



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LEAD FEET STOMPED:

15,761 SPEEDERS CITED IN STATEWIDE ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN

High Travel Speeds Drop on Measured Roads in Metro and Greater Minnesota

ST. PAUL — A statewide, six month-long speed enforcement program resulted in 44,922 vehicle stops, 15,761 speed citations, and 24,910 speed warnings. The HEAT (highway enforcement of aggressive traffic) enhanced patrols were conducted by more than 40 law enforcement agencies, June–December 2007. According to speed data collected before and after the project, high travel speeds continued to drop on roads that had speed limits increased from 55 mph to 60 mph. HEAT was funded through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and administered by the State Patrol in partnership with county and city agencies.

A 2006 HEAT campaign that ran for a year resulted in more than 88,238 vehicles stopped and 33,686 motorists cited for illegal speed.

For the 2007 effort in the metro, the number of vehicles traveling over 70 mph dropped 34 percent based on MnDOT speed data recorded before and after the enforcement. On I-35W, I-94 and Hwy. 100, vehicles traveling over 70 mph decreased by 19 percent, 33 percent, and 51 percent, respectively. The decreases translate to 3,344; 6,487; and 4,834 fewer vehicles per day traveling over 70 mph, respectively. In greater Minnesota, data collected on Highways 2 and 71 show the number of vehicles traveling over 70 mph dropped 25 percent.

In the Twin Cities' metro area during the six-month campaign, law enforcement agencies stopped 12,749 vehicles for various traffic violations and cited more than half of the drivers — 6,971 — for illegal speed.

The number of vehicle stops and speeding violations for the rest of the state were reported by Patrol districts: Brainerd (3,294/1,530); Detroit Lakes (2,599/650); Duluth (3,073/751); Mankato (2,878/744); Marshall (4,887/1,164); Rochester (6,577/1,677); St. Cloud (4,385/1,364); Thief River Falls (1,754/245); and Virginia (2,726/665).

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***HEAT* Enforcement**

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Speeding is the most commonly reported factor in Minnesota's fatal crashes. Each year in the state, speed contributes to 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.

In addition to the speed enforcement, officers tallied 22,412 citations for various offenses during the campaign including DWI (65), outstanding warrant (149), and seat belt non-use (1,051).

Minnesota Department of Public Safety and MnDOT officials consider the 2007 HEAT program a key effort of the state's *Toward Zero Deaths* (TZD) effort in reducing traffic deaths. TZD is a multi-agency approach to address traffic issues regionally through enforcement, education, engineering and emergency trauma care and response.

The preliminary traffic death count for 2007 is 504, but that number is expected to climb as more crash reports are submitted to the state. To-date in 2008, the state reports 26 preliminary traffic deaths compared to 46 at this time last year.

The 2007 HEAT project was a \$1.5 million federally funded enforcement program, and supported by nearly 1,200 hours of additional weekly traffic enforcement. In Greater Minnesota, participating agencies included the State Patrol and the county sheriff's offices of Aitkin, Beltrami, Benton, Blue Earth, Chippewa, Clay, Crow Wing, Freeborn, Kandiyohi, Lyon, McLeod, Morrison, Olmsted, Otter Tail, Rice, St. Louis, Stearns, Steele, Wadena and Watonwan. The police departments of Bemidji, Cloquet, Floodwood, Moorhead, and Owatonna also participated.

Participating agencies in the Twin Cities metropolitan area included the State Patrol and the county sheriff offices of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington. Participating police departments included Golden Valley, Maple Grove, Minneapolis, New Brighton, North Branch, Robbinsdale, Roseville, St. Paul, and Wyoming.

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