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**Cinco de Mayo is near: Please Celebrate Responsibly**

For many people across the country, Cinco de Mayo (May 5) is a time for fun and celebrations that may involve drinking. Cinco de Mayo commemorates the Mexican Army's victory over the French forces of Napoleon III on May 5, 1862, at the Battle of Puebla. The holiday, which happens to fall on a Sunday this year, is a reminder to the public to celebrate responsibly and not drive impaired.

The Ventura Police Department will have additional officers on patrol throughout the weekend, ready to stop and arrest drivers suspected of being under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

"We understand the importance of this day to many people and encourage community members to plan ahead for a safe ride home. Please don't drink and drive," Ventura Police Department Corporal Al Gomez said. "There are many options to get home safely that don't involve you driving."

The community is encouraged to use a designated sober driver, ride-share or public transportation. A "DUI Doesn't Just Mean Booze." Prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications and marijuana can all be impairing, especially in combination with alcohol or other drugs.

The Ventura Police Department offers these reminders to ensure you have a safe night of fun that doesn't involve a DUI:

- Always use a designated sober driver – a friend who is not drinking, ride-share, cab or public transportation – to get home.
- See someone who is clearly impaired try and drive? Take the keys and help them make other arrangements to find a sober way home.
- Report drunk drivers – Call 911.
- Hosting a party? Offer nonalcoholic drinks. Monitor who are drinking and how they are getting home.

Getting home safely is cheap, but getting a DUI is not! Drivers caught driving impaired and charged with DUI can expect the impact of a DUI arrest to be upwards of \$13,500. This includes fines, fees, DUI classes, license suspension and other expenses not to mention possible jail time.

"Don't even put yourself in a position where you need to ask whether you are okay to drive," Ventura Police Sergeant Mike Brown said. "If you feel the slightest hint of a buzz, you should not be driving."

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