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PRESS RELEASE

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**The Orange County “Avoid the 38” Task Force
Launches Intensive Crackdown on Impaired Driving**

Police Vow to Arrest Everyone Found Driving ‘Over the Limit’

[Santa Ana, CA] – The problem of impaired driving is a serious one. While America witnessed a decline in the number of DUI fatalities in recent years, the numbers are still too high. That’s why the “Avoid the 28” and “Avoid the 10” DUI Task Forces will join together in support of an intensive crackdown on impaired driving this August 20 – September 6, known by its tagline, “*Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.*”

Alcohol-involved fatalities and injuries have dropped dramatically in the last three years of this end-of-summer enforcement campaign in California. Combined deaths and injuries in 2007 were 1780, dropping to 1682 in 2008. Provisional 2009 data show that the numbers have dropped again, to 1317 a 26 percent decrease in just three years.

“All too often, innocent, law-abiding people suffer tragic consequences and the loss of loved ones due to this careless disregard for human life,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “Because of the commitment to end the carnage, Police, Sheriffs and CHP are intensifying enforcement during the crackdown. They’ll be especially vigilant during high-risk nighttime hours when impaired drivers are most likely to be on our roads.”

The “Avoid the 38” Orange County will deploy officers to conduct five checkpoints, one multi-agency DUI Task Force operation, 10 local roving DUI saturation patrols, a warrant/probation sweep targeting repeat offenders throughout the county and a court sting operation. (Media Note: see the attached “Avoid the 38” DUI Task Force Campaign enforcement schedule for the 18 day effort)

“Driving impaired is simply not worth all the consequences. Just designate a sober driver. Don’t take the chance. Remember, if you are over the limit, you will be arrested,” said Sheriff Sandra Hutchens, whose department oversees the “Avoid the 10” DUI Task Force.

According to the latest national data, 32 percent of fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes involve a driver or motorcycle rider with a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .08 percent or above, averaging one fatality every 45 minutes.

“Our message is simple and unwavering. If we find you driving impaired, we will arrest you. No exceptions,” said Chief John Welter of the Anaheim Police Department, which runs the “Avoid the 28” DUI Task Force. “Even if you beat the odds and walk away from an impaired-driving crash, motorists should be aware that the financial and social consequences of a DUI can be devastating.”

Violators will face jail time, loss of their driver’s license, huge fines and maybe sentenced to use ignition interlocks. Their insurance rates go up. Other financial hits include attorney fees, court costs, lost time at work, and the potential loss of job or job prospects. When family, friends and co-workers find out, violators can also face tremendous personal embarrassment and humiliation.

The national “*Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest*” crackdown is led by NHTSA and the California Avoid DUI Task Force Campaign combining high-visibility enforcement with heightened public awareness through publicity.

For more information on local and statewide Avoid DUI Task Force Campaign Enforcement Schedules and Daily DUI Arrest/Fatal Stats, visit the www.californiaavoid.org. The Program is funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety who reminds everyone to please – Report Drunk Driving – Call 9-1-1!

Media Notes: To schedule an interview regarding Anti Drunk-Driving efforts, or request a ride-along with law enforcement during the holiday period, please contact the Orange County Sheriff Department’s Public Affairs at 714-647-7042.

