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## **The Governor's Prevention Partnership Joins School and Business Partners in New Venture Providing Safe Rides for Students**

*Governor Rell commends first community partnership of its kind in the nation*

The Governor's Prevention Partnership (The Partnership) has joined with the University of New Haven (UNH) and Metro Taxi in a pioneering program to ensure that college students always have access to safe transportation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. "We look for opportunities to collaborate with our business and education partners to keep kids safe and, of course, to develop relationships with them to find creative ways to promote prevention - whether that be prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, violence, underage drinking or the promotion of mentoring," said Jill Spinetti, Partnership president and CEO.

"Metro Taxi is a company that works to serve the community, and UNH takes its commitment to student safety and well-being seriously," said Governor M. Jodi Rell. "Together, with the support of The Governor's Prevention Partnership, they have created a resource that will significantly benefit students and their families, and that's to be commended."

With Metro Taxi's URide Safe® Card, thousands of UNH students will have safe transportation to wherever they are going. "This guaranteed transportation is important for student safety, for students dealing with unexpected situations, as well as for convenience and peace of mind," said Spinetti. According to Ric Baker, UNH assistant dean of students, the URide Safe® Card will complement the shuttle and transportation services already offered for UNH students.

The no-cash, personal debit card can be used in any Metro Taxi throughout Connecticut. Students or parents can add money to the account and receive a detailed ride log, enabling them to keep track of their usage of Metro Taxi transportation. [www.URideSafeCard.com](http://www.URideSafeCard.com).

"We strongly support the innovative partnership between Metro Taxi and University of New Haven to bring comfort and security to students and their parents, knowing that they have access to reliable transportation at any time," said Spinetti. "URide Safe® Card provides another tool for students to make good choices where their safety is concerned. We know, from our experience working with college campuses around the state, that when the community gets involved, students are more likely to make good choices."

"We believe that this is the first community partnership of its kind in the nation initiated by a taxi cab company among our nearly 1,000 member companies. Metro Taxi's debit card for college and university students may well become a 'best practice,' replicated by colleges and universities everywhere," said Al LaGasse, president of the Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association, the industry's leader and international trade association.

UNH's URide Safe® Card bears The Governor's Prevention Partnership logo to reinforce the importance of this effort to keep kids safe, and to promote The Partnership's broader mission, which includes building a strong, healthy future workforce through leadership in mentoring and prevention of violence, underage drinking, and alcohol and drug abuse. "We look forward to working with UNH and Metro Taxi on these issues," said Spineti.

"We're absolutely delighted to team up with UNH and The Partnership, the state's leader in helping to ensure that our youth remain safe and develop as strong, confident, successful people ready to work and to contribute to our society," said William Scalzi, founder and president of the West Haven-based Metro Taxi. Metro Taxi is Connecticut's largest, full-service cab company.

**The Governor's Prevention Partnership** - <http://www.preventionworksct.org>

Created in 1989, The Governor's Prevention Partnership is a statewide public-private alliance, building a strong, healthy future workforce through leadership in mentoring and prevention of violence, underage drinking, alcohol and drug abuse. They serve as Connecticut's alliance partner for Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) and Partnership for a Drug Free America. Co-chaired by Governor M. Jodi Rell and a business leader, The Partnership provides leadership and services to help schools, communities, youth organizations, and businesses create and sustain quality programs.

**Metro Taxi** - <http://www.metrotaxi.com>

Founded in 1987, Metro Taxi has been lauded for its state-of-the-art use of technology by the New Haven Chamber of Commerce, recognized for exceptional service by the Governor and the Connecticut General Assembly, named a Business New Haven Rising Star and was voted "Best in New Haven" every year that the New Haven Advocate's readers have been polled. Last month, the American Red Cross acknowledged Metro Taxi with the Pearce Award. Named after business and community leader Herbert H. Pearce of H. Pearce Real Estate Co., the award recognizes the transportation company's volunteerism and in-kind contributions, which aid the American Red Cross' humanitarian relief efforts year-long.

**The University of New Haven** - <http://www.newhaven.edu>

Founded in 1920, the University provides its students with a unique combination of solid liberal arts and real-world, hands-on professional training. UNH is a private university with an 80-acre main campus. The University has an enrollment of more than 5,200; approximately 1,700 graduate students and more than 3,500 undergraduates, 70 percent of whom reside in University housing. A leader in experiential education, the University of New Haven is experiencing a historic and nationally recognized surge in enrollment. The University offers more than 80 undergraduate degrees and more than 25 graduate degrees through its five colleges, in fields such as sports management, nutrition, forensic science, music and sound recording, engineering, computer science and criminal justice.

Editor's Note: Graphic of URide Safe® Card available upon request.

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