

THE DWI COURT REPORTER

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NATIONAL CENTER
FOR DWI COURTS

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New Michigan Law Creates “Marriage” of DWI Courts and Ignition Interlock Devices

By: *Honorable Harvey Hoffman,
Eaton County DWI Court*

On September 2, 2010, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law Michigan’s DWI Court/Ignition Interlock law. In conformity with 23 USC Section 164 (a)(5)(A), the new statute provides that repeat DWI offenders will be able to receive a restricted operator’s license after a 45 day hard suspension, if they have an ignition interlock on their vehicle and are participating in one of the Michigan’s 26 DWI Courts. The restricted licenses will allow the DWI Court participants to drive to and from work, school and treatment.

Broad Support for New Law

The marriage of the DWI Courts with the ignition interlock devices was supported by the Michigan Association of Drug Court Professionals, MADD of Michigan, The Michigan Sheriff’s Association, The Prosecuting Attorney Association of Michigan, The Michigan Association of Counties, The Secretary



DWI Court Judges and Governor Granholm at bill signing.

of State, Auto Owners Insurance and The Century Council.

It is anticipated that the three year pilot program will make the interlock devices

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NTSB Updates Most Wanted List for Transportation Safety

Last November, the National Transportation Safety Board updated its “Most Wanted List” of Transportation Safety Improvements directed at state governments by adding a new issue area - motorcycle safety - and dropping another - recreational boating - where substantial progress has been made. The changes were



announced at a press conference in Washington, D.C held on November 16, 2010.

"State governments are in a unique position to effect the most significant improvement in certain areas of transportation safety," NTSB Chairman Deborah A.P. Hersman said.

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NAPC Comes Out in Support of DWI Courts

The [National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators \(NAPC\)](#) is the latest national organization to officially endorse DWI Courts. NAPC is the nation's only national organization of prosecutor coordinators and promotes the exchange of ideas and information and the development of programs and services for the mutual benefit of state prosecutor coordinators and prosecutors.

In endorsing DWI Courts, NAPC released a resolution which strongly supports the establishment of DWI Courts for hardcore DWI offenders.

“Prosecutors have always been committed to removing the impaired driver from the nation’s roadways and we now know that DWI Courts are one of the most effective tools we have to meet this goal,” said NAPC President Rob Kepple. “Hardcore drunk drivers are not impacted by the same general deterrence methods as most impaired drivers. DWI Courts ensure accountability for these individuals while providing the structure, supervision, and treatment to permanently change their behavior. We are honored to



work with the National Center for DWI Courts on the important work of expanding the reach of these courts.”

NAPC endorsement comes as DWI Courts continue to spread across the country. There are currently over 500 DWI Courts designed specifically to address the root cause of hardcore, impaired driving: alcohol addiction. The rapid expansion of these courts and their proven effectiveness is changing the mindset of criminal justice professionals and affecting how DWI offenders are handled.

“The National Center for DWI Courts is thrilled to count NAPC among our many partners,” said David Wallace, Director of the National Center for DWI Courts. “NAPC’s endorsement of DWI Courts sends a strong message to prosecutors and all professionals working in the criminal justice system

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that DWI Courts provide the accountability and treatment hardcore drunk drivers require to forever change their behavior. The support of prosecutors is critical to the advancement of DWI Courts as a more effective option than just the application of a

conviction, punishment and probation.” NAPC’s endorsement comes at an important time for DWI Courts. Over the next several months NCDC will be working to further expand the DWI Courts by working closely with state legislators, prosecuting attorneys, and law enforcement agencies across the country to encourage their growth and protect the community.

NAPC’s endorsement of DWI Courts can be found online, along with other official endorsements, at www.DWICourts.org or click [here](#). For information on how your organization can partner with the National Center for DWI Courts, contact David Wallace at dwallace@dwicourts.org

NADCP Wants To Be Your Friend...on Facebook

NADCP has launched a new Facebook page under the name All Rise. The All Rise Facebook page will be your source for exclusive videos, contests, news, and information as well as a great way for you to communicate with us. You are encouraged to pass our page along to Drug Court alumni, colleagues, friends and family. Let them know the amazing work you do every day in Drug Court.

NADCP has already received incredible feedback on our first exclusive Facebook video of Drug Court graduates telling their stories of transformation. Look for more videos to be released in the coming weeks featuring some of NADCP’s celebrity friends.



Click on the logo to go to the All Rise Facebook page

DWI/Drug Court Held on Capitol Hill

For the participants and staff of Minnesota's Koochiching County DWI/Substance Abuse Court and Family Dependency Treatment Court, proceedings held on Friday, October 1, 2010, were unlike any other. Sure there were the usual encouraging words, rounds of applause, and congratulations, but this time they were delivered from over 1,300 miles away by a judge *and* a 17-term Congressman.

On that Friday, Judge Chad LeDuc presided over Drug Court with former U.S. Congressman James Oberstar (D/MN), former Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, via videoconference from the Chairman's office in Washington, DC. It was the first time a Drug Court session had ever been held from a Congressional Office Building. "Judge LeDuc is using new tools and techniques to administer justice more efficiently and effectively, but he is not losing sight of the human side of the justice system," said Congressman Oberstar.

Judge LeDuc has presided over DWI/Drug Court via videoconference before. His three DWI/Drug Courts are located 150 miles apart in rural Minnesota which occasionally necessitates him to hear cases via videoconference when he can't make



the drive in time to be there in person. "We have to be able to serve the people when we need to serve them and this is a tool that allows us to do so," he said. Judge LeDuc was in Washington, DC to meet with Members of Congress about Drug Court.

"I was honored to watch Judge Chad LeDuc preside over Drug Court via the internet hook up from our conference room this morning," said Congressman Oberstar. "The proceeding represented everything that is right and good in our criminal justice system. He engaged each person who came before him in a personal, friendly and firm manner, encouraging those who are winning their battle with drugs to find redemption and administering incarceration and treatment to others who continue to endanger themselves and the community. It was a reminder to me that America's fine justice system is built by professionals of the highest caliber."

One by one, participants stood before a large screen and spoke to the judge as if they were face to face. "I hear you have been behaving yourself. You doing any woodcutting?" Judge LeDuc asked a one man. "Oh, yeah I

cut a cord yesterday, storing up for winter," was the reply. Another participant asked the judge if he would preside over her wedding. "I only do weddings for close friends and family. I consider you very dear friends and would be honored," replied the Judge.

Congressman Oberstar, who also visited the court last February, applauded participants for "restoring their lives" and "rediscovering themselves and helping others to rediscover themselves."

"I like that Congressman Oberstar sat in on the discussion. I felt like he had interest in our stories and

**"It was a reminder to me that America's fine justice system is built by professionals of the highest caliber."
James Oberstar**

wasn't just pretending to hear us. I like that he is interested in small communities and is able to take these concerns to Washington," remarked one

participant following the hearing. "I was so nervous, but I thought it was pretty cool. You don't expect someone like Congressman Oberstar to sit and listen to stories of people like us," said another.

When it came time for the Congressman to leave, Judge LeDuc thanked him for his tremendous support. "I think this is the best meeting we have had in this room," quipped the Congressman and laughter could be heard from 1,300 miles away.



New Georgia Governor Addresses DWI and Drug Courts in Inaugural Address

In his inaugural address to a small crowd of state lawmakers, supporters and state officials, Gov. Nathan Deal on Monday made crime and its cost his very first topic.

From Deal's prepared text:

"Presently, one out of every 13 Georgia residents is under some form of correctional control. It cost about \$3 million per day to operate our Department of Corrections. And yet, every day criminals continue to inflict violence on our citizens and an alarming number of perpetrators are juveniles.

"College students should be concerned about their grades not whether they are



Governor
Nathan Deal

going to be mugged on their way home from class. Visitors to our cities should be treated as welcomed guests and protected. Families should not live in fear of gang violence and drive-by shootings. But most of all, our dedicated law enforcement officers must not be targets for criminals. Anyone who harms one of them harms us all, for they embody the

Constitutional mandate that government provide us with protection and security.

"Breaking the culture of crime and violence is not a task for law enforcement officials alone. Parents must assume more responsibility for their children.

Communities must marshal their collective wills; civic and religious organizations must use their influence to set the tone for expected behavior.

"For violent and repeat offenders, we will make you pay for your crimes. **For other offenders who want to change their lives, we will provide the opportunity to do so with Day Reporting Centers, Drug, DUI and Mental Health Courts and expanded probation and treatment options. As a State, we cannot afford to have so many of our citizens waste their lives because of addictions.** (emphasis added) It is draining our State Treasury and depleting our workforce...."

"As a State, we cannot afford to have so many of our citizens waste their lives because of addictions."

Louisiana Passes New Law on Felony DWI Offenders — Incorporates DWI Courts

In June of last year, the Louisiana legislature decided that the laws for felony DWI offenders needed to be updated. Part of that entailed increasing the mandatory minimum for felony offenses. The prior law provided that on a conviction of a third offense DWI, (a felony offense) the offender will be imprisoned for not less than one year nor more than five years and shall be fined \$2,000 and imprisoned for 45 days without benefit of probation, parole, or suspension of sentence. The court, in its discretion, could suspend all or any part of the remainder of the sentence of imprisonment.

The new law retained the prior law's requirements, and increased the

minimum imprisonment sentence from 45 days to one year without benefit of "probation, parole, or suspension of sentence." However, the new law also declared that: "The court may suspend, in whole or in part, the imposition or execution of the sentence when the following conditions exist: . . .

(iv) The court orders the defendant to do any of the following:

(aa) Enter and complete a program provided by the drug division of the district court. . . .

(bb) **Enter and complete an established DWI court program, as agreed upon by the trial court and the district attorney.**"

Emphasis added. Act No. 801 of 2010.



The Louisiana State
Capitol building

This law went into effect on June 30, 2010, and it shows that another state has determined DWI Courts are an important tool in the effort to end hard core drinking driving.

New Michigan Law Creates “Marriage” of DWI Courts and Ignition Interlock Devices

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more effective. Studies have shown that interlock devices do a good job of holding down DWI recidivism while the interlocks are on the vehicles. However, the same studies have shown that once the interlocks are taken off the vehicles, the DWI recidivism rates of participants eventually return to levels comparable to offenders who did not participate in an interlock program. Furthermore, as few as 22% of the individuals ordered to place interlocks on their vehicles actually comply.

By linking interlock use to DWI Court treatment and accountability, the recidivism rate of the program participants should not go up once the devices come off the vehicle. Furthermore, since the participants are closely monitored by the courts, much higher rates of interlock installation should be achieved.

Creating New DWI Courts

The new law should also greatly help DWI Courts. By providing a restricted license to DWI Court participants, it should be much easier for these individuals to comply with court ordered, treatment, employment and school. It should also make DWI Court look more attractive to potential participants. Finally, the availability of restricted licenses through DWI Courts has generated an unprecedented number of inquiries from courts around the state, as to the possibility of establishing new DWI or DWI Hybrid courts (Drug Courts that take DWI cases).

Many DWI Court judges, myself included, have expressed concerns about the use of ignition interlocks in DWI Courts. One big issue was



Bill signing with Governor Granholm

always, how can you identify the person making a blow? A number of interlock devices now come with a camera that takes a photo of the face of each person using the device. This goes a long way to providing proof as to the element of offender identification.

Most modern interlock devices also have data loggers built in, which are basically small computers. The data loggers store all relevant information for downloading at the interlock center. Interlocks also have an early recall mechanism that allows you to build in program requirements to fit probation orders. If probation orders are not complied with, a memo pops up on the interlock telling the participant that if they do not bring the vehicle in to the center for a download within twenty four hours, the car will not start anymore. E-mail communication from the interlock center to the desks of probation officers provide critical information in a timely manner.

Taking Advantage of Technology

Over the past year, in my court, we have been using photo equipped interlock devices for our high BAC first offenders. We are using the interlocks to not only control the car, but also as our alcohol testing mechanism. Three times a day the program participants go out to their driveways, place their faces in from of the camera and blow. If they miss a blow, or blow “dirty,” the early recall mechanism is activated and they must bring the car in within twenty four hours. This has eliminated arguments that the program participants could not make it to testing locations. It has also substantially reduced the cost of alcohol testing, the interlock charge being only \$4.00 per day. Eighty four percent of program participants ordered to place interlocks on their vehicles have complied. Our Probation Department is very pleased with the interlock alcohol monitoring program.

We live in challenging times. We need to take advantage of legislative opportunities as they present themselves. We also need to utilize rapidly evolving technology to make our programs more cost effective and beneficial to our program participants.

Editor’s Note: To obtain a copy of the two bills that were passed by the Michigan Legislature and signed by Governor Granholm, [click here](#).

NTSB Updates Most Wanted List for Transportation Safety

(Continued from page 1)

"Our Most Wanted List spotlights those states that have made noteworthy progress in better protecting the traveling public - and those that have not."



A few of the highlights of the Board's actions announced today follow.

Improve Motorcycle Safety

The NTSB added this new issue area to the list. From 1997 through 2008, the number of motorcycle fatalities more than doubled during a period when overall highway fatalities declined. Although the number of motorcycle fatalities fell in 2009, the 4,400 deaths still outnumber those in aviation, rail, marine and pipeline combined.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle crashes.

The NTSB therefore recommends that everyone aboard a motorcycle be required to wear a helmet that complies with DOT's requirements. Currently, 20 states, the District of Columbia and 4 territories have universal helmet laws that apply to all riders. Twenty-seven states and one territory have partial laws that require minors and/or passengers to wear helmets. Three states—Iowa, Illinois and New Hampshire—have no helmet laws.

Enact Primary Seat Belt Enforcement Laws

In 2009, 55 percent of the 23,000 people who died as occupants in auto crashes were not wearing seat belts. Using lap/shoulder belts reduces the risk of fatal injury to front seat passengers by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. The NTSB recommends that all states enact primary seat belt enforcement laws. Nineteen states still lack such laws, and 14 states and 2 territories that have primary enforcement laws need to expand them to all seating positions.

Eliminate Hard Core Drinking Driving

The nation's deadliest drunk driving accident occurred 22 years ago, when a drunk driver hit an activity bus head-on in Kentucky, killing 27 people. The driver had a history of impaired driving convictions, and had a blood alcohol level of 0.26 percent that night. Since 2001, more than 81,000 persons have been killed by hard core drinking drivers. The NTSB recommends an 11-step model program to combat this deadly epidemic. Six states (California, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Ohio, Utah and Virginia) have a sufficiently rigorous program that the NTSB considers acceptable action. However, 23 states have achieved insufficient progress on the issue. The remaining states and territories have partially complied with the recommendation.

A complete package explaining state actions on all these recommendations, including easy-to-follow maps, is available on the Board's website at www.nts.gov/Recs/mostwanted/state_issues.htm.

Editor's Note: One of the items included in NTSB's Most Wanted List to eliminate Hard Core Drinking Driving is for states to implement "special sanction court-based programs such as DWI Courts for hard core DWI offenders." During the November press conference, Dr. Mark Rosekind, NTSB Board member, specifically addressed the hardcore drinking driver issue. What follows are some of his remarks.

"Last year, 10,839 people were killed in traffic crashes that involved an alcohol-impaired driver. That is over four times as many deaths as all fatalities in aviation, rail, marine, pipeline, and hazmat accidents combined. 10,839 fatalities is a staggering number and an unacceptable loss.

Hard core drinking drivers are involved in more than 70% of the alcohol-impaired fatalities (in 2009, this represented 7,607 deaths) and 22% of the total highway deaths.

The deadliest drunk driving related crash in our Nation's history occurred in 1988 on an interstate highway near Carrollton, Kentucky. A driver with a blood alcohol content of 0.26 percent (over three times the current legal limit) drove his pickup truck in the wrong direction on the interstate and hit a school bus head on. The school bus, with 67 passengers onboard, burst into flames. Twenty-seven people lost their lives and 34 others were seriously injured in the crash.

Each day more people are killed in drunk-driving crashes than the 27 people who were lost in the most deadly

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The Graduate Corner

Editor's Note: Many DWI Courts require a participant to write an essay on where they are at in their lives before they can advance to the next phase or level. What follows is such an essay. DJW

My name is David, and I am an alcoholic. It's become very easy to say that as the months of recovery have evolved. I have been a hard drinker for quite awhile but I have never lost a job. I have had trouble getting there, but always managed it. I started to have health problems, high blood pressure, etc, and my own doctor, who I work with, said I should cut back. Again, I was always in denial, saying I'm fine.

Over time, I required more alcohol to numb my feelings and thoughts. What little I could remember while drunk I chose to forget. Drinking wasn't my problem, I thought, but rather a solution. Boy, was I ever so wrong! Then I started not to enjoy drinking, but I did it anyway, out of habit. Sure I tried quitting and I made it for a few months, at the most. But it always called me back since I thought it was an easy way to escape. Then, I was



introduced to a thing called DWI Court. What the heck is that, I thought. My attorney asked if I was interested. She explained that this was a commitment. Me in a commitment? That was a novel idea at the time. I had tried AA before, but I didn't get it. Since then, I have been in the DWI Court. It has given me that extra commitment that I needed in my life, and I mean life. I now have a life I am proud of. I can't explain it—you just have to trust me. (Trust, that's another issue I am still working on.) You either get it or you don't. Something like being willing to quit drinking rather than having to quit.

My sponsor said to me "Just show up to the meetings," which didn't seem to hard to do. But admitting to strangers that I am an alcoholic was. However, admitting that I was one, helped me. Telling my family that I was an alcoholic was easier since they already knew. With the help of the DWI Court, I have taken my life back—a better life, a life of substance,

not substance abuse. I am not saying it was easy, no way, in fact it took awhile to get it. But you see that was the glory of it. As President F.D. Roosevelt said, if it is easy, anybody can do it, but if it is a struggle and hardship, that is what makes it even greater. I am proud of myself. My family is proud of me. My father, God rest his soul, would definitely be

proud of me. So in conclusion, am I a changed man? Absolutely! Am I a better person? Yes. Do I believe in this program? Definitely. Do I want to drink? What kind of question is that? The answer, by the way, is no, thank you—I don't need it.

I believe it takes different experiences to help you live. I think you really never stop living and growing as a person. I know that when I do finish this program, I will be a more self-confident man. Whenever I have an obstacle to overcome in the future, I will think back to this program and know that I can conquer it. My goal for myself is to show more love and appreciation to my friends and family for all they have done for me. I feel that I have done something great and wonderful and hope to keep it.



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Questions about DWI Courts? What does the research say? Find pictures and videos of DWI Court events. Get the latest NCDC publications or download TA forms.

Go to www.DWICourts.org for that and more!!



The Graduate Corner— “I’m Thankful for Being Held Accountable”

Editor’s Note: *The following article was published on Thanksgiving Day in the Troup County News located in LaGrange, Georgia. It was written by Phillip A. Clark. Reprinted with permission.*

A few weeks ago, Troup County News was able to visit with Judge Jeanette Little and members of the DWI Court team, but that story did not serve up the perspective of one important element, that missing element of course, coming from the standpoint of one of the participants.

Several days ago, the Troup County News dropped by the office of Donald Wright, Coordinator of the Troup County DWI Court Program about getting an update on a grant that his office had received. While waiting, Mr. Wright gave a sweeping motion to step into his office saying that he “had a better idea.”

Sitting in Wright’s office was Frank Bryant, age 57, a retired Navy Veteran, and current participant of the program. After some small talk and hearing just enough to know that Bryant’s story was an interesting one, it was agreed that Mr. Bryant would sit down and give us more information about his situation.

It would be a story of thanks. And the timing was perfect. After all, today is a day of thanks.

Bryant was passing through LaGrange, traveling from Virginia to Columbus, when he was pulled over by a State Trooper just as he had gotten on I-85 from the I-185 loop.

“I literally got out and put my hands behind my back. I told him I’m yours,” recalled Bryant of that day in 2004.

Bryant remembered thinking just minutes before the arrest, that he knew he had a serious problem, and that he needed some serious help. Here was his opportunity.

“After serving in the Navy for 25 years, I had seen it all. I was in charge of people, and had a lot of responsibility. When I worked, I worked hard, but when I was off duty, I partied hard, and it was a lifestyle thing with me. Once you start drinking alcohol, and you get to that level of unmanageability, you don’t think anyone can hold your feet to the fire.”

Even though Bryant admits he could be a rambunctious partier, he says alcoholism “started showing its ugly face when I retired twelve years ago.”

In Bryant’s words, when the State Patrolman arrested him, “he introduced me to the first day of the rest of my life.”

Part of Bryant’s life now, when he is not busy restoring classic boats, is in twice weekly meetings with Dr. Shannon Dunlap and Kelly Veal at Counseling Services, Inc. It is there that Bryant and others seek help from the “cunning, baffling, and powerful grip of addiction,” as Dunlap refers to it.

“Addiction is a wholly powerful disease. It hijacks that part of the brain that controls sleep, sex,

production, emotion, basically all the things that non-addicts take for granted. It is very common for addicts to relapse. It is just a tenacious disease,” noted Dunlap.

Bryant is a believer in the steady drumbeat of ‘personal accountability’ that Judge Little hears about every two weeks in DWI Court.

“Judge Little is helping us maintain order. The sanctions are hard, and the penalties cost us time and they certainly aren’t free, but without the accountability and without the order that she tries to help us keep every day, there would be



a lot of lives lost without this program. I am thankful for being held accountable,” declared Bryant.

Mr. Bryant and Dr. Dunlap both agreed that addiction is an equal opportunity destroyer of lives, careers, finances and relationships. Professionals, blue collar workers, high society types, beggar man, thief...no one is immune to the stubborn sickness of addiction.

“we have clients that come through here that are ages 18 to 70. some are doctors. Some are lawyers, and some are engineers. We just had a client that is starting on a Masters in Psychology,” noted Dr. Dunlap.

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The Graduate Corner— “I’m Thankful for Being Held Accountable”

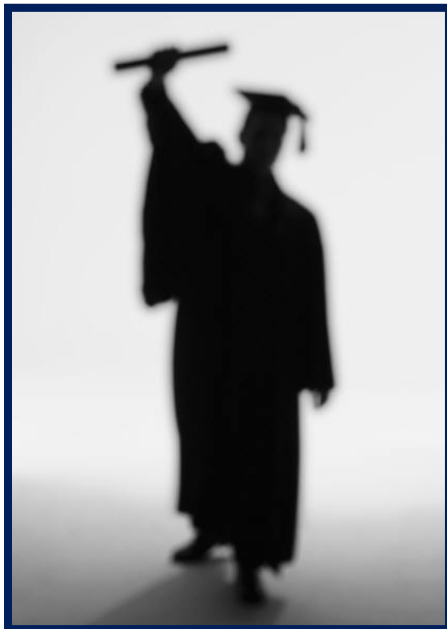
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“I agree that the devil is a big part of all of this,” began Mr. Bryant. “The temptation of alcohol is the devil sneaking up on you. The devil talks you into it. He will sneak up on you,” Bryant recounted.

Thanks to the program that Judge Little instituted back in ‘04, which ironically enough was the year Bryant was stopped on the interstate, he has gradually rebuilt enough trust with his daughter that he can be a “babysitter for her kids. She trusts me to take care of them a little more each day. Before this program, I couldn't have a decent relationship.”

Another enormous point of agreement with Mr. Bryant and Dr. Dunlap has to do with the fact that not every county in the state of Georgia has a DWI Court system. The option is jail, which can affect employability, finances, and relationships.

“What would be my status right now if I had gotten stopped a few miles from here in a county that didn't have this alternative to jail? Where would I be? Would I be dead? Would I be friendless? Would I know my daughter? More than likely I would have



faced much tougher incarceration, and incarceration is not the answer.”

Dunlap concurs: “This is not an automatic arrangement. Not everybody is cut out for it, and not everybody is entitled to it, but this program being in Troup County is such a blessing. We are also blessed that Judge Little is the leader. I have never seen anybody hold the scales like she does. And I’m not talking about just the legal part. She is a very caring and deeply empathetic person.”

Ms. Veal said she is thankful and humble to be part of a program where she can witness miracles, and see families get rebuilt after tough times.

“It is extremely rewarding to me to see people get promotions, or to have a client bring their new baby by the office for us to see. We have one client that bought a motorcycle, bought a house, and is setting his daughter up for a trip to Hawaii. We just had a client that is getting his masters in psychology. We are a conduit for change, and lives are being saved.”

On top of all his troubles, Frank Bryant recently lost his home and all of his early possessions to a fire, but now instead of turning towards the “instant medication of alcohol, that is more

“The sanctions are hard, and the penalties cost us time and they certainly aren’t free, but without the accountability and without the order that she [Judge Little] tries to help us keep every day, there would be a lot of lives lost without this program. I am thankful for being held accountable,” declared Bryant.

dangerous than a loaded gun,” Bryant is taking this latest setback in stride.

“I’m thankful that I have been given a second chance. I’m taking care of this out of my pocket, and I’m looking forward to a good Thanksgiving at home. I don't have anything special planned, but I do know that “There by the grace of God go I.”

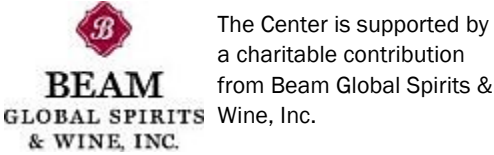
Editor’s Note: *Have a story you want to share? Please feel free to email it to me at dmwallace@dwicourts.org.*



Making Your Community A Safer Place

1029 North Royal Street
Suite 201
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Phone: 703-575-9400
Fax: 703-575-9402
E-mail: dwallace@dwicourts.org



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NADCP On The Move

After nearly nine years in southern Alexandria, VA, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals has moved to a new office space just minutes outside of Washington



D.C in Old Town Alexandria.

Just as the Drug Court field has expanded over the last nine years, so has NADCP's role as the premier provider of training and

technical assistance services, advocacy on Capitol Hill and membership. The new NADCP office is the national headquarters for the National Drug Court Institute, the National Center for DWI Courts, and Justice for Vets: the National Veterans Treatment Court



Clearinghouse. We invite any visitors to the Washington DC area to stop by and say hello. At the Open House held in November, many of our friends did just that.



NTSB Updates Most Wanted List for Transportation Safety

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alcohol impaired accident of all time. These daily crashes may involve a single fatality and they occur across the country and, as a result, do not receive national media coverage or the attention that each one of these tragedies deserves.

Since 2000, the NTSB has focused its efforts on hard core drinking drivers. These are individuals with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.15 percent or greater; or repeat offenders with a drunk-driving arrest or conviction in the past 10 years. Hard core drinking drivers are involved in more than 70% of the alcohol-impaired fatalities (in 2009, this represented 7,607 deaths) and 22% of the total highway deaths. Between 1982 and 2009, more than 251,000 people have died in crashes that involved a hard core drinking driver.

What can be done to address these unacceptable daily tragedies that occur on our Nation's roadways? Since 2000, the NTSB has one recommendation to all states and the District of Columbia: establish a comprehensive program designed to reduce the incidence of alcohol-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities caused by hard core drinking drivers. The NTSB identified 11 elements of a model comprehensive program. This issue has been on the NTSB's States Most Wanted List since 2003.

The good news is that data show these program elements can be effective and can save lives. Six states - California, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Ohio, Utah and Virginia - have implemented sufficiently rigorous programs that meet the Board's recommendation. These states . . . should be recognized for their

efforts. The very bad news is that over the past 10 years, 44 states and the District of Columbia have implemented insufficient programs. While there is no magic bullet to address this problem, the recommended tactics can make a difference.

Since the Board's recommendation in 2000 that focused on hard core drinking and driving, about 81,000 people have died in crashes that involved these drivers. The number of deaths associated with drunk driving is far too high and unacceptable. We can and MUST do better. It is time for all states and the District of Columbia to step up their efforts and implement programs to address this national tragedy on our roads."