

# **Executive Summary**

# 2011

## ALCOHOL and CRIME in WYOMING



**Wyoming Association of Sheriffs  
and Chiefs of Police**

### INTRODUCTION

In spring of 2005, the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police received grant funding from the Wyoming Department of Transportation – Highway Safety Program to collect and evaluate alcohol-related arrest data in ten counties in Wyoming for a period of six months. Although it had long been suspected that alcohol was a factor in a large number of custodial arrests in Wyoming, reliable data had not been available previously to more accurately determine the scope and impact of alcohol on crime in this state.



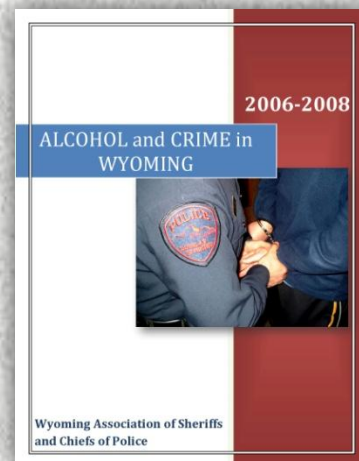
This pilot project was initiated with the expressed purpose of formulating effective enforcement strategies aimed at reducing the number of alcohol related crimes and traffic crashes in Wyoming. The data collection process has continued since 2005, has been refined and was expanded to include data collection in all twenty-three counties in 2006. The collection of data was then extended to a full twelve-month period in 2008 and the data collection process has now been institutionalized as a part of the book-in process for all custodial arrests.

A sufficient amount of alcohol-related arrest data has now been collected which can be analyzed for the purpose of identifying trends in alcohol involvement in crime in Wyoming. Consistent patterns of alcohol involvement for certain crimes are now more evident and the times when these crimes are occurring more predictable.

***To date, information has been collected from a total of 99,872 persons who were arrested and subsequently detained in a detention facility in Wyoming.*** Specific information that has been collected during the book-in process includes the following:

- Type of offense
- Whether alcohol or drugs were involved
- Location of last consumption and point of sale
- Known blood alcohol content levels for alcohol related arrests; and
- Demographic information

Although the data fields and the process for collection were standardized and relatively consistent for the first five years, the time periods for collection and reporting were not. This was due mainly to the timing and availability of grant funding. This inconsistency in reporting periods made it difficult to compare statistics from year-to-year, as well as with state traffic crash data. Beginning in 2010, the data collection and analysis is





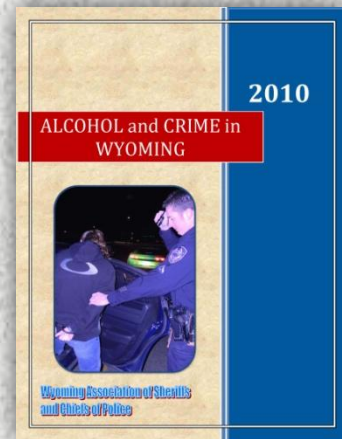
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## Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming - 2011

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now an ongoing process and the report is being published annually on a calendar-year basis.

The Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police has published the results and analysis of the data collection efforts each year in two separate reports. The main report provides statewide statistics and averages, along with comparisons of county statistics in specific categories. The accompanying supplemental report provides county, community and local law enforcement agency specific statistics. These reports can be accessed online on the following websites: <http://wascop.com> and <http://jandaconsulting.com>



*The information collected from a total of 19,003 persons who were arrested and subsequently detained in a county detention facility in Wyoming during this twelve-month period (January 1 through December 31, 2011) confirms what law enforcement officers who patrol the highways and who respond to calls for service in Wyoming already know from experience – alcohol is the major contributing factor in situations that result in someone going to jail.*





### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Executive Summary highlights a few of the significant findings contained in this report. It focuses on issues that are of obvious concern or which may be of greater interest to the general public; however, a careful review of other relevant findings and statistics contained in the body of the main report is essential in order to gain a more complete perspective of the impact of alcohol on crime in Wyoming.



This report contains an analysis of alcohol-related arrest information collected in all twenty-three counties in Wyoming during a twelve-month time period (January 1, through December 31, 2011) by the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police. ***Information was collected from a total of 19,003 persons who were arrested and subsequently detained in a county detention facility.*** The alcohol-related arrest data contained in this report provides a detailed, statistical picture of the impact of alcohol abuse on crime in Wyoming.

The profile of the average person taken to jail in Wyoming continues to be relatively consistent with previous years. Eight out of ten times it was a male – average age 35. Ten percent of the time it was an out-of-state visitor and 6% of the time it was an in-state visitor. Juvenile arrests that resulted in detention in a county detention facility accounted for less than 2% of the total custodial arrests.

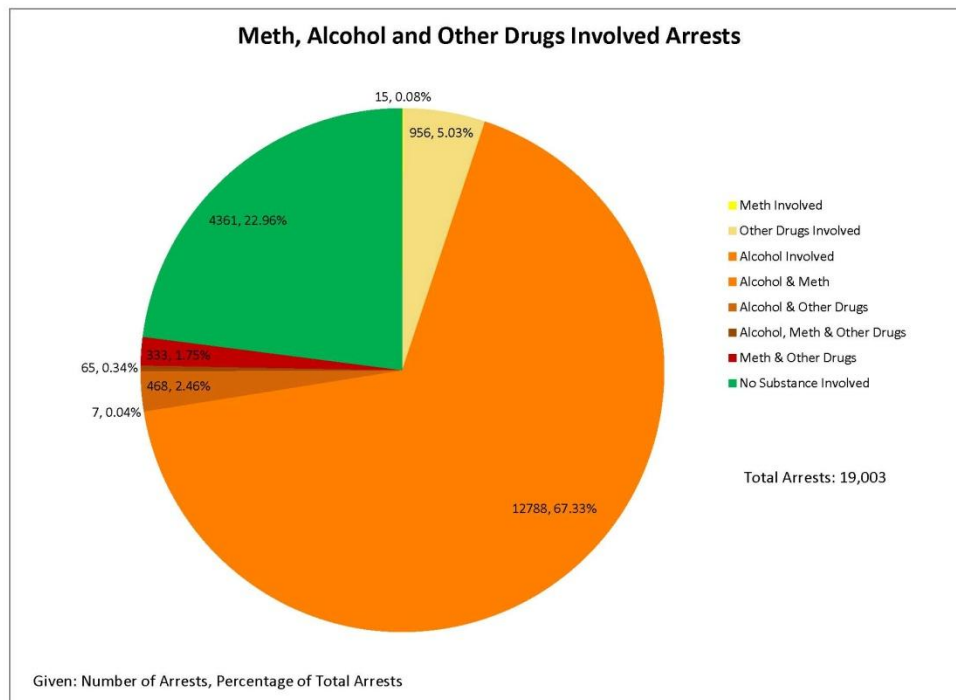
A review of the data collected from persons arrested and subsequently taken to jail indicates that Wyoming continues to be relatively safe from what is generally considered to be “serious” crime. The number of persons who are arrested for felonies are relatively low when compared to the number of persons arrested for minor crimes (misdemeanors). Felony arrests accounted for 7% of the total arrests statewide.

***Although Wyoming is relatively “safe” from what is generally considered to be serious crime, the high percentage of alcohol-involved arrests, the inordinate number of arrests for public intoxication and driving under the influence, and the high levels of blood alcohol content for drivers arrested represent a real and significant threat to public safety.***



## Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming - 2011

**ALCOHOL AND DRUGS:** A total of 19,003 persons were arrested statewide and taken to jail in 2011 - and more than three out of four times the arrest involved alcohol and/or other drugs. *The level of alcohol involvement reported in the 99,872 reported arrests over the last seven years indicates that alcohol is, and continues to be, the drug that has the greatest influence on crime in Wyoming.*



- Alcohol was involved in 70.14% of all custodial arrests.
- Alcohol was involved in 75.22% of all misdemeanor arrests.
- Methamphetamine was involved in 2.21% of the 19,003 reported arrests.
- “Other drugs” were involved in 9.6% of the reported arrests.

***77.04% of the 19,003 arrests statewide involved alcohol and/or other drugs.***





**BLOOD ALCOHOL CONTENT:** The number of arrests for public intoxication and driving under the influence and the levels of blood alcohol content (BAC) recorded for this twelve-month reporting period equals or surpasses the statistics that were recorded during the previous year<sup>1</sup>.

*The statistics for alcohol involved arrests, public intoxication and DUI arrests have trended upward over the course of the last seven years.*

- Arrests for public intoxication accounted for 18.72% of all arrests.
- The average blood alcohol content for persons arrested for public intoxication was 0.2583.
- 5,199 persons arrested for driving under the influence accounted for 32.06% of all arrests.
- The average reported blood alcohol content for DUI arrests statewide was 0.1545.<sup>2</sup>
- 46% of persons arrested for DUI had a reported BAC level above 0.16 and 8% had a BAC of 0.24 or greater.
- The average reported BAC for 609 persons who were arrested for DUI after being involved in a traffic crash was 0.1685.
- The age group (in 5-year increments) with the highest percentage of DUI arrests was age 21-25 (19%), followed by age 26-30 (16%) and 31-35 (11%).



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<sup>1</sup> Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming:2010 - May 2011 Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police

<sup>2</sup> In Wyoming, a person driving with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 is legally presumed to be impaired.

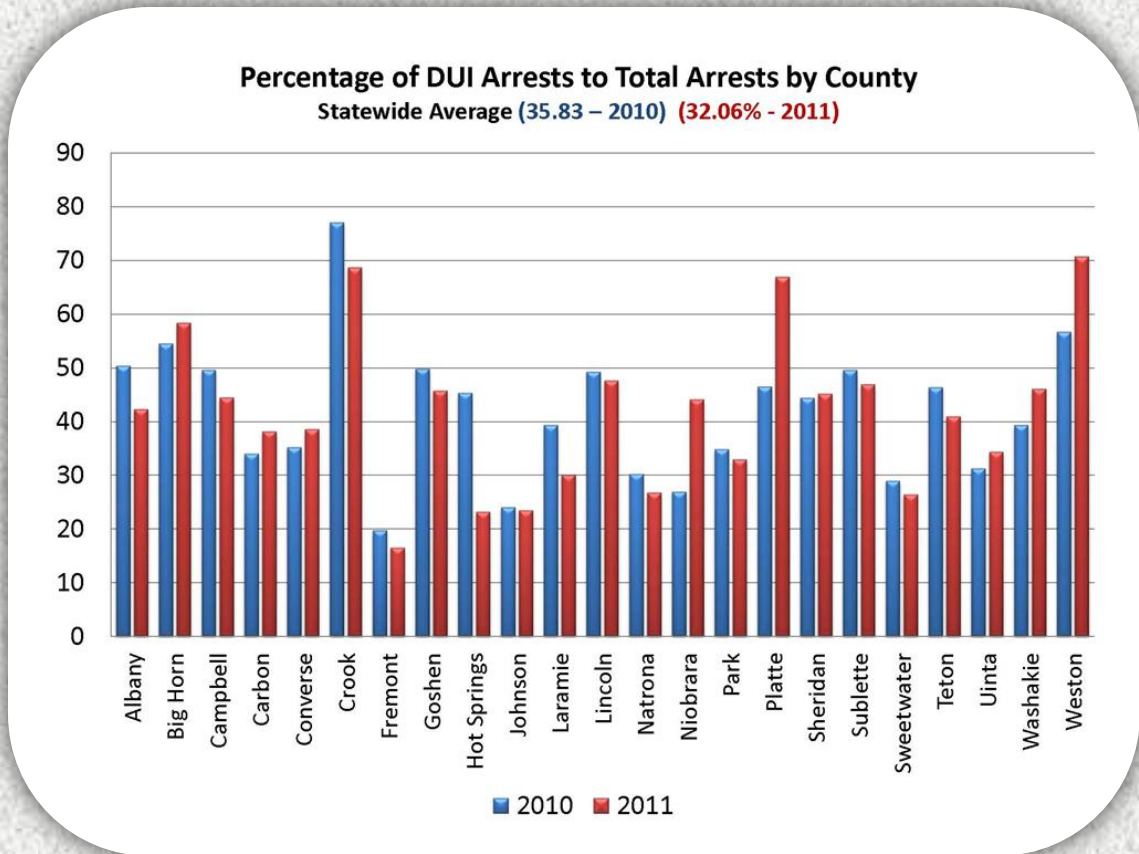
**BAC LEVELS IN PERSPECTIVE:** *In order to grasp the significance of these statistics, it should be noted that a physically fit male who weighs 180 pounds would have to consume at least seven drinks in one hour in order to achieve a BAC of 0.15 – a female weighing 120 pounds would have to consume five drinks in one hour.*



### SIGNIFICANT STATISTICS AND FINDINGS

- **Alcohol was a factor in 70.14% of the custodial arrests in Wyoming.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Crook – 89.06%
    - Weston – 87.80%
    - Teton – 84.06%
- **Alcohol was involved in 72.86% of the misdemeanor arrests.**
- **Methamphetamine was involved in 2.21% of the arrests statewide.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Sweetwater – 6.45%
    - Converse – 5.12%
    - Uinta – 4.85%
- **“Other” drugs were involved in 9.98% of the reported arrests statewide.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Hot Springs – 25%
    - Platte – 24%
    - Lincoln – 23.63%
    - Johnson – 22.63%
- **Arrests for Public Intoxication accounted for 18.72% of all arrests statewide.**  
*(The statewide average does not include 1,438 persons who were admitted into the Fremont County Alcohol Crisis Center for public intoxication)*
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Fremont – 36.16%
    - Teton – 29.87%
    - Hot Springs – 24.89%
- **The average blood alcohol content for all persons arrested for public intoxication was 0.2583.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Platte – 0.3050
    - Fremont - 0.2723
    - Sublette – 0.2595





### DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE:

- **Arrests for Driving under the influence (DUI) accounted for 32.06% of all arrests statewide.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Weston – 70.73%
    - Crook – 68.75%
    - Big Horn – 59.40%
- **2.41% of the arrests for DUI involved drugs.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Platte – 17%
    - Crook – 10.94%
    - Lincoln – 8.02%
- **The average blood alcohol content (BAC) reported for 5,199 persons arrested for driving under the influence statewide was 0.1545.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Weston - 0.1812
    - Hot Springs - 0.1739
    - Sublette - 0.1671



- **46% of the persons arrested for driving under the influence had average blood alcohol content above 0.16.**
  - 8% had a BAC of 0.24 or greater
  - 13% had a BAC between 0.20 and 0.239
  - 25% had a BAC between 0.16 and 0.199
- **10.64% of traffic crashes resulting in arrests involved drugs.**
  - Counties with significantly higher statistics:
    - Converse – 28.57%
    - Carbon – 3-23.08%
    - Sublette – 21.43%
- **The average BAC reported for 706 traffic crashes that involved alcohol was 0.1685.**

### JUVENILE STATISTICS:

- **Juveniles accounted for 1.1% of the arrests statewide.**
  - The data in this report does not represent a complete accounting of juvenile arrests as these arrests often do not result in detention in a county facility.
- **40.74% of the juvenile arrests involved alcohol.**
- **1.85% of the juvenile arrests involved methamphetamine.**
- **17.13% of the juvenile arrests involved “other” drugs.**
- **7.25% of all persons arrested for driving under the influence (DUI) were under the age of 21.**
- **Where 370 minors arrested for alcohol-related offenses reported obtaining alcohol:**
  - Party – 29.19%
  - Home – 28.65%
  - Bar – 21.62%
  - Liquor Store – 20.27%
  - Drive-up – <1%

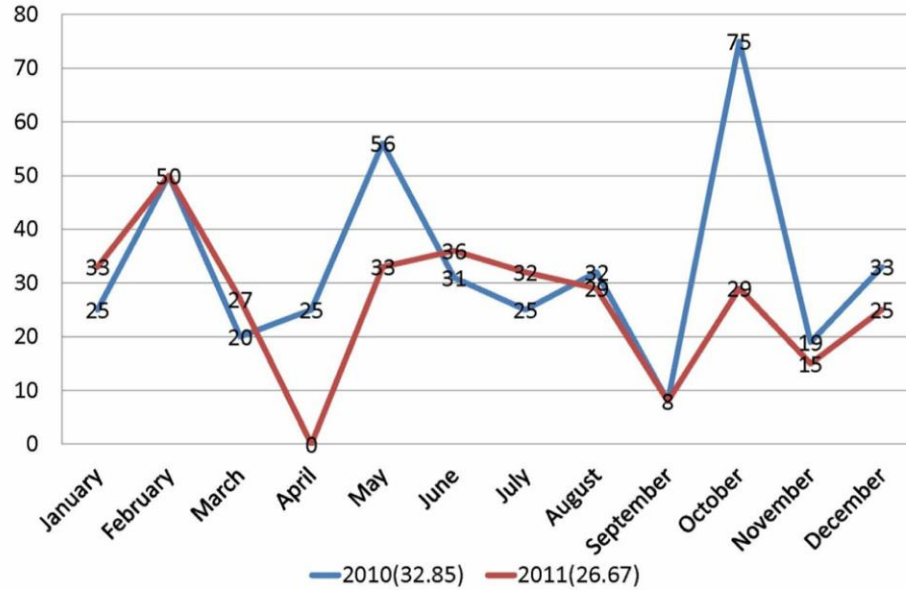


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### FATAL CRASHES:

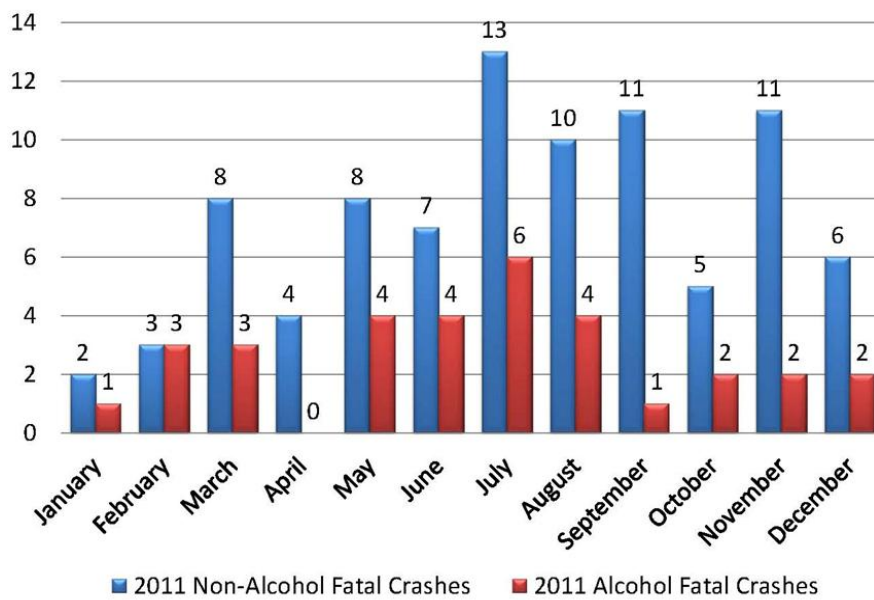
#### Statewide Percentage of Alcohol Involved Fatality Crashes

(Statistics Provided by the Wyoming Department of Transportation)



#### Statewide – 2011 Fatal Crashes

(Statistics Provided by the Wyoming Department of Transportation)

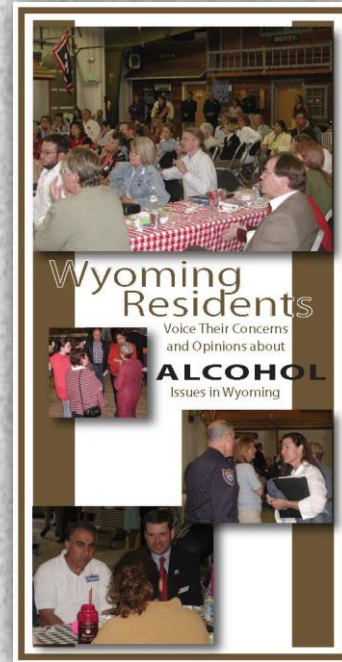




### PUBLIC OPINION

The statistics in this report provide evidence of the high level of alcohol abuse statewide. The high percentage of alcohol involved arrests (70.14%), the inordinate number of arrests for public intoxication (4,473) and DUI (5,199) and the high levels of BAC recorded for these individuals (average BAC: 0.2583 for public intoxication and 0.1545 for DUI) appear to validate the concerns about alcohol abuse expressed by Wyoming residents in the most recent statewide public opinion survey<sup>3</sup>. Some excerpts from the survey that involved 4,699 Wyoming residents:

- 77.8% view alcohol abuse by Wyoming adults as a serious or somewhat serious problem
- When Wyoming residents were asked whether they would support a state law that would prohibit selling or serving alcohol to someone who is obviously intoxicated:
  - 76.8% strongly supported such a law
  - 13.6% somewhat supported such a law
- **86.8% of Wyoming residents believe that drinking and driving in their community is a serious or somewhat serious problem.**



The full report, Alcohol and Crime in Wyoming: 2011, includes statewide statistics and averages, along with comparisons of county statistics in specific categories. In addition, there are approximately one hundred pages of data in a supplemental report that provides county, community and local law enforcement agency statistics. A careful review of both reports is essential in order to gain a more complete perspective of the impact of alcohol on crime in all communities in the state of Wyoming.

*The statistics contained in this report identify significant public safety issues which hopefully will prompt further discussion, analysis and action by local law enforcement, citizens and state/community leaders.*

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<sup>3</sup> Wyoming Alcohol Use Issues Survey, Wyoming Survey & Analysis Center, October 2006

# **ALCOHOL AND CRIME IN WYOMING: 2011**

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**April 2012**

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