Give Drunk Drivers A Ride Back Home

With so much deserved emphasis in Lafayette these days on the number of drunken drivers, the suggestion has been offered that police should drive drunks home before these inebriates hit the road after leaving a bar or a party — or both.

The idea is sound in theory, but impracticable. As the mayor pointed out, there are too many drunks for the police to accommodate with taxi service at the expense of other areas of crime protection. However, the fact remains that keeping a drunk away from the wheel, depositing him in a seat as a passenger, not the driver, and letting someone take him home makes a lot of sense. His life could be saved, as well as that of someone else.

That is why the City Council is listening with attentive ears to an offer made by a cab company to have bartenders and policemen call in if there is an intoxicated person who needs to be carried to his abode. A cabbie would respond and haul off the person who’s had too much.

There’s the question of who would pay the cab fare. We don’t think that requires much deliberation. The least the drunk could do would be to pay his way home. It could save his life, that of others and, at the very least, the embarrassment of a DWI ticket plus fine. Neither would it be necessary to limit the service to only one firm. Other responsible cabbies could be authorized by the police. Rules would have to be spelled out, as they are in dealing with local wrecking firms that tow away cars ticketed by police.

These are minor problems that could be worked out. City Councilman Dub Hudson elaborated upon that idea by pointing out that Houston has a program in which cabbies, with a direct radio link to police, can help the law enforcement officials if they see a crime in progress, something like our local Neighborhood Watch set-up.

This is the sort of thing that involves the citizen directly in crime prevention in their community and should be encouraged by both city officials and the citizenry.