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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICERS ISSUE 18,000 SAFETY BELT CITATIONS DURING *CLICK IT OR TICKET* Nighttime patrols found 270 unbelted, 9 drunk drivers

Law enforcement officers in Michigan issued more than 18,000 safety belt citations during the recent *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* enforcement period, according to preliminary reports from participating agencies.

Between May 21 and June 3, officers across the state cited motorists who were not properly buckled in safety belt enforcement zones. Of the 18,436 restraint citations issued, 777 were for children under 4 years old who were not properly restrained in a child safety seat.

Officers wrote 13,176 of these citations in grant-funded safety belt enforcement zones. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) administered federal traffic safety funds to agencies in 55 counties for the enforcement activity.

Law enforcement agencies that voluntarily agreed to make safety belt enforcement a priority during the enforcement period issued the remainder of the citations. The Michigan State Police Traffic Safety Division focused additional enforcement on commercial truck drivers.

"Officers working the zones reported that the vast majority of drivers and passengers complied with the law, which was our goal," OHSP Director Michael L. Prince said. "To save lives we need to keep the safety belt use rate high, and we hope that safety belt observation studies will confirm that most Michigan motorists buckle up."

In addition to writing safety belt citations, law enforcement officers arrested 870 motorists for drunk driving and other alcohol-related charges, including one case of child endangerment when a drunk driver had a 5-year-old passenger in the vehicle. They also made 337 felony and 1,849 misdemeanor arrests, issued 6,948 speeding citations and found 1,085 drivers with suspended licenses.

Law enforcement agencies in 11 counties participated in a pilot project by conducting roving safety belt patrols the night of May 24. That evening, officers issued 262 safety belt and seven child restraint citations. They also found nine drunk drivers, 37 drivers with suspended licenses and 28 speeders.

Michigan's current safety belt use rate is 94.3 percent. New figures for 2007 and complete citation results from this May's enforcement campaign will be available in mid-July.

OHSP is providing federal funds for safety belt, drunk driving and intersection enforcement throughout the summer. The summer enforcement will end with a drunk driving crackdown Aug. 17-Sept. 3.

For a citation breakdown by county, visit www.michigan.gov/ohsp.

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