FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State and Local Police Crack Down on Deadly Nighttime Violations, IDOT Launches Safety Campaign

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and law enforcement officials today announced the start of the 2011 Click It or Ticket mobilization focusing on nighttime law violators across the state. The Illinois State Police (ISP) and nearly 500 local law enforcement agencies are emphasizing nighttime safety belt violations now through Memorial Day weekend. In conjunction with enforcement activities, IDOT is rolling out a series of public service announcements (PSAs) geared toward young male motorists, the demographic group that research shows is most likely to drive unbelted or impaired.

“Even with nine out of 10 motorists buckling up in Illinois, far too many people choose not to wear a safety belt at night,” said IDOT Secretary Gary Hannig. “Our strong partnership with law enforcement demonstrates our commitment to boost safety belt usage during the nighttime hours and bring impaired drivers to justice. The PSAs support law enforcement activities by providing a proven and effective communication tool to directly reach our intended audience and positively impact motorist behavior.”

A total of $1.58 million in federal safety dollars has been made available to the Illinois State Police, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Police and more than 500 local law enforcement agencies to provide additional safety belt and impaired driving patrols during the two-week mobilization period. The federal dollars will also fund more than 1,200 safety belt enforcement zones and 1,000 safety belt saturation patrols. Fifty percent or more of these patrols will occur during late-night hours (11 p.m.-6 a.m.). The mobilization also includes impaired driving enforcement, including more than 60 roadside safety checks.

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"The simplest and single most effective way of protecting our family members during a crash, is to ensure they are wearing their seat belts every trip, every time," said Illinois State Police Director Hiram Grau. "During the spring and summer months, the Illinois State Police, and local law enforcement officers, will participate in nighttime safety belt enforcement zones, promoting safety belt use during the hours they are least likely to be used.”

Research proves motorists buckle up at a much lower rate during the late-night hours. Last year in Illinois, statistics show that only two in ten of individuals who died in crashes during the midnight to 3 a.m. timeframe were properly restrained by a safety belt.

IDOT has partnered with Arthur Agency, a Carbondale based creative firm, to develop the PSA campaign with the goal of directly influencing the target audience, educating the public on the dangerous consequences of driving unbelted, and to saving more lives on Illinois roadways.

“We were thrilled to join IDOT to help save the lives of Illinois motorists,” said Dennis Poshard, Arthur Agency President. “We tried to bring new creative energy to the shared goals of increasing safety belt usage and decreasing traffic fatalities. We also partnered with Flowers Communications Group of Chicago to leverage their multicultural expertise and ensure the spots resonate with the urban market.”

For more information about the Click It or Ticket campaign in Illinois, go to www.buckleupillinois.org.

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