

Diageo Declares 2011 Milestone Year for Progress in Responsible Drinking

Launches Responsible Drinking Programs for Holiday and New Year

Challenges Industry to Increase Efforts to Combat Drunk Driving and Underage Drinking

NEWS PROVIDED BY

Diageo →

Dec 27, 2011, 12:54 ET

NORWALK, Conn., Dec. 27, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Diageo, the world's leading distilled spirits, beer and wine company, today declared 2011 a milestone year for progress in the reduction of drunk driving and underage drinking. Recent reports released this month by highly respected independent and government organizations demonstrate the serious progress that can be made when public and private stakeholders work together for a common cause.

"This year's data demonstrates that consistently adhering to the highest standards of responsible marketing, supporting innovative programs aimed at preventing underage access and working with a broad array of partners across the country makes a tangible difference in reducing drunk driving and underage drinking," said Guy L. Smith, Executive Vice President, Diageo.

"For the past decade serious and dedicated people within law enforcement, government at all levels, the scientific and academic communities, education at all levels, the alcohol policy community and the alcohol industry – beer, wine, and spirits – have been making concerted efforts alongside thoughtful and engaged parents towards reducing underage alcohol access and drunk driving. Clearly these efforts are producing positive results," Smith continued.

Earlier this month, Monitoring the Future (MTF), a highly respected annual study by the University of Michigan funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, released figures showing that underage drinking rates for 8th, 10th and 12th graders are at historic lows, and their lowest points since MTF was first conducted in 1975. In addition, the study showed significant decreases in alcohol use among nearly all grades across all prevalence periods, including binge drinking.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recently announced alcohol-impaired driving fatalities are at an historic low, despite the increase in miles driven. Since 1982 when recordkeeping began, the number of deaths has been cut by more than half and by nearly five percent in the last year alone.

"While these numbers show that the industry's efforts and those of many others around the country are gaining real traction and saving lives, there is still much work to be done," continued Smith. "To build on this momentum, Diageo will launch several initiatives to promote responsible drinking throughout the holidays and the New Year including Safe Ride Programs in Chicago, New York and Miami."

This holiday season, Diageo's iconic brand Johnnie Walker has partnered with the New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide free debit cards valued at \$15 apiece and single ride Metro Cards for New Yorkers to use in taxis and on trains or subways. The Safe Rides Home program enlists revelers, their friends and family members, as well as the city's transportation professionals: cab, livery and bus drivers and subway operators to make sure everyone gets home safely.

The DOT launched the first Safe Rides Home program last December, and 78 percent of all debit card transactions from that giveaway took place between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. – prime celebratory hours.

CIROC will also run safe rides programs in New York, Chicago and Miami with the fourth annual "CIROC Safe Rides" program in partnership with cast members of Bravo's Real Housewives.

In addition to the Safe Rides Program, Diageo supports the federal government's "We Don't Serve Teens Campaign" aimed at preventing adults from providing alcohol to underage persons. It also funds the Responsible Retailing Forum and the Responsible Hospitality Institute, which address responsible drinking in retail establishments, bars and communities. Both groups have been awarded government grants for their evidence-based approaches. In addition, Diageo is a founding member of The Century Council and supports its award-winning programs to reduce drunk driving and underage drinking in states across the country.

Diageo has also provided unrestricted grants to train medical professionals in the use of screening and brief intervention techniques (SBI). Grant recipients included the Medical Society of the State of New York to train its membership; Sacred Heart University to continue the use of SBI with college students; and the University of Chicago, which has recently implemented a landmark program to train Employee Assistance Program counselors in SBI throughout the United States. SBI is an evidence-based approach to reducing hazardous drinking and is endorsed by all global health agencies, including the World Health Organization.

"Significant progress has been made in reducing drunk driving and underage drinking," said Smith. "Despite this, Diageo, together with others who are serious about this important matter, will continue in our commitment and efforts to combat drunk driving and underage drinking."

About Diageo

Diageo (Dee-AH-Gee-O) is the world's leading premium drinks business with an outstanding collection of beverage alcohol brands across spirits, beer and wine. These brands include Johnnie Walker, Crown Royal, J&B, Windsor, Buchanan's and Bushmills whiskies, Smirnoff, Ciroc and Ketel One vodkas, Baileys, Captain Morgan, Jose Cuervo, Tanqueray and Guinness.

Diageo is a global company, with its products sold in more than 180 countries around the world. The company is listed on both the New York Stock Exchange (DEO) and the London Stock Exchange (DGE). For more information about Diageo, its people, brands, and performance, visit us at Diageo.com. For our global resource that promotes responsible drinking through the sharing of best practice tools, information and initiatives, visit DRINKiQ.com.

Celebrating life, every day, everywhere.

