



FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Nancy Peters
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
300 SOUTH SIXTH STREET
612-348-5022 OFFICE
NANCY.PETERS@COURTS.STATE.MN.US

DWI Court receives MADD award

For Immediate Release

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The Fourth Judicial District DWI Court serving Hennepin County will receive a MADD award at their statewide Recognition Awards Ceremony on March 25, 2009 at the Clarence Wigington Pavilion on Harriet Island in St. Paul.

MADD will recognize the DWI Court team comprised of judges, law enforcement, probation, attorneys, treatment providers, court staff, victim advocates and chemical health assessors and district court administration.

Presiding Judge John Holahan remarked, "Since opening our doors two years ago, we have had about 150 of the worst DWI offenders enter our program. These are the offenders designated as 'potential killers' by the National Highway Safety Transportation Board. Twenty-five have graduated. Our program requires the offender to participate for a minimum of 18 months. Most importantly, only two participants have reoffended. Our recidivism rate at this point is 1.6% compared to the statewide average of 13%."

The Fourth Judicial District Adult DWI Court is designed for repeat DWI offenders who strive to live a sober, crime-free lifestyle. An eligible defendant who enters a guilty plea or is convicted of DWI will have the voluntary option of participating in this program, an alternative to traditional criminal probation.

The program facilitates short and long term behavioral change measured in three phases. Requirements include at least 120 continuous, sober/clean days; complete treatment and aftercare, attend 50 12-step meetings; have a 12-step sponsor; complete community service work; have no pending criminal charges; pay all program fees; and have full time work or school. Participants must have an ignition interlock installed on their cars for a minimum of one year.

This program enables problem drinkers, on the verge of becoming felons, to turn their lives around. They become law abiding, productive, tax-paying citizens that drive sober, with insurance and a valid driver's license.

About the Fourth Judicial District

The State of Minnesota's Fourth Judicial District serves only Hennepin County and is the state's largest trial court with more than 750,000 cases received annually. For more information, visit the website at www.mncourts.gov/district/4/.

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