

Annual Festive RIDE Program returning for the holidays]

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

'Tis' the season to celebrate, and also to launch the Dufferin County Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) detachment's annual Festive RIDE Program.

Officers from Dufferin OPP officially kicked-off the seven-week long campaign focused on driver sobriety.

As first responders we have attended far too many horrific collisions caused by impaired driving. These collisions are completely avoidable, if drivers' plan ahead when consuming drugs or alcohol," said Staff Sgt. Tony Jelich. "There are many alternative options to remove impaired driving from the picture such as designative drivers, taxis, ride shares, public transit or staying the night."

According to the Dufferin OPP, in 2022 thus far there have been 20 collisions related to drugs or alcohol in the County. There have also been 43 arrests made by Dufferin OPP involving impaired driving.

During the Festive Ride Program, officers will be utilizing Mandatory Alcohol Screening (MAS), which allows officers to demand a breath test from any lawfully stopped driver, even if there is no evidence or suspicion that the driver has consumed alcohol.

Officers will also be using Drug Recognition Evaluation (DRE) and Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) as a resource for detecting drug-impaired drivers. The same penalties apply as those who are alcohol-impaired.

The OPP Festive RIDE Program will run until Jan. 12.