

Douglas County lays down the Law for New Year's Eve

By Jim Halsey

The Douglas County Sheriff's Office is readying itself for the upcoming New Year's Eve celebration at Lake Tahoe. Each year, upward of 65,000 celebrants ring in the New Year in the casino core area of Stateline.

Due to the ordinarily high volume of pedestrians within the Stateline casino core area during the New Year's Eve celebration, Highway 50 may be closed to vehicle traffic through the area if necessary for the general safety of the public. If that occurs, vehicle traffic will be detoured around the Stateline casino core using upper and lower Lake Parkway.

Drivers anticipating traveling through the Stateline casino core area on New Year's Eve should allow an additional 30 minutes.

Additionally, due to past poor road conditions caused by weather, anyone traveling in the area should have snow tires or carry tire chains.

Officers of the Douglas County Sheriff's Office will be present in the casino-core area throughout the evening, along with officers and representatives of numerous other agencies to support them. Participating agencies include the Nevada Highway Patrol, Carson City Sheriff's Office, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol, Nevada Department of Prisons, Placer County Sheriff's Office and the FBI.

Douglas County Sheriff Ron Pierini has directed all officers to adopt a non-confrontational approach in their contacts with

the celebrants. This method of enforcement has been extremely effective in years past.

There are, however, behaviors that will not be tolerated by law enforcement.

Acts that will most likely result in an arrest include any act that places celebrants or law enforcement in jeopardy; including acts of vandalism, theft, narcotic violations, rowdy behavior or fighting, throwing projectiles, possession or setting off of fireworks, drunkenness, minors consuming or possessing alcohol or any other act that disrupts the goal of achieving a peaceful and safe environment for all in attendance.

Open containers of alcohol are prohibited within the Stateline casino core area. Glass or metal containers, regardless of contents, are also prohibited in the Stateline casino core area on New Year's Eve, and will be confiscated by law enforcement. This does not apply to persons inside an operating casino or hotel.

Parents must be mindful of their children's whereabouts and activities, especially during New Years. The crowd that gathers in the casino core for the New Year celebration is neither conducive nor intended for participation by juveniles.

Each year during New Year's Eve, a large percentage of the arrests and law enforcement contacts made are of persons under the age of 21. The curfew in Douglas County is midnight on Dec. 31. Persons under the age of 18 are subject to arrest and or citation for being in violation of this ordinance.

All persons under the age of 21 who are in possession of alcohol or who have consumed or are under the influence of drugs or alcohol will be subject to arrest.

In addition to the augmented law enforcement staffing in the Stateline casino core area during New Years Eve, the Douglas

County Sheriff's Office will have a full complement of patrol personnel on duty in both the Carson Valley and Lake Tahoe areas, to handle calls for service and conduct traffic enforcement, particularly targeting intoxicated drivers. All persons who consume alcohol during their New Year's Eve celebration are encouraged to catch a ride with a sober driver, or utilize a local taxi service.

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