

# A D D R E S S

of Mark Venzke,  
citizen of the City Of Gainesville, Florida,  
to the Commissioners of the City Of Gainesville, Florida

during the early evening public comment period  
at the regular meeting of the Gainesville City Commission

on Thursday, March 21, 2013  
at about 6:30 p.m.

*concerning*

**impaired driving and the reputation of our mayor and our city**

Mayor Pro Temp ore, Mark Venzke.

I've been....struck today by the unfortunate news of Mayor Lowe's arrest [on drunk driving charges.] I think it is something that we should all be concerned about.

There is...widespread abuse of alcohol in this country, and I think we need to realize that.

I've...got some statistics from the Internet site of Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) that are very startling. ...[They say] that:

**An average drunk driver has driven drunk 80 times before first arrest.**

([Centers for Disease Control](#). "Vital Signs: Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among Adults — United States, 2010." Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. October 4, 2011.)

**About one-third of all drivers arrested or convicted of driving while intoxicated or driving under the influence of alcohol are repeat offenders.**

(Fell, Jim. "Repeat DWI Offenders in the United States." Washington, DC: [National Department of Transportation](#), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Traffic Tech No. 85, February 1995.)

**50 to 75 percent of convicted drunk drivers continue to drive on a suspended license.**

(Peck, R.C., Wilson, R. J., and Sutton, L. 1995. "Driver license strategies for controlling the persistent DUI offender, Strategies for Dealing with the intent Drinking Driver."

Transportation Research Board, Transportation Research Circular No. 437. Washington, D.C. National Research Council: 48-49 and Beck, KH, et al. "Effects of Ignition Interlock License Restrictions on Drivers with Multiple Alcohol Offenses: A Randomized Trial in Maryland." American Journal of Public Health, 89 vol. 11 (1999): 1696-1700.)

**Drunk driving costs the United States \$132 billion a year.**

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration FARS data, 2010

**Drunk driving costs each adult in this country almost \$500 per year.**

(Taylor, et al 2002) Full cite: Taylor, Dexter; Miller, Ted; and Cox, Kenya. "Impaired Driving in the United States Cost Fact Sheets." Washington, DC: [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), 2002.

**One in three people will be involved in an alcohol-related crash in their lifetime.**

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "The Traffic Stop and You: Improving Communications between Citizens and Law Enforcement." [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), March 2001, DOT HS 809 212.

**Almost every 90 seconds, a person is injured in a drunk driving crash.**

Blincoe, Lawrence, et al. "The Economic Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes 2000." Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2002. [NHTSA FARS data, 2011](#).

**Every day in America, another 27 people die as a result of drunk driving crashes.**

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration FARS data, 2012.

**In 2010, 211 children were killed in drunk driving crashes. Of those 211 deaths, 131 (62 percent) were riding with the drunk driver.**

(National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. "Traffic Safety Facts 2010: Alcohol Impaired Driving" Washington DC: [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), 2011.)

This is a bad time for Mayor Lowe, but it's also a time for all of us to think of the consequences of drinking and [of drinking and] driving especially.

The Florida Gator Well Office...[that]...promotes wellness on the University Of Florida campus has a longitudinal study that runs between the fall of 2004 and the fall of 2011. I can report from the graphs here [in the study] that there's been a general decline in the use of tobacco, alcohol, ecstasy, marijuana and cocaine with slight increases [in all of them] in the last...one or two years depending upon the substance.

Of those surveyed, those who performed poorly on tests or on [an] important project [during the preceding year] declined from twenty-five to fifteen percent. [Those who] drove a car while

under the influence [during the preceding year] has gone from thirty-seven and one-half percent to seventeen percent. That's good, but that is not what we need. We need people to...use alcohol responsibly.

...[The irresponsible use of alcohol by our mayor] goes to the character of the leadership of our city, and I want to say that it does not reflect...[well]...on our mayor or our city.... [I also want to say that]...we had much better choices [in candidates in the general election than the two now standing in the runoff election—that include our mayor—] that were available [to voters and that those choices included me].

With that, let us all endeavor to use alcohol [responsibly] and...[to not]...use other [mind-altering] substances.

**455 words**

**2.74 minutes (00:02:44)** at 166 words per minute