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NEWS RELEASE

‘CLICK IT OR TICKET’ SEAT BELT ENFORCEMENT MOBILIZATION STARTING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE PHOTOGRAPHS ATTACHED

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DELAWARE, Oh., May 23, 2011 – When Powell Police spotted a minivan on its side after a T-bone crash on Sawmill Parkway March 12, they expected fatalities.

Instead, they found four survivors along the side of the road – one with a broken arm, the other three only shaken. Today, those and other “saved by the belt” crash survivors helped Delaware County law enforcement and safety leaders kick off this spring’s “Click It or Ticket” seat belt enforcement mobilization.

From now through June 5, police officers will focus on ticketing drivers who aren’t buckled up.

At today’s Delaware County “Click It or Ticket” kickoff event at Liberty Township Fire Station 322 in Powell, Cynthia Weber recalled the terrifying March 12 crash that injured one of her 6-year-old twin sons Jace and Gage. Mrs. Weber was driving south on Sawmill Parkway with a friend and her twins when another driver ran a red light at the Rutherford Road intersection and smashed into the side of Weber’s minivan. The minivan veered off the road into an embankment and rolled multiple times, ending up on its side.

Mrs. Weber and her front-seat passenger were wearing seat belts, and they walked away unhurt. Her twins were properly restrained in high-back booster seats. One of them suffered a broken arm, but they were otherwise unhurt. Powell Police Officers Travis Dennison and Ben Boruchowitz shared their amazement that anyone was able to walk away from Weber’s smashed vehicle, which was displayed at the event.

Also testifying for seat belts were three teen-age drivers who attend Buckeye Valley schools. Senior Harlie Akers, 18, walked away from a November smashup on Ohio 257. Junior

Taylor Newland, 17, emerged unscathed from a rollover crash at U.S. 23 and Coover Road on May 6. Senior Natalia Halmbacher, 18, survived a different crash. They all told the assembled officers and safety leaders how seat belts saved them.

Also urging seat belt usage on every trip were Delaware County Sheriff Walter L. Davis III, Powell Deputy Police Chief Stephen Hrytzik, and Liberty Township Fire Chief Tim Jensen.. Representatives of numerous local safety departments were in attendance.

The Delaware County Safe Communities Coalition, a Delaware General Health District safety program, encourages all motorists to always buckle up whenever they get into a vehicle. Regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. Front-seat passengers face significantly less risk of death in a crash if they are properly restrained in seat belts.

Surveys conducted by the Delaware County Safe Communities-Safe Kids Program and similar groups throughout Central Ohio showed an average seat belt usage rate above 82 percent, but the rate was below 80 percent for male drivers, drivers aged 15-25, African-Americans, and pickup truck drivers.



Powell Police Officers Ben Boruchowitz, left, and Travis Dennison reunited at today's "Click It or Ticket" event with members of the Weber family, survivors of a rollover crash which destroyed the Webers' minivan on March 12. Officer Dennison said the wreckage made him think the occupants had been killed or seriously injured. Twin 6-year-olds Jace, front, and Gage Weber and their mother, Cynthia, were spared serious injury by proper use of seat

belts and child booster seats. Also shown are dad Craig Weber and Grayson Weber, the twins' sister.



Teen-age crash survivors Harlie Akers, left, and Taylor Newland show where they ended up in photos of their respective highway crash scenes. Both Buckeye Valley High School students told their “Saved By the Belt” stories at today’s “Click It or Ticket” highway safety campaign kickoff event.