

In effect during RIDE program

New legislation allows police officers to issue 90-day licence suspensions

By LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

Just in time for the annual Christmas RIDE program, new provincial legislation will result in drunk drivers facing an automatic 90-day licence suspension.

As of midnight Thursday (November 28) drivers who blow over the legal alcohol limit or refuse a breathalyzer test will have their licence suspended on the spot for 90 days.

Halton North MPP Ted Chudleigh said Thursday he is very supportive of the new legislation.

"It is shown to have a significant impact in other jurisdictions," said Chudleigh. "I think it will have the same impact here."

Sgt. Tom Chapman of Halton's

Public Safety Unit said the automatic driver's licence suspension program has been run successfully in Manitoba since 1989. He said since its implementation there has been a 20 per cent increase in guilty pleas in impaired driving cases and a 50 per cent reduction in the number of people charged with impaired driving.

Chudleigh said he had to "balance the issue of human rights (regarding the legal principle of presumed innocence) with the carnage on the highways."

"Sixty-seven per cent of accident deaths are alcohol-related. About



TED CHUDLEIGH

1,000 people die on roads in Ontario each year," said Chudleigh.

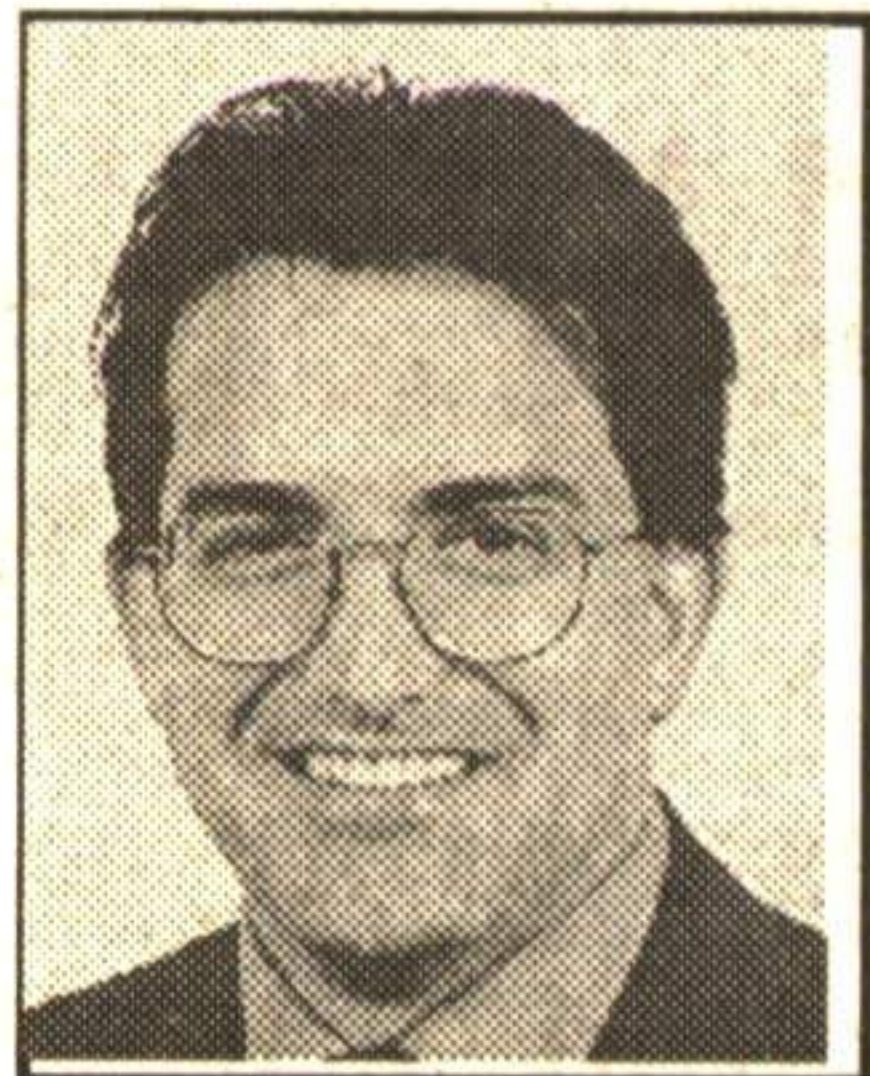
The province has also provide additional funding to police force to step up their RIDE programs.

Chapman said the provincial money will allow for an additional 15 spotchecks throughout Halton region through January 2, resulting in a spotcheck somewhere in the region almost every day.

Last year Halton police stopped 17,110 vehicles during the holiday RIDE spot check program. Four criminal driving offences were laid, 29 roadside screening tests were given and one 12-hour driving suspension was laid.

Chapman said the goal for this Christmas season is to check more than 20,000 vehicles. Halton officers will be handing out coupon books and window scrapers at the spotchecks.

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