

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE _____

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Click It or Ticket Nets Results in Suffolk

Suffolk, VA (June 10, 2011) Suffolk officers were hitting the streets with one goal in mind...to increase seat belt wearing and save lives. From May 22, 2011 through June 5, 2011, Suffolk officers heavily patrolled the Suffolk highways in an effort to create awareness of the importance of wearing seat belts.

Officers in each roll call were treated to a "Click It or Ticket" cake as a reminder that enforcement and awareness were the keys to compliance. Their efforts paid off as seat belt usage climbed from 78 out of 100 to 89 out of 100 drivers wearing seat belts. This was determined by pre and post seatbelt surveys conducted at the busy intersection of Main St. and Constance Rd. Seatbelt wearing behavior is measured before the campaign and after the campaign to determine if seat belt wearing behavior is changed.

During the campaign, officers issued 288 safety belt citations and 41 child restraint citations out of the total 1,204 summonses issued as part of the campaign. 100 hours of overtime paid for by a National Highway Safety grant as well as officers' regular work hours were used to generate the 1,204 arrest citations and warnings from the campaign. "Our officers worked very hard during this campaign and we are proud of their efforts. Using seatbelts saves

lives, and our change in seat belt usage demonstrates that public education and enforcement are the keys to changing behavior.” said Major Stephanie Burch.

In 2009, 11,593 passenger vehicle occupants died in motor vehicle crashes nationwide between the nighttime hours of 6 p.m. and 5:59 a.m., according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

High-visibility enforcement such as the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization is credited with increasing the national belt usage rate from 58 percent in 1994 to an observed usage rate of 85 percent in 2010. Belt use saves thousands of lives each year across America. In 2009 alone, seat belts saved 12,713 lives nationwide.

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