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PRESS RELEASE

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California Office of Traffic Safety Launches DUI Crackdown

Education campaign urges party-goers to choose sober rides

Sacramento, CA – The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) is providing federal funding to law enforcement agencies throughout the state for high visibility DUI enforcement this holiday period and will reinforce the message to bar-goers to plan for a safe ride home. Although the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recently announced 2011 figures showing that the state's DUI deaths remained unchanged from 2010 at a 67 year record low 774, even that level is unacceptable.

During this year's Crackdown, OTS will fund more than 325 DUI checkpoints and hundreds of saturation patrols through January 1 to decrease impaired driving and reinforce its message to *Report Drunk Drivers. Call 911.* The California Highway Patrol and over 500 participating law enforcement agencies throughout California will conduct increased sobriety checkpoints and saturation patrols throughout the state. This is the first wave in what will be nearly 2,000 DUI checkpoints over the next year, slightly more than last year and more than any other state.

“Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs is not only illegal, but incredibly dangerous,” said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. “Law enforcement will be out in force with a commitment to stopping those who are endangering themselves and others by driving while impaired. Checkpoints, strategically targeted patrols, and an increase in police presence on our roadways will help ensure that these offenders are caught and arrested.”

These operations not only aim to remove impaired drivers from the roadways, but also raise public awareness about the dangers of alcohol and drug impaired driving. Officers that are specially trained in drug detection will also be on hand to identify and arrest drivers under the influence of legal and illegal drugs, a problem that is quickly growing on California's roadways.

(more)

This year's efforts also include a new addition to the popular "RUOK?" anti-drunk driving campaign, which aims to educate Californians year-round about the dangers of drunk and drugged driving and reinforces the message that if you have to ask someone if they're okay to drive, they're probably not.

The new spin on the "RUOK?" campaign emphasizes the importance of safe and sober rides. The campaign takes aim at popular nightlife areas in four major cities throughout the state: Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Francisco and San Diego. "Wrapped" cars which are made to look like law enforcement cruisers in the front and taxi cabs in the rear will be placed in high-traffic areas every weekend during the crackdown. These engaging displays will help remind patrons of popular bars and restaurants that every night out can end safely by taking sober and responsible modes of transportation home rather than risk a trip to jail by driving drunk.

Each car will be accompanied by a street team that will distribute materials that highlight rides home that are both normal – taxi, sober friend – and ridiculous – pirate ships and giant chickens. This effort, which helps to support the ongoing "RUOK?" campaign launched in 2011, highlights in a creative and engaging way that no matter how ridiculous the ride may be, as long as it is a safe and sober ride, it is the right choice. These materials also include a QR code linking users to a GPS-enabled cab-finder mobile website, which they can use to search for a nearby cab.

The street teams will also encourage people to actively engage in campaign efforts via a "Not Driving" Instagram contest, another new element of this year's campaign effort. Participants are asked to follow OTS on Instagram, upload photos that demonstrate their safe ride home, and add a "not driving," caption and a #RUOK hashtag. Contest winners can receive taxi ride vouchers, donated by Taxi Magic, its participating fleets and other OTS partners.

For more information on the RUOK? campaign or the wrapped cars, please visit the OTS Facebook at www.facebook.com/CaliforniaOTS or follow OTS on Twitter @OTS_CA. For more information on all OTS efforts, visit www.OTS.ca.gov.

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