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Have a Safe Memorial Day Weekend

MAY 23RD 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Submitted by

Dee Loflin, SMT Manager/Writer

Dexter, Missouri - The first summer holiday weekend will soon be here! Memorial Day weekend is an opportunity for Missourians to enjoy the many recreational possibilities in this great state. Whether you will be visiting family, going to one of Missouri's lakes, or enjoying other travel destinations, the Missouri State Highway Patrol urges everyone to think about safety when making plans for the upcoming holiday weekend. Holidays should be enjoyed, but enjoyed responsibly. Be aware of construction along your route, pay attention while you are driving, and buckle up. If alcohol is part of your holiday, make sure driving a vehicle or a vessel is not.

The Patrol will be participating in Operation C.A.R.E. (Combined Accident Reduction Effort) during the long holiday weekend. This means every available officer will be on the road enforcing traffic laws and assisting motorists. In addition, the Patrol will assign troopers to 20-mile intervals along Interstates 35, 44, 55, and 70, and U.S. Highways 60 and 63 on May 24, 2013 and May 27, 2013. Troopers taking part in the 20-Mile Trooper enforcement project will be alert for all traffic offenses, and be especially vigilant to aggressive driving violations.

Motorists or boaters in need of assistance or who want to report a crime should use the Highway Patrol's Emergency Assistance number 1-800-525-5555 or *55

on a cellular phone. For road condition reports, travelers can visit our web site at **www.mshp.dps.mo.gov** and click on the Road Condition icon to view road construction areas throughout the state or call 1-888-275-6636.

Over the 2012 Memorial Day holiday weekend, nine people died and 355 were injured in 944 traffic crashes. Last year, 184 persons were arrested for DWI. This year's fatality counting period for the holiday weekend begins at 6 p.m., Friday, May 24, and ends at 11:59 p.m., Monday, May 27, 2013. Troopers will focus their attention on seat belt use, use of child safety seats, intoxicated drivers, and speed violations.

Motorists are encouraged to be safe and courteous drivers. Speed, inattention, and impaired driving are leading causes of traffic crashes. Please do your part. Obey all traffic laws and buckle up.

The Memorial Day weekend is also an unofficial start to the boating season. During the 2012 Memorial Day weekend, there were eight boating accidents with eight injuries and zero fatalities. No one drowned over the holiday weekend. Officers arrested 38 people for boating while intoxicated. Boating is a great pastime and troopers want everyone to enjoy themselves. Please be courteous to others on the water, wear a lifejacket, and obey the law regarding safe operation of a vessel and no wake zones. Never operate a boat while intoxicated.

"I encourage every driver—of a vehicle or a vessel—to make safety part of their three-day weekend plans," said Colonel Ron Replogle, superintendent of the Missouri State Highway Patrol. "Please, DON'T drink and drive. We want all of you to have a safe, enjoyable holiday weekend."

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