



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MORE THAN 7,900 VEHICLES STOPPED IN NINE MONTHS OF *HEAT* IN SOUTHEAST

2,365 Speed Citations Issued; Speed Travel Declines

ROCHESTER — During the third quarter of HEAT (highway enforcement of aggressive traffic), participating law enforcement agencies in the Minnesota State Patrol Rochester district stopped 2,884 vehicles for various traffic violations and cited 823 drivers for illegal speed. The reporting period was March through May. District results for HEAT's nine-month point are 7,901 vehicle stops, 2,365 speed citations, 4,807 speed warnings and 775 citations for other offenses.

Statewide, the first nine months of HEAT yielded 62,077 vehicles stops, 23,660 speed citations, nearly 33,000 speed warnings, and 10,287 citations for various offenses related to DWI, outstanding warrants, drugs, no insurance, illegal substance/open bottle, unbelted occupants and equipment.

High travel speed continued to drop on roads that had speed limits increased from 55 mph to 60 mph. Speed data was collected by MnDOT automatic traffic recorders (ATR) for a seven-day period before and after HEAT enforcement.

On Highway 52 with a 65 mph limit in the Rochester Patrol district, ATR data shows that since the beginning of HEAT enforcement, motorists traveling over 75 mph have decreased by 11 percent.

On I-90, with a 70 mph limit, motorists traveling over 80 mph have been reduced by more than half (55 percent).

On I-35 (70 mph speed limit), the number of motorists traveling over 80 mph had increased during the first six months of HEAT. In the recent March-May reporting period, that number did decrease slightly. The State Patrol continues to assess the situation and allocate resources based on the data.

In the metro, the number of vehicles driving over 70 mph has dropped almost 25 percent based on data sampling on Highways 100, I-94 and I-35W. In greater Minnesota, data collected on Highways 2 and 71 shows the number of vehicles traveling over 70 mph has dropped nearly 28 percent.

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HEAT, a year-long \$2.5 million federally funded enforcement program, is supported by nearly 1,400 hours of additional weekly traffic enforcement by the Patrol, county sheriffs' offices and local police departments. Participating agencies in southeast Minnesota include the State Patrol; the Freeborn, Olmsted, Rice and Steele county sheriffs' offices; and Owatonna Police Department.

The number of vehicle stops and speeding violations in last three months in the Twin Cities metro were 8,429 and 4,923, respectively. Stops and speed violations for the rest of the state were reported by Patrol districts: Brainerd (2,296/799); Detroit Lakes (1,358/355); Duluth/Virginia (2,016/503); Mankato (1,400/412); Marshall (1,925/336); St. Cloud (1,768/624); and Thief River Falls (868/112).

The figures represent only HEAT vehicle stops and citations and do not reflect violations or warnings issued during regular traffic enforcement.

In addition to the year-long HEAT program, 45 law enforcement agencies from 11 southeast counties launched a Summer HEAT campaign on June 14. Participating counties are Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha and Winona. Police, county sheriffs and State Patrol will stop and cite speeding motorists during regular and over-time patrols. Last year's Summer HEAT program generated nearly 5,300 speed citations.

Each year in Minnesota, speed is a factor in about 150 traffic deaths and 7,000 injuries. Twice as many speed-related fatal crashes occur in rural areas than in urban areas. Illegal or unsafe speed is the greatest crash factor for younger drivers.

Editor's Notes: A breakout of traffic citations and warnings by offense by State Patrol district is available upon request from dennis.smith@state.mn.us .

The table "Minnesota Illegal/Unsafe Speed Statistics by County, 2001–2005" showing total speed-related traffic fatalities and estimated cost of speed-related fatalities is available upon request from dennis.smith@state.mn.us .

Driving Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths