

# RIDE nets 7 impaired charges

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**  
*The Champion*

The number of people arrested for drinking and driving during last month's Halton holiday RIDE program was higher than it was the previous two years.

But Sgt. Trevor Hay, of Halton Regional Police's traffic unit, said the conclusion shouldn't be drawn that drinking and driving's increasing.

Sometimes the numbers fluctuate for no particular reason, he said.

As part of last month's program, which ran from December 1 to 31, seven people were charged with drinking and driving. Last year and in 2003, that number was down to three people.

Once again in 2002, seven people were charged.

"If there's a message, it's that people continue to drink and drive and we've got to continue our efforts," Sgt. Hay said.

The number of drivers given 12-hour licence suspensions — after blowing a 'warning' in the breathalyzer — was 34, compared with 55 in 2004, 46 in 2003 and 63 in 2002.

A direct comparison can't be made though, since the number of vehicles stopped changes from year to year.

During this year's program, 35,002 cars were stopped, compared with 41,149 last year.

There were two liquor seizures made during the campaign.

As in previous years, the number of people charged with drunk driving offences was higher during regular December police spot checks than during the holiday RIDE campaign, he said.

That's because RIDE stops everyone, while the spot checks can be targeted, for example, at people coming out of bars or driving erratically.

It seems older drivers continue to drink and drive more than their younger counterparts, Sgt. Hay observed.

"This is purely anecdotal, but I think the

message is getting through to the younger drivers," Sgt. Hay said, explaining the older drivers — 35 and older — are the ones who didn't have school programs

enforcing the 'don't drink and drive' message.

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