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## **Labor Day Drunk Driving Crackdown Begins in Illinois**

*Law enforcement looking for drunk drivers to help stop deadly crime*

**SPRINGFIELD** – Drunk driving, especially around holidays such as Labor Day, is one of the deadliest crimes we face in Illinois and the nation as a whole. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois State Police (ISP) are committed to saving lives and today the agencies announced the kickoff of the “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” enforcement campaign leading up to Labor Day.

From today through Labor Day, state police will join more than 250 local police departments and county sheriff’s offices to step up enforcement with roadside safety checks and hundreds of additional hours of drunk and drugged driving patrols. In addition, motorists are being warned to buckle their seat belts no matter where they are sitting in a vehicle, especially during the deadly late-night hours.

As with all of the state’s high-visibility holiday enforcement campaigns, an important aspect of the Labor Day crackdown is getting the truth out to the public. That truth is that drunk and drugged driving destroys lives every day. Campaigns like this one aim to end the devastation caused by motor vehicle crashes.

“Progress in recent years is encouraging, but data clearly shows drunk and drugged driving remain a devastating problem on Illinois roads,” said Jared Thornley, IDOT’s Director of Traffic Safety. “Getting the word out about the dangers of drunk and drugged driving is a big part of why we do these holiday enforcement crackdowns. Unfortunately, the facts often aren’t enough to get the driving public’s attention. That’s why enforcement is necessary to keep Illinois roads as safe as they can be.”

Illinois has experienced improvements in the past decade with drunk and drugged driving fatalities, but impaired drivers still play a role in more than 300 highway deaths and hundreds more serious injuries every year.

“Labor Day weekend remains one of the busiest travel periods of the year and we want all motorists to reach their destination safely,” said ISP Colonel Mike Zerbonia. “ISP Troopers and

our law enforcement partners will saturate predesignated areas to strictly enforce DUI laws. Designate a driver before going out this holiday weekend to help ensure everyone makes it home safe,” he stressed.

According to estimates from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 475 traffic crash fatalities involved an alcohol-impaired driver in 2004 in Illinois. That number dropped to a low of 278 in 2011. However, 322 drunk driving deaths occurred in Illinois in 2012 and 2013.

The Labor Day crackdown is part of the “Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over” and “Click It or Ticket” programs in Illinois, funded with federal traffic safety dollars and administered by IDOT.

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