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NEWS RELEASE

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OHS Launches 2007 “Stop Aggressive Driving” Campaign With New Signs Encouraging Motorists to Call 911

Dover – “Your safety is in your hands.” That’s the message that Delaware Office of Highway Safety (OHS) officials are sending to the public as, on Friday, they launch the 2007 “Stop Aggressive Driving” campaign, a high visibility enforcement and awareness initiative aimed at reducing aggressive driving-related traffic deaths. A new element of this year’s campaign involves the recent placement of 12 roadway signs in locations statewide that encourage motorists to call 911 to report aggressive and impaired drivers.

“We want to empower our citizens who are often frustrated by the aggressive driving they see around them, to believe they can be part of the solution and help make our roadways safer by calling 911 to report the dangerous drivers threatening their safety,” said Andrea Summers, Community Relations Officer for the Office of Highway Safety.

Aggressive drivers are those who speed, tailgate, weave in and out of traffic, run red lights and stop signs and pull into traffic without giving others adequate room or time to maneuver. When motorists see examples of these dangerous behaviors, they are being asked to call 911 when it’s safe to do so (or have a passenger call for them), and provide dispatchers with a description of the vehicle, a license plate number when possible and the vehicle’s direction of travel. Alerts will then be sent to officers in the surrounding area to be on the lookout for the aggressive driver, make contact with him/her and cite that person for the offenses they observe.

Radio messages and fliers with this new information have also been developed and will be used to remind the public that they have a way to report aggressive drivers. The signs, located in all three counties, are also movable. If officials see a high volume of calls on a particular

roadway, or if crash data shows an increase in vehicle collisions in another area, the signs can be relocated.

Sustained, high visibility enforcement will again be part of this year's "Stop Aggressive Driving" campaign. Delaware State Police in all three counties, along with New Castle County, New Castle City, Newark, Newport and Wilmington Police agencies will be conducting aggressive driving patrols over the next two months. Delaware State Police and New Castle County Police will again be utilizing a two-officer team enforcement approach as part of their efforts, which involves the use of both marked and unmarked/unconventional vehicles to spot violations.

Police are being asked to focus on the top "fatal four" aggressive driving violations in the State of Delaware. These factors are the top four primary contributing factors in the state's aggressive-driving fatal crashes. They are speeding, red light violations, following too closely and failure to yield the right of way. In 2006 officers issued over 6,500 citations for aggressive driving behaviors.

OHS officials believe last year's high visibility enforcement effort is largely responsible for a nearly 10 percentage point decrease in aggressive driving fatal crashes. In 2005, 61% of all traffic fatalities were related to acts of aggressive driving, and in 2006 that percentage dropped to 52%! Still officials realize that there is much work to be done.

"It's still unacceptable to us that more than half of fatal crashes in our state are caused by aggressive driving actions," said Jana Simpler, Aggressive Driving program manager for the Office of Highway Safety. "We want the public understand that these wrecks aren't accidents, they are preventable collisions. We're enlisting the public's help by asking them to report aggressive drivers, but we'll also have a strong enforcement presence on the roads to stop the violators we see."

Individuals who are stopped under Delaware's aggressive driving law can be charged both with aggressive driving and charged for each individual traffic offense. Penalties include fines between \$100 - \$300 for a first offense, possible jail time, and mandatory attendance at an 8-hour behavior modification course. Subsequent convictions will result in the loss of driving privileges for one month.

For more information on the "Stop Aggressive Driving" campaign, visit our website at www.state.de.us/highway.

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