



MEDIA RELEASE

Traffic Safety Office

Ohio Traffic Safety Office • Tina O'Grady, Administrator
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FIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES WIN NEW VEHICLES FROM ODPS *Car Give-Away is Part of Safety Campaign*

(COLUMBUS) – The Ohio Department of Public Safety's (ODPS) Ohio Traffic Safety Office (OTSO) held its eighth car give-away at the Enforcement Expo in Columbus today with 20 law enforcement agencies from around the state. This year, ODPS gave away five police vehicles.

Five police departments came away the big winners and will have a police vehicle delivered to them to be customized for their department's use. This year's winners are Marion Police Department, Sandusky Police Department, Miami Twp. Police Department (Montgomery County), Erie County Sheriff's Office and Middletown Police Department.

"While we were fortunate enough to witness a historic low in fatalities last year, preliminary data is showing an increase this year," said ODPS Director Thomas J. Stickrath. "We know our law enforcement partners have limited resources and we hope these vehicles will aid in the effort as we all work together to save lives and reduce injuries on Ohio's roads."

The 20 agencies were chosen from the more than 900 law enforcement partners that committed to conduct high-visibility education and enforcement during two national safety mobilizations, the Click It or Ticket seat belt safety campaign and the *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.* Crackdown. Those chosen not only participated in the mobilizations, but also went above and beyond in their efforts to keep Ohioans safe. While five lucky agencies won police vehicles, all of the agencies at the event were recipients of some of the more than \$300,000 in traffic safety equipment OTSO distributes each year.

The funds for the cruisers and safety equipment come from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Ohio receives these federal funds specifically for traffic safety-related efforts including high-visibility enforcement and public awareness campaigns. Local law enforcement and safety partners receive grants through OTSO, which coordinates the campaigns and safety efforts on a statewide basis.

In 2009, there were 1,022 deaths on Ohio's roads – a record low. Provisional data for 2010 show a 10 percent increase in fatalities on Ohio's roads compared to the same time period in 2009. ODPS has asked all of its safety partners to step up enforcement and educational efforts wherever possible to try to reverse this trend as we enter the final months of 2010. ODPS' efforts continue to be focused on the national goal of reducing highway fatalities to less than one fatality per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

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ODPS works to reduce deaths and injuries on Ohio's roads through the coordinated efforts of all of its Divisions. The Ohio Investigative Unit enforces liquor, tobacco and food stamp laws in liquor permit premises and the Ohio State Highway Patrol enforces traffic laws. OTSO funds the efforts of Operating a Vehicle while Impaired (OVI) Task Forces and other grants for law enforcement to combat impaired and unsafe driving and increase seat belt use while also promoting educational programs, coalition-building and campaigns focused on highway safety.