayed by frequent relapses but the experience has galvanized his relationship with his family. Gilbert A. came into the program with custody, but not necessarily the respect, of his three teen children. He has gained a stable job during his time in the program. More importantly, however, Gilbert A.'s hard work in the program has earned his children's trust. James P. has

uncluttered his life by learning to focus on himself and his sobriety. He has nearly completed the requirements needed to earn his Master's Degree. Javier N. is another graduate who had many bumps on the road to graduation. These "bumps" caused Javier N. to be in the program for more than two years. The time has been well-spent, though. Always intelligent, sobriety has given Javier N. the clarity to realize his good intentions. He has started a successful business and developed a relationship with his family.

These graduates, as stated, were all cautiously optimistic about their respective futures. Now that they have learned to deal with their respective substance/alcohol abuse issues, their goals are actually within reach.



The El Paso DWI Court Team

DWI Courts Surpass 600 Nationally

(Continued from page 1)

“There is simply no better way for a community to take a stand against drunk driving than to implement a DWI Court,” said NCDC Senior Director David Wallace. “Reaching 600 DWI Courts nationwide sends a strong message that this country is ready for a new approach to stop repeat drunk driving, one that protects public safety, saves money, and permanently changes the behavior of DWI offenders.”

In December, [the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) announced that impaired driving fatalities were down 2.5% in 2011. This progress is due to a comprehensive approach to end drunk driving which includes successful programs like DWI Courts for hardcore DWI offenders. DWI Courts are being implemented throughout the country to hold DWI offenders accountable while also providing rigorous treatment and supervision. Repeat drunk drivers are particularly dangerous, and traditional sentencing has proven largely ineffective. In 2009,

hardcore impaired drivers, those with a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of .15 or greater or a previous DWI conviction, were involved in 70 percent of all fatal alcohol related crashes. Across the nation there remain more than two million impaired drivers with three or more DWI convictions and 400,000 with five or more.

DWI Courts protect public safety by using the highly successful Drug Court model to address the root cause of repeat and high BAC drunk driving: alcohol and other substance dependency. Participants in DWI Courts are intensely supervised, regularly and randomly tested for alcohol use, required to appear at least bi-weekly in court, and receive incentives for doing well and sanctions for not living up to their obligations.

“These programs are truly changing the way the criminal justice system deals with repeat drunk drivers and the results are greater than anything we have seen before,”

said Wallace. “More and more, communities are turning to DWI Court because frankly for the hardcore offender, nothing is as effective at reducing drunk driving and protecting public

safety.” Studies demonstrate that DWI Courts reduce the number of re-arrests of repeat DWI offenders, saving vast amounts of money that would be needed for jail confinement and probation services.



DWI Court Graduate Jill, before and after DWI Court. To see a short video discussing her transformation, [click here](#).

A recent evaluation completed in Georgia found that repeat DWI offenders participating in three DWI Courts were up to 65% less likely to be re-arrested for a new DWI offense than DWI offenders sentenced in a traditional format. A similar study in Michigan found that DWI Courts had better outcomes in nearly all comparisons with traditional sentencing. In one county, the participants were up to 19 times less likely to reoffend. The finding also noted that DWI Courts saved the criminal justice system time and money when compared to a traditional court. Orange County, California has four DWI Courts in operation, saving over 109,000 jail bed nights; and over \$11 million, since 2004.

Repeat DWI offenders participating in three DWI Courts in Georgia were up to 65% less likely to be re-arrested for a new DWI offense than DWI offenders sentenced in a traditional format

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April is Alcohol Awareness Month

(Continued from page 2)

educate people about treatment and prevention of alcoholism. Local NCADD Affiliates as well as schools, colleges, churches, countless community organizations will sponsor events that create awareness and encourage individuals and families to get help for alcohol-related problems and the disease of alcoholism.

Editor's Note: This is an excellent opportunity for DWI Courts to discuss what they are doing in communities across the nation: preventing impaired driving. DWI Courts are providing “**Help For Today**” through treatment and accountability for alcohol dependent offenders, and “**Hope for Tomorrow**” as graduates leave the program, ready to live a clean and sober life.

2013 DWI Court Leadership Award Nominations Being Taken

(Continued from page 2)

with the person being nominated for the award. They should be able to articulate in writing why the nominee should receive the award. They should also be ready to discuss their nominee with the Director of the National Center for DWI Courts.

Important Dates

Nominations should be submitted to the Director of the National Center for DWI Courts no later than **Friday, May 10, 2013**. The winner will be announced during the [NADCP 19th Annual Training Conference](#), at the Gaylord National Resort outside Washington DC from



**Judge Kent Lawrence (center)
receiving the 2012 DWI Court
Leadership Award.**

July 14-17, 2013.

A nomination can be made on the nomination form found on the NCDC website by [clicking here](#) or in a separate letter. Submissions can

also be faxed to David Wallace, director of the NCDC at (703) 575-9402, sent by email to dwallace@dwicourts.org, or by mail to the NCDC at 1029 North Royal Street, Suite 201, Alexandria, VA 22314.

Note: Some applications received in past years were not submitted by NADCP members and thus they were not considered. For the application to be considered, please be sure that all three of the individuals submitting the application and the person nominated are current members.