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## **Highway safety officials distribute 15,000 drink coasters in Savannah to deter DUIs**

*Smartphone app provides list of sober rides on St. Patrick's Day*

**(ATLANTA)** – Every year on St. Patrick's Day, Savannah draws thousands to its Spanish-moss draped streets and festively dyed fountains. This year will be no different. With the surge in green-clad visitors on a busy drinking holiday, the Governor's Office of Highway Safety is bucking a trend of increased alcohol-related crashes by distributing 15,000 drink coasters in the popular bar districts of Georgia's oldest city to keep drunk drivers off the road.

The coasters have been distributed all around Savannah. Bar patrons can use their smartphones to scan the QR code printed on the coasters. The code will send them to GOHS's Drive Sober, Georgia app, which provides a list of free and paid services in Savannah that will get them home safely. It is available for both Apple and Android devices.

"Savannah is the No. 1 destination in the state for this holiday weekend," GOHS Director Harris Blackwood said. "We want to make sure all the folks out celebrating St. Patrick's Day get home safely. While you're out, find our coasters and you'll have a list of sober ride options at your fingertips."

As the overall number of crashes in Georgia continues to decline, the incidence of alcohol-related crashes has been on the rise for several years. Last year, there were 9,300 alcohol-related collisions statewide. That's an increase of 275 crashes, or 3 percent, over 2012.

"We're losing far too many people on our roads to something that has a simple solution," Blackwood said. "Don't drink and drive this St. Patrick's Day. Designate a sober driver before you go out. The alternative could cost you or someone else their life."

Law enforcement patrols will be stepped up this weekend. Loss of life is the most tragic consequence of DUI, but the offense can also create a tremendous financial burden. From court costs and lawyer fees to higher insurance rates and lost wages, a DUI is estimated to cost approximately \$10,000. Other repercussions can include jail time, unemployment and the loss of a license.

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