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Media Relations

Portsmouth Police Launch Responsible Drinking Social Marketing Campaign
Effort Developed By UNH Student Provides Tips And Resources To Those Out On The Town

May 30, 2012

DURHAM, N.H. – The Portsmouth Police Department has launched a responsible drinking social marketing campaign in an effort to educate those out on the town in Portsmouth about how to safely enjoy themselves. The campaign, which is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation launched by a police department, was developed by a University of New Hampshire student and deployed with assistance from The Atom Group of Portsmouth.

“This project has been a ground-up collaboration among a variety of community stakeholders to promote an educational campaign about responsible drinking. Portsmouth is a destination city known for its hospitality industries, and through this campaign we are hoping to communicate better awareness about the effects of alcohol,” Portsmouth Police Chief David “Lou” Ferland said.

The “Think Smart. Drink Safe.” social marketing campaign was developed by Adam Gaudreault, a graduate student in justice studies at UNH who has been interning at the Portsmouth Police Department. The campaign has two components: a website and drink coasters with responsible drinking tips and QR codes. The QR codes connect smart phone users to additional information about responsible drinking and community resources such as the phone numbers for the city’s taxi cab services.

The Portsmouth Police Department plans to provide the Downtown Hospitality Association members with 50,000 drink coasters with the QR codes.

“The Downtown Hospitality Association had requested a way to share responsible drinking messages with their patrons. The association’s members had found that their patrons believed that if they simply did not drive home, they would be okay. They did not understand that responsible drinking involves more than just not drinking and driving,” Gaudreault said.

In response to the association’s request, Ferland asked Gaudreault to research whether QR codes on drink coasters would be an effective way to get out the message of responsible drinking. The project took off from there, with Gaudreault researching the best practices of social marketing campaigns and responsible drinking messaging, and then developing the campaign and prototype for the drink coasters with QR codes.

Among the responsible drinking tips patrons will receive are:

- Don’t drink on an empty stomach. Foods high in fat and protein will help your body break down and absorb alcohol.
- Keep track of how many standard drinks you’re having.
- Take your time and space your drinks.
Stop drinking before last call.

The campaign also includes information on blood-alcohol content and how alcohol affects the body, myths of drinking, consequences of impaired drinking and driving, facts about drinking, and how to contact a local cab company.

The website and final drink coaster design was developed by The Atom Group of Portsmouth, which provided its services for free.

“We are honored to be part of such a worthwhile project that will literally be saving lives in our community,” said Adam Vicinus, managing partner of The Atom Group, which is based in Portsmouth. “This new site will allow the Portsmouth Police Department to effectively connect with their target audiences about responsible drinking.”

The “Think Smart. Drink Safe.” social marketing campaign is believed to be the first of its kind in the nation. According to Gaudreault, beer and liquor companies have used drink coasters to encourage responsible drinking, but no police department has launched a comprehensive social marketing campaign like the Portsmouth Police Department’s “Think Smart. Drink Safe.” effort.

For Gaudreault, who plans a career in law enforcement after he graduates in September, his internship with the Portsmouth Police Department and work on the “Think Smart. Drink Safe.” campaign has been life changing.

“I have always been drawn to the community aspect of policing, which is why I was drawn to this project. I had thought I would go into the investigative side of law enforcement, but this experience has shown me the importance of the community relations side of policing,” Gaudreault said.

Visit www.thinksmartdrinksafe.org for more information on the "Think Smart. Drink Safe.” campaign.

The Atom Group
The Atom Group is a full-service, web software development agency that develops the highest-quality solutions to meet clients’ diverse needs. The agency deploys content and contact management systems, mobile applications, e-commerce storefronts, social networking tools, and many other custom back-office solutions. The agency has experienced incredible growth, including winning prestigious industry awards, securing a number of new clients, doubling the number of its staff, moving its headquarters to a larger space in Portsmouth, N.H. and, most recently, opening a new office in Chicago. For more information visit www.TheAtomGroup.com.

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GRAPHICS
Front of the “Think Smart. Drink Safe.” social marketing campaign drink coaster.
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/coasterfront.jpg

Back of the "Think Smart. Drink Safe." social marketing campaign drink coaster.
http://www.unh.edu/news/img/coasterback.jpg

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