

May 28, 2010

***Click It or Ticket 2010 Works to Keep Drivers Safe Day and Night
Special Nighttime Enforcement Effort with Border States***

NASHVILLE – In 2008, 13,250 people across the U.S. unbuckled their safety belt and walked away from what could have been a deadly crash. That's more than 13,000 people who were able to hug their family, talk with friends and live to see another day thanks in part to their safety belt.

Tennessee's Governor's Highway Safety Office is joining hundreds of law enforcement officials, highway safety representatives and safety advocates nationwide to remind motorists that safety belts do save lives during the annual *Click It or Ticket* education and enforcement campaign. As part of the campaign, Tennessee's law enforcement agencies are partnering with border states for special nighttime *Hands Across the Border* safety belt enforcement events to draw attention to the need to wear a safety belt at all times, day and night.

"It's just plain common sense. Wearing a safety belt greatly increases the chance you will survive a crash," said TDOT Commissioner Gerald Nicely. "Statistics show more people not buckled up die in crashes at night, which is why TDOT is supporting enhanced nighttime enforcement of safety belt laws during this *Click It or Ticket* campaign."

Law enforcement agencies in Tennessee will conduct special nighttime *Click It or Ticket* enforcement and education efforts May 24 through June 6, 2010. *Click It or Ticket* events like these are credited with increasing the national seat belt usage rate from 58% in 1994 to an observed usage rate of 84% in 2009. In Tennessee, seat belt usage has increased from 59% in 2000 to 81.5% in 2008.

More than half of people killed in passenger vehicle crashes in 2009 in Tennessee were not wearing a safety belt, according to preliminary figures, and more unrestrained deaths occurred during nighttime hours. Preliminary 2009 numbers show 216 unbelted people died during nighttime hours while 195 motorists not buckled up died during the daytime hours.

Nationally, 12,671 people died in passenger vehicle crashes at night between the hours of 6:00 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. in 2008, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Nearly two-thirds, or 64%, of those who died were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the crashes, compared to less than half, 45%, of the people who died in passenger vehicle crashes during the day between 6:00 a.m. and 5:59 p.m.

"Remember this May 24 to June 6 law enforcement will be working to save lives on Tennessee roadways by making sure motorists are buckled up," said GHSO Director Kendell Poole. "Buckle up and encourage your loved ones to do the same. You'll save the cost of a ticket and could even save a life."

###