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MUSCATINE POLICE DEPARTMENT PRESS RELEASE

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ENHANCED TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT SCHEDULE JULY 3-7

Awareness of seat belt use primary goal of sTEP program this holiday season

MUSCATINE, Iowa – If you are prone to fudging on traffic laws, you may want to rethink your position, especially this Fourth of July Holiday weekend from July 3 through July 7. The Muscatine Police Department, in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Public Safety, will be participating in the Iowa Special Traffic Enforcement Program (sTEP) and that could mean some costly fines for those pulled over.

“Of course we want people to obey the traffic laws at all times,” Muscatine Police Chief Brett Talkington said. “The sTEP program of “high visibility” traffic enforcement is coordinated around a holiday with the main effort being to raise awareness of safety belt use.”

The Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB) states that the last few months have brought incredible challenges for all communities.

“As our nation begins to reopen, many Americans will be eager to celebrate the Fourth of July with family and friends,” Genie Sterbenz, GTSM Program Administrator, said. “The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Governor’s Traffic Safety Bureau (GTSB) want to remind drivers to not let the celebration turn dangerous by driving impaired.”

The sTEP events call for heightened traffic enforcement for all traffic violations with the main effort to raise awareness in safety belt use as the best means of protection in the case of a motor vehicle collision.

Nationally, during the 2018 July 4th holiday period (the most recent statistics available) 193 people died in motor vehicle crashes and 78 of these fatalities occurred in an alcohol-impaired crash. On the Fourth of July in 2018, one person lost their life in Iowa due to an alcohol related crash. On July 4, 2019, Iowa experienced 112 crashes which involved two fatalities and nine serious injuries. These fatalities and injuries are certainly nothing to celebrate.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration 71 percent of those who died in alcohol related crashes were in vehicles involving a driver with a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of .15 or higher, almost two times the legal limit of .08. Law enforcement agencies across Iowa will be participating in the national *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* campaign from July 3 to July 7, 2020.

In an effort to combat impaired driving, officers will be exhibiting zero tolerance for impaired drivers.

Impaired driving is not only dangerous but illegal, and it puts everyone on the road in jeopardy. There is also a financial aspect of driving impaired. An OWI arrest can cost up to \$10,000. You could lose your license, your car, and your job. Before you set out to celebrate this holiday weekend, make a plan – have a designated driver, call an Uber, or other rideshare service.

The Iowa Department of Public Safety and the Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau reminds you that it is **never** okay to drink and drive!