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NEWS RELEASE

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Click It or Ticket Enforcement Begins

Follows deadly weekend – 5 killed in vehicle crashes, 4 not wearing seat belts

Dover – Starting today, thirty-one state, local and federal (DAFB) law enforcement agencies are stepping up their enforcement of Delaware’s seat belt and child restraint laws as the enforcement component of the 4th annual Click It or Ticket campaign begins. For the next two weeks, these law enforcement agencies will put extra officers on the road each day to conduct checkpoints and roving patrols looking for unbelted motorists.

“There is zero tolerance for unbelted motorists,” said Tricia Roberts, Director of the Office of Highway Safety. “Last week the public was warned through paid t.v. and radio commercials, billboards, and news stories that enforcement would begin this week. Now those who continue to disobey the state’s seat belt law will receive a ticket.”

The start of the campaign could not be more critical. Safety officials, already concerned with an increase in the number of people killed this year who were not wearing seat belts, were shocked at this weekend’s rash of traffic deaths. Six people were killed this weekend in three separate traffic crashes. One motorcyclist died in a Sussex County crash, while the two vehicle crashes occurred in New Castle County. Five people died in those two crashes, and four of them were not wearing seat belts.

“We are extremely concerned by the number of fatal crashes occurring this year, and in particular with the number of people not wearing seat belts,” said Roberts. “The importance of conducting the Click It or Ticket campaign, the goal of which is to save lives and reduce injuries by increasing the number of people who buckle up, right now, should be clear for all to see.”

Click It or Ticket, which is a nation-wide campaign to increase seat belt use, employs a combination of daily high visibility enforcement and paid media awareness to increase compliance with each state's seat belt laws. Most other states will begin their period of stepped up enforcement on May 23rd, as the campaign also kicks off the start of the summer travel season. In Delaware, enforcement will continue through May 31st, and be followed up with statewide observational seat belt use surveys to determine the level of campaign's success.

Past Click It or Ticket campaigns have increased seat belt use in the state to an all time high of 82% in 2004, while the nation also reached an all time high seat belt use rate of 80%. Despite gains in belt use, safety officials need only look at the fatal crash statistics for this year to see that motorists belt use habits are slipping.

The following Delaware police agencies will participate in this year's Click It or Ticket campaign: Bethany Beach Police, Bridgeville Police, Camden Police, Clayton Police, Delaware State Police, Delmar Police, Dover Air Force Base, Dover Police, Ellendale Police, Elsmere Police, Felton Police, Fenwick Island Police, Greenwood Police, Georgetown Police, Harrington Police, Laurel Police, Lewes Police, Milford Police, Millsboro Police, Milton Police, New Castle City Police, New Castle County Police, Newport Police, Ocean View Police, Rehoboth Beach Police, Seaford Police, Selbyville Police, Smyrna Police, South Bethany Police, Wilmington Police and Wyoming Police.

Information about the Click It or Ticket campaign, including daily results of enforcement activities, a seat belt fact sheet, a New Initiatives section, and frequently asked questions can be found at www.state.de.us/highway.

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