

A Preliminary Review of Bernalillo County's Safe Ride Program

Prepared by:
Institute for Social Research, University of New Mexico
Nalani Quinn and Paul Guerin, Ph.D.
April 2006

The following reports information provided by the Bernalillo County Safe Ride program. A total of 12,421 rides were provided by the program from January 1, 2004, to December 31, 2005. Direct comparisons between 2004 and 2005 should be made with caution because funding and services available differed by year. Safe Ride funding was decreased in 2005 due to decreased overall funding available to the County's DWI program. As a result, hours of operation changed from 9pm-3am in 2004 to 10pm-2am in 2005, and days of operation changed from Wednesdays through Sundays in 2004 to Fridays and Saturdays in 2005. Both calendar years also provided service on primary holidays that did not fall on a regular service day.

"Who Uses Safe Rise Programs: An Examination of the Dynamics of Individuals Who Use a Safe Ride Program Instead Of Driving Home While Drunk" by Sheila Sarkar provides the following definition of Safe Ride programs:

The safe ride concept is one in which an outside source, taxis, business vehicles, etc. provide a safe ride home for intoxicated drivers. These programs range from a free or reduced price taxi service to a tow truck that can take the driver and their car home. A further development of the safe ride program is one in which people call a toll-free number and receive a free ride for themselves and their passengers, in their own car. Volunteers arrive in pairs, one member drives the inebriated person, and any passengers, home in their own car; the second volunteer follows in the volunteer's vehicle.

The Bernalillo county Safe Ride program provides free rides to Albuquerque bar patrons when the bartender or waiter/waitress calls a local phone number and requests a ride for an inebriated patron. A cab service is dispatched to pick up the participant, and drives the participant to any location in the Bernalillo County area. The Bernalillo County DWI Program reimburses the cab service for the ride.

The following table represents the number of rides the program provided in calendar years 2004 and 2005. A very small portion of the data did not have an associated year. Crash data were obtained from reports by the New Mexico Department of Transportation Programs Division Traffic Safety Bureau available at <http://www.unm.edu/~dgrint/dgr.html>.

	Frequency	Percent
2004	7774	62.8
2005	4611	37.2
Total	12385	100.0

*Missing- 36

Subsequent tables combine calendar years 2004 and 2005.

Month	Frequency	Percent
January	1487	12.0
February	1177	9.5
March	1271	10.2
April	1293	10.4
May	1317	10.6
June	1028	8.3
July	941	7.6
August	629	5.1
September	795	6.4
October	887	7.1
November	743	6.0
December	818	6.6
Total	12386	100.0

*Missing -35

The largest number of rides were provided in January (12%), followed closely by May (10.6%), April (10.4%), and March (10.2%). The fewest rides were provided in August. Approximately 60% of the rides were provided between January and June.

Month	Frequency	Percent
January	285	8.5
February	316	9.5
March	286	8.6
April	286	8.6
May	313	9.4
June	291	8.7
July	287	8.6
August	272	8.2
September	266	8.0
October	280	8.4
November	241	7.2
December	213	6.4
Total	3336	100

The crash data (derived from NMDOT publication “Driving While Impaired New Mexico 2004”) show that in 2004, a slight majority of DWI crashes occurred in February (9.5%), closely followed by May (9.4%), and June (8.7%). As the safe ride program is year round, this does not have much impact on the program.

	Frequency	Percent
Monday	16	.1
Tuesday	0	0
Wednesday	32	.3
Thursday	1158	9.3
Friday	5642	45.4
Saturday	4978	40.1
Sunday	595	4.8
Total	12421	100.0

The vast majority (85.5%) of the rides were provided on Friday and Saturday. This occurred because rides are currently offered on Fridays and Saturdays, and major holidays. During 2004, the program offered rides from Wednesdays through Sundays and major holidays.

	Frequency	Percent
Monday	326	9.8
Tuesday	372	11.2
Wednesday	399	12.0
Thursday	433	13.0
Friday	685	20.5
Saturday	734	22.0
Sunday	387	11.6
Total	3336	100.0

The crash data (derived from NMDOT publication “Driving While Impaired New Mexico 2004”) show that in 2004, the majority of crashes occur on Friday (20.5%) and Saturday (22.5%). Accordingly, the safe ride program currently operates on days when crashes most frequently occur.

Time	Frequency	Percent
7:00	12	.1
7:30	35	.3
8:00	27	.2
8:30	35	.3
9:00	199	1.6
9:30	366	3.0
10:00	788	6.4
10:30	1086	8.8
11:00	1136	9.2
11:30	1304	10.5
12:00	1409	11.4
12:30	1560	12.6
1:00	1894	15.3
1:30	1848	14.9
2:00	678	5.5
Total	12377	100.0

*Missing-44

Almost 99% of the Safe Rides were provided between 9pm to 2 m. Slightly more than 1/3 of all rides were provided after 1 am, and 24% of the rides were provided between 12 midnight and 1am. As noted above, currently the Safe Ride program operates from 10pm to 2am; previously, however, the program operated from 9pm to 3am. In the data set, the times were given exactly (in both military and civilian time), but for the purposes of this table all times were rounded to the nearest half-hour.

The hours of operation for the safe ride program are intended to provide services where they are most needed. Data tables in *Driving While Impaired New Mexico 2004* would suggest that the Safe Ride Program does operate at a time that is most beneficial, but additional benefits could be achieved by expanding safe ride services to 5 and 6pm which are the hours that had the highest crash rates in NM in 2004.

	Establishment	Frequency	Percent
1)	Rusty's Lounge	781	6.3
2)	Post 99	703	5.7
3)	Foxes Lounge	586	4.7
4)	Graham Central Station	476	3.8
5)	Sonny's Bar And Grill	473	3.8
6)	Caravan East	367	3.0
7)	AMC	352	2.8
8)	Blue Spruce	350	2.8
9)	The Ranch	342	2.8
10)	Post 100	331	2.7
11)	La Mesa Inn	330	2.7
12)	Post 13	313	2.5
13)	Silver Fox Lounge	282	2.3
14)	Blue Jeans Lounge	274	2.2
15)	Sandia Casino	200	1.6
16)	Muggsys	187	1.5
17)	Jack Step In Lounge	163	1.3
18)	Bird Of Paradise	161	1.3
19)	Moose Lodge Edith	148	1.2
20)	Neds RG	141	1.1
21)	Post 49	133	1.1
22)	Gin Mill West	129	1.0
23)	Atomic Cantina	126	1.0
24)	DAV	119	1.0
25)	Cowboys	116	.9
26)	ABQ Social Club	115	.9
27)	TDs Eubank	113	.9
28)	Chapter II	110	.9
29)	The Pulse	110	.9
30)	Sneakers	107	.9
31)	Midnght Rodeo	105	.8
32)	Coaches	101	.8

The above table represents the 32 establishments whose patrons most frequently utilize the Safe Ride program. Patrons from these establishments represent approximately 67% of the data. It should be noted that two of the bars in the top ten (Rusty's and Blue Spruce) are now

closed—therefore, current lists such as this would look different. The top 10 establishments account for 38.3% of the safe rides. Approximately 250 establishments utilize the Safe Ride program.

For the most part safe rides are offered when they are most needed. However, New Mexico crash data indicates that extended hours of service would greatly benefit Albuquerque. Safe – ride programs appear to be a widely used tool that attempt to reduce alcohol-related crashes. Additional data