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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Traffic Safety Tips

PUTNAM COUNTY, TN – As the time changes this Sunday and we enter the winter season, Sheriff Farris urges motorists to keep the following traffic safety tips in mind:

As of October 4, 2016, more than 1,000 pedestrians were involved in Tennessee traffic crashes, and 73 pedestrians have been killed, according to the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security's TITAN Division.

Wear Your Seatbelt:

“Every day, unbuckled motorists are losing their lives in motor vehicle crashes,” said Sheriff Eddie Farris. “As we enter the winter season, we want to make sure people are doing the one thing that can save them in a crash—buckling up.”

Last year, the state of Tennessee passed a bill that raises fines for seat belt violations. As of January 2016, the fine for not wearing a seat belt (1st violation) went from **\$10** to **\$25**. A second violation went from **\$20** to **\$50**.

Don't Text and Drive:

“Texting and driving requires motorists to take their eyes off the road, hands off the wheel, and minds off the task of driving. It creates the proverbial ‘perfect storm’ for a crash, and no one has the right to put another person’s life at risk like that,” said Sheriff Eddie Farris.

Texting and driving in Tennessee can result in a \$50 fine for a driver of any age. For young drivers who have Learner’s Permits or Intermediate Restricted licenses, cell phone use of any kind while driving is illegal.

Preliminary data reveals that in 2014, Tennessee experienced its highest number of known distracted driving crashes at 21,021:

- 41 fatal crashes resulting in 48 deaths
- 5,951 injury crashes resulting in 8,602 injured
- 15,029 property damage only crashes

Check The Weather:

Make sure you turn on the radio or TV weather report or have your weather radio turned on while you get ready for school or work in the morning. Before you leave the house, know what the road conditions will be and time your departure accordingly. Rain, snow and/or sleet can be especially hazardous when driving and you will need to plan for extra driving time to get to your destination.

“Earning the Public’s Trust Every Day!”

Beware of Motorcycles, Bicycles and Other Motorists:

According to the Department of Safety and Homeland Security, there were 2,710 known crashes involving a motorcycle in 2014 that resulted in 121 deaths. Over the last decade, motorcycle fatalities have increased nearly twenty-five percent statewide.

Drivers can utilize the following tips to help prevent a fatal crash with a motorcycle:

- Though a motorcycle is a small vehicle, its operator still has all the rights of the road as any other motorist. Allow the motorcycle the full width of a lane at all times.
- Always signal when changing lanes or merging with traffic.
- If you see a motorcycle with a signal on, be careful: motorcycle signals are often non-canceling and could have been forgotten. Always ensure that the motorcycle is turning before proceeding.
- Check all mirrors and blind spots for motorcycles before changing lanes or merging with traffic, especially at intersections.
- Always allow more follow distance – three to four seconds – when behind a motorcycle. This gives them more time to maneuver or stop in an emergency.
- Never drive distracted or impaired.

Many of these tips can also be applied to bicycles which are especially prevalent in school zones and other motorists who may be distracted, sleepy or just inexperienced.

“If everyone is vigilant and drives defensively, it will make our roads safer,” said Sheriff Eddie Farris. “All road users need to share the responsibility of keeping the roadways safe. By following road signs, obeying speed limits, and always staying focused on the road, deaths could be prevented.”

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