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ALEA Encourages Everyone to End the Summer Safely this Labor Day Weekend

MONTGOMERY – As the final holiday of the summer draws near, many Alabamians are preparing for an extended fun-filled weekend with friends, family and festivities on the state’s busy roadways and scenic waterways. The Labor Day holiday is often recognized as a day off for many hardworking citizens; however, the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) would like to remind everyone that you should never take a holiday off from being safe.

ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said, “Each year, ALEA Troopers see a significant increase in the volume of traffic on Alabama’s roadways and those enjoying its waterways over the course of the weekend. While we want everyone to have an enjoyable and relaxing holiday, safety should always remain a top priority for all those who plan to travel. We ask everyone to avoid risky driving and boating behaviors that could possibly put you or your community in harm’s way. Especially when our health systems are already taxed with treating COVID-19 patients.”

Each year, the Agency participates in a variety of national campaigns and safety initiatives to not only educate citizens, but to also eliminate the dangers associated with driving vehicles or operating motorcycles while impaired or under the influence of alcohol. On Tuesday, Aug. 31, Troopers joined local and state partners in Bremen and Columbus, Ga. to kick off the 30th annual “Hands Across the Border” campaign. The week-long impaired driving enforcement initiative is held each year prior to the Labor Day holiday in an intensified effort with adjoining state partners to remove impaired drivers and keep our roadways safe.

“We are fortunate to have neighboring state law enforcement agencies that share the same commitment of removing impaired drivers to prevent deadly crashes. One of the most difficult and daunting tasks that an ALEA Trooper is faced with is conducting a death notification. If you choose to consume alcohol, please do so responsibly and have a designated driver or utilize a ride-share service,” said Secretary Taylor. “For law enforcement officers, removing impaired drivers and boaters from the state’s roadways and waterways is potentially one less family they must notify when their loved one has been fatality injured in an impaired driving crash.”

This year, the official holiday weekend begins at 12:01 a.m. Friday, Sept. 3, and runs through midnight Monday, Sept. 6. Citizens should expect to see an elevated number of Troopers actively patrolling Alabama’s roadways and waterways to conduct enforcement activities designed to reduce crashes and save lives. During the same travel period in 2020, ALEA’s Highway Patrol Division saw over a 60 percent reduction in the overall traffic fatalities

compared to 2019, while its Marine Patrol Division experienced zero boating deaths on Alabama's waterways.

“While the reduction in fatalities last year was a tremendous accomplishment, our mission aims to ensure everyone makes it safely to their destination. This cannot be accomplished without assistance from the motoring public,” said Secretary Taylor. “Everyone can make a tremendous difference and contribute to the safety for all.”

ALEA offers the following Five to Arrive Alive:

1. **Prepare ahead of time.** One of the simplest ways to avoid causing a traffic accident is to get your car regularly maintained and inspect your vehicle before a long trip. A tire failure can cause you to lose control of your vehicle and breaking down on a busy highway can be just as dangerous. Plan your route and adjust travel plans to accommodate busier than normal roadways.
2. **Never drink and drive.** Citizens should never drink and drive or operate a boat when under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol and drugs impact your decision-making, coordination, reaction time, and vision which makes you vulnerable to several hazards. If you do consume alcohol, do so responsibly and have a designated driver or safely utilize a ride sharing service.
3. **Obey the laws and avoid dangerous driving and boating behaviors.** Do not go over posted speed limits, avoid following too closely and always buckle up. Alabama law now requires all occupants, front and back seat passengers to wear a seat belt. If enjoying the water, personal flotation devices (PFDs) should be available to all passengers. Children 8 and younger must wear them at all times when on the water.
4. **Keep in mind Alabama's Move Over Law and use extreme caution in construction zones.** For the safety of the traveling public, construction industry workers and maintenance crews, the Alabama Department of Transportation will have no temporary lane closures on the interstate after noon Friday, Sept. 3, through Monday, Sept. 6, at 11:59 p.m.
5. **Stay off the water during inclement weather.** Even though Hurricane Ida is long gone, summer thunderstorms are still a possibility. Monitor your local weather and avoid being outdoors during thunder and lightning.