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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Michigan Traffic Safety Summit Tuesday and Wednesday in East Lansing **20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SEAT BELT LAW FEATURED**

The state's traffic safety community will learn about efforts to limit drowsy driving crashes and how the legalization of recreational marijuana will impact drivers as part of the two-day 2020 Michigan Traffic Safety Summit.

The summit starts on March 10, the 20th anniversary of Michigan's primary seat belt law taking effect. Prior to the law, Michigan's seat belt use rate was around 70 percent. It's been as high as 97.9 percent in 2009 and currently is at 94.4 percent. This law is one of the main reasons traffic fatalities in Michigan have fallen from nearly 1,500 per year in the 1990s to less than 1,000 in 2018.

"Over the last two decades, 3,454 lives have been saved because of the seat belt law," said Michael L. Prince, Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) Director. "You've heard it a million times, but it is still important to remember buckling up really does save lives."

More than 500 people are expected to attend the summit which starts tomorrow and runs through Wednesday at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in East Lansing. The summit is sponsored by the OHSP and is largely supported with federal traffic safety funds.

General sessions include:

Tuesday

- *20th Anniversary of Michigan's Seat Belt Law*, James Hedlund, principal of Highway Safety North, and Betty J. Mercer, former director of the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
- *The New World of Impaired Driving*, Kinga Canike and Ken Stecker, traffic safety resource prosecutors

Wednesday

- *Effective Social Media Strategies*, Sgt. Tracy Lillard of the Illinois State Police
- *Victory over Critical Injury*, Sgt. Robert Bemis (Ret.) of the Pennsylvania State Police

In addition to general sessions, there are more than 25 workshops, including: Illegal Passing of School Buses; New Trends in Substance Abuse – What You Need to Know; Miranda and Other Roadside Issues; Impaired Driving Silver Bullets; Dangers of Drowsy Driving; and a course on how to perform triage on the roadside.

The summit runs from 8:45 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday and 8:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m. Wednesday. A detailed and complete program can be found at Michigan.gov/OHSPTrafficSummit.

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