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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 20, 2015

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE UNVEILS DISTRACTED DRIVING PROGRAM IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP YOUNG DRIVERS SAFE

Neptune Township: Sheriff Shaun Golden wants students who are about to get their driver's license and take to the roadways, to stay safe. In conjunction with April being Distracted Driving Awareness Month, a new program, called "*Distracted Driving-Seconds that Could Change or End Your Life*" was unveiled by the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office to students at Neptune High School on Monday, April 20.

"We have seen too many crashes on our roadways as a result of distracted driving," said Sheriff Shaun Golden. "Texting and talking on a cell phone while driving is irresponsible. It takes the focus off of the roads and may have deadly consequences that otherwise could be avoided."

"*Distracted Driving-Seconds that Could Change or End Your Life*" was presented by Sheriff's Officers Iliana Velazquez and Michelle Melendez to 75 high school students at Neptune High School. During the one hour presentation, distracted driving was explained along with the types of distracted driving such as texting and talking on cell phones, eating, drinking, reading and grooming, among other activities. In addition, several compelling videos, detailing the aftermath of distracted driving were graphically illustrated. At the conclusion of the presentation, students had the opportunity to ask questions and were left with the advice to share the information they obtained with others.

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“This is a valuable presentation that could very well save the life of a driver and I’m proud to have had the program unveiled at Neptune High School,” said Principal Richard Allen. “I commend the Monmouth County Sheriff’s Office for its commitment to this serious safety issue. Together we can help decrease distracted driving activities.”

According to the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety:

- Driver inattention has been a major contributing factor in nearly 750,000 motor vehicle crashes in the state since 2009.
- At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 660,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has held steady since 2010.
- 11% of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted.
- For drivers 15-19 years old involved in fatal crashes, 21 percent of the distracted drivers were distracted by the use of cell phones.

While the sheriff’s office program is presented to high school aged students, the information gathered needs to be shared, since driver distraction means that your eyes are off the road, hands are off the wheel and mind is off driving. That could change or end a life.

“It’s crucial for students to share this information with their parents, since parents should eliminate distracted driving while operating a vehicle,” said Sheriff Golden. “When a parent is in the driver’s seat, they lead by example, by the manner in which they drive.”

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