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Click It or Ticket 2011 Works to Keep Drivers Safe Day and Night Special Nighttime Enforcement Effort with Border States

NASHVILLE – The Governor's Highway Safety Office (GHSO) has joined with local and border state law enforcement officers, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and highway safety advocates all across the country for the 2011 national *Click It or Ticket* seat belt enforcement mobilization. This campaign runs through June 5.

During the mobilization, officers are cracking down on motorists who fail to wear their seat belts – both day and night. Tennessee's law enforcement agencies are partnering with border states for special nighttime *Hands Across the Border* safety belt enforcement events to draw attention of the need of all passenger vehicle occupants to wear a safety belt at all times.

Because nighttime passenger vehicle occupants are among those least likely to buckle up and most likely to die in crashes when unrestrained, nighttime enforcement has become a priority of the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization. Nationally, of those who died in nighttime crashes in 2009, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) were not wearing seat belts at the time of their fatal crashes.

"Many more nighttime traffic deaths can be prevented if more motorists simply start wearing their seat belts. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is strongly supporting enhanced nighttime enforcement of seat belt laws during the *Click It or Ticket* campaign," said Commissioner John Schroer. "It's just plain common sense. Wearing a safety belt greatly increases the chance you will survive a crash."

Law enforcement agencies in Tennessee will conduct special nighttime *Click it or Ticket* enforcement and education efforts May 23 through June 5, 2011. *Click it or Ticket* events like these are credited with increasing the national seat belt usage rate from 58 percent in 1994 to an observed usage rate of 85 percent in 2010. In Tennessee, seat belt usage has increased from 59 percent in 2000 to 87 percent in 2010.

In 2010, preliminary numbers show that 384 passenger vehicle occupants involved in fatal crashes in Tennessee were not wearing seat belts. There were 425 unrestrained vehicle occupants during 2009 and 462 in 2008 involved in fatal crashes in the state.

"Tennessee statistics are improving and law enforcement will continue working to save lives on Tennessee roadways by making sure occupants are buckled up," said GHSO Director Kendell Poole. "Motorists should buckle up. They will save the cost of a ticket and could even save a life."

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