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LODI TARGETS SEAT BELT VIOLATORS IN MAY AND JUNE

Click It or Ticket Aims to Increase State's Seat Belt Use Rate

Lodi, Calif. – The Lodi Police Department is preparing to launch the state's annual *Click It or Ticket* seat belt enforcement campaign, with law enforcement from throughout {region} stepping up enforcement of the state's occupant protection laws during the three week mobilization, May 14-June 3, 2007. This special enforcement period is part of the state's annual effort to increase seat belt use through a combination of heavy enforcement, advertising and public awareness campaigns.

“Our department will be putting forth tremendous resources to make sure we have officers on the roads looking for drivers and passengers who are not buckling up”, said Police Captain David Main. “The intent of the *Click It or Ticket* campaign is simple – to save lives and prevent injuries.”

California currently has the fourth highest seat belt use rate in the nation, with the 2006 *Click It or Ticket* campaign resulting in an increase in the state's seat belt use rate from 92.5 percent in 2005 to 93.4 percent in 2006. Since the campaign first began in California in 2005, nearly a million more motor vehicle occupants are buckling up.

“It is our hope to see even more gains in California's seat belt use rate this year,” said Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) Director, Christopher J. Murphy. “We are particularly interested in making sure the state's teen population is buckling up in greater numbers.”

California's 2006 teen seat belt use rate was 90.8 percent, well below the state rate of 93.4 percent, but up from 88.6 percent in 2005.

California has a primary seat belt law which requires that every passenger in the car, including the driver, is required to wear a seat belt at all times. If stopped and found to be in violation, law enforcement will issue citations without warning. Tickets for seat belt violations range from \$80-\$91 for adults. When children under 6 are not properly secured in a vehicle, the parent or driver can receive one 'point count' on their driving record, with a fine of \$330 to \$401 on a first offense and \$795 to \$971 on a second offense.

Funding for officer overtime to support California's *Click It or Ticket* campaign was provided by a grant from the Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.