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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2009

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In Week 10 of Seat Belt Campaign – Lowest Number of Citations Issued for Violations

Dover – Officers participating in a stepped up statewide enforcement effort to save lives by getting more Delawareans to buckle up, issued 16 citations for seat belt violations between October 5th and the 11th. This is the lowest number of citations issued for seat belt violations since the enforcement and awareness mobilization launched on August 1st.

A total of 517 seat belt citations have now been issued in the first ten weeks of the four-month long safety initiative. The campaign which encourages drivers and passengers to “Buckle Up Day & Night” was created after results from observational seat belt surveys conducted by the Office of Highway Safety in June revealed that the state’s 2009 statewide use rate declined from 91% last year to 88% this year. To date this year, 58% of drivers and passengers killed since January 1st have not been buckled up.

In addition to the seat belt citations issued in the last week, officers also stopped 14 individuals for speeding, arrested 2 for DUI and cited another 31 for other traffic violations.

Eight county and municipal police agencies, primarily located in Sussex and New Castle Counties, are conducting either traffic safety patrols and/or checkpoints looking for unbuckled drivers and passengers. Seat belt usage declined by 4% each in New Castle and Sussex Counties, while the usage rate actually increased by 1% in Kent County.

Enforcement is occurring both day and night and will continue through the end of November, including the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

Delaware law requires drivers and *all* passengers, including those in the back seat, to wear a seat belt. An officer can pull over a driver if he sees any person not wearing one. Delaware’s law also requires correct use of the seat belt...which means the shoulder belt must be

worn over the shoulder and not under the arm. Officers will be issuing citations for seat belt violations as part of a zero tolerance policy. The ticket, which goes to the driver no matter who is unbuckled in the vehicle, is a \$25.00 fine plus court administrative fees, which can eventually total more than \$70.00.

For weekly updates on OHS's seat belt mobilization results please visit the Newsroom on the OHS website at www.ohs.delaware.gov . While there, bookmark the site in your RSS Reader. You can also follow OHS updates on our activities on Twitter at www.twitter.com/DEHighwaySafe .

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