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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAFETY BELT ENFORCEMENT ZONES IN EFFECT UNTIL JUNE 4

3,500 citations issued during first week of Click It or Ticket campaign

As motorists embark upon their first trip of the Michigan summer travel season, they are reminded to buckle up, or they might have to pay up, as law enforcement officers continue cracking down on safety belt offenders.

The annual *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* enforcement campaign continues through the Memorial Day weekend and ends June 4. More than 500 Michigan law enforcement agencies, including local, county and Michigan State Police posts, are making safety belt enforcement a priority by taking part in the national campaign focused on saving lives by increasing safety belt use. Much of the enforcement takes place in the form of safety belt enforcement zones in 55 counties.

Safety belt enforcement zones are areas marked by portable signs that alert motorists they are entering the enforcement area. One officer serves as a spotter, radioing unbelted motorist information to nearby marked patrol vehicles who then stop the motorist and issue a citation. Nearly 800 of these zones are being conducted across the state during the two-week enforcement effort.

According to early reports received by the Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP), officers in 34 counties have issued 3,500 citations to unbuckled motorists during the enforcement campaign's first week. Of those citations, 3,476 were for unbelted drivers and their passengers and 24 were for children under age four who were not properly restrained. Other activity included 97 misdemeanor and 15 felony arrests, 42 speeding citations and 616 other traffic citations.

OHSP is coordinating the *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* mobilization, providing federal traffic safety funds for overtime patrols to more than 230 Michigan law enforcement agencies and paid advertising to promote awareness of the initiative. This mobilization is part of an effort to save lives and prevent injuries by increasing Michigan's safety belt use rate to 95 percent. By providing law enforcement agencies with overtime funding, officers can concentrate on safety belt enforcement without taking away from their day-to-day duties.

A listing of safety belt enforcement zones and citation information can be found at the OHSP website: www.michigan.gov/ohsp.

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