COMMUNITY LEADERS WARN OF DANGERS OF HOLIDAY IMPAIRED DRINKING AND DRIVING

(Costa Mesa, December 11, 2013) –

What: Victims, law enforcement, and community leaders will discuss the threat to lives tragically ending due to driving under the influence of alcohol. No one thinks that their holiday celebration will end in tragedy. However, for those who include alcohol in their celebrations and then get behind the wheel, this is too often the case. Information and resources on how everyone can enjoy their holiday and come home safely will be provided. The press conference will also address the need for the Social Host Ordinance, which the City of Irvine passed in 2011.

In 2012, nearly one in ten collisions (or 9.7%) in Orange County involved the use of alcohol. Furthermore, in 2011 there were 16,003 DUI arrests in Orange County alone. Underage DUI has become an epidemic in this county. Based on DMV and CHP statistics, in O.C. in 2010 there were 941 underage DUI convictions, and 150 fatal or injury collisions involving underage DUI drivers.

This holiday season, make sure to plan ahead for a safe way home:

- Don’t drink and drive – always designate a non-drinking driver.
- Never serve alcohol to those under the legal drinking age of 21.
- Call a friend or family member for a ride home if you’ve been drinking.
- Keep a cab company telephone number in your wallet for a ride home.
- Be a responsible party host, don’t let guests drive after consuming alcoholic beverages. Take the car keys away from friends and relatives who have had too much to drink.
- Report suspected impaired drivers to law enforcement – Call 911 (pull over before using cell phone).
- Always buckle up.

Visuals: MADD DUI crash car and taxi cabs (to symbolize safe rides home) will be present at this event.

When: Monday, December 16, 2013
10 a.m.

Where: Irvine City Hall – 1 Civic Center Plaza, Irvine, CA 92606

Who: Desiree Vargas, daughter of DUI victim tragically killed in Irvine in 2004 by
Brandon Friend – underage (19-year old) DUI driver leaving a house party – example of need for Social Host Ordinance.

John Saliture, father of Allison Saliture - DUI victim killed in Cypress in 1994 by a driver who drank in a social home setting.

Silas Miers, Program Manager, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) California

Anita Lorz, Automobile Club of Southern California/Orange County DUI Task Force

Deputy Chief Mike Hamel, Irvine Police Department

Captain Jim Rudy, Orange County Sheriff’s Department

Chief Keith Richter, Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA)

Supervisor Todd Spitzer
Third District, Orange County Board of Supervisors

Irvine Mayor Pro Tem Jeff Lalloway

The Orange County Task Force includes representatives from 60 agencies representing law enforcement traffic safety, public health, local government, education (K-12 and college/university), private organizations and local residents. The task force has two lead agencies: the Automobile Club of Southern California and the County of Orange Health Care Agency Alcohol and Drug Education and Prevention Team that coordinate task force activities and facilitate general membership and steering committee meetings.

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