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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delaware to Observe First Annual
National Teen Driver Safety Week
October 15 – 20

Dover – Thanks, in large part, to the implementation of a Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) law in Delaware, motor vehicle crashes involving 16 year old drivers have been cut in half over the last eight years. Despite this reduction, 16 – 19 year olds who make up just 5% of Delaware’s driving population were involved in 13% of fatal crashes and 21% of injury crashes in the First State last year.

Recognizing the importance of teen driver safety, the U.S. House of Representatives recently passed a resolution to establish the third week of October each year, as National Teen Driver Safety Week. The introduction of a National Teen Driver Safety Week is expected to increase awareness of this important issue among teenagers and adults in communities throughout the United States, while additional research is conducted to develop and test interventions that will help teenagers become safer drivers.

This year, National Teen Driver Safety Week will be October 15th through the 20th. Delaware will mark this special week with a proclamation to be issued by Governor Ruth Ann Minner. Additionally, the Office of Highway Safety (OHS) is sending DUI prevention materials to high schools throughout the state in conjunction with activities aimed at reducing underage drinking during the Homecoming season.

OHS is encouraging parents and teens during this week, to visit its website at www.ohs.delaware.gov and take advantage of a variety of resources and programs available to them. One such program is OHS’s GDL Parent Orientation Program. The program provides parents with key information they need to help their children develop good driving habits. Find

out if your child's high school is involved in the program. If it isn't learn what you can do to get the school involved.

OHS is also taking the opportunity to announce that it has been awarded a \$20,000.00 grant from Ford Motor Company's *Driving Skills for Life (DSFL) Program*. Delaware was one of only three states to receive such a grant in 2007. DSFL provides an interactive online curriculum and educational materials that helps supplement driver education instruction. Part of the grant will be used to purchase interactive DVD's to support the GDL Parent Orientation Program, and the rest will be used to assist one of OHS's partners, Delmarva Broadcasting, in incorporating the DSFL curriculum into its award winning *Smart Drive* program.

Links to *Driving Skills for Life* as well as the *Smart Drive* program can be found on the OHS website. The website is also linking visitors to the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the Governors Highway Safety Association for more information on National Teen Driver Safety Week activities nationwide and other key messages.

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