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Motorists are still driving while impaired

The OPP is reporting that drivers are still not getting the message about drinking and driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol. During the OPP's Festive RIDE program that began on November 23rd and wrapped up on January 2nd, the OPP laid 573 charges of impaired driving in this province.

Police also report that just over 350 people who had their licenses suspended following a roadside warning during the annual safety initiative that saw police officers checking vehicles at roadside stops, while checking for alcohol and drug impaired drivers.

Recent statistics do indicate that the percentage of people charged with impaired driving is down slightly during the Festive RIDE program this year compared to last year, but police say the sobering fact is that impaired driving is still considered a huge threat to public safety.

?Despite the high number of charges again this year, it is difficult to understand why people still choose to drink or use drugs, and then get behind the wheel to drive. These statistics are alarming, and we intend to keep the pressure on drivers who refuse to consider an alternative way to get to their destination. The annual Festive RIDE program may be over, but I can assure you that OPP officers will remain diligent with their focus on impaired drivers by conducting RIDE stops in various random locations every day across this province,? said Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, Provincial Commander of Traffic Safety & Operational Support.

In 2015, the OPP laid over 6000 alcohol and drug impaired driving charges. The OPP is reminding the public that some officers now have specialized training to identify drug impaired drivers. Police will continue their efforts to raise awareness about the dangers associated with impaired driving.