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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Oct. 12, 2017

CONTACT: CYNTHIA SCOTT, PIO
PHONE: 732-431-6400 ext. 1113

SHERIFF'S OFFICE CONDUCTS PROGRAM IN AN EFFORT TO KEEP YOUNG DRIVERS SAFE

Matawan: Sheriff Shaun Golden wants students who are about to get their driver's license and take to the roadways, to stay safe. On Oct. 11, "Distracted Driving-Seconds that Could Change or End Your Life" was conducted by the Monmouth County Sheriff's Office at Matawan High School.

"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 Santos to approximately 220 high school students from 9th to 12th grades. 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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According to the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety:

- Driver inattention has been a major contributing cause in more than 800,000 motor vehicle crashes from 2010 to 2014.
- At any given daylight moment across America, approximately 542,000 drivers are using cell phones or manipulating electronic devices while driving, a number that has decreased over 18% since 2010.
- 10% 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.
- A quarter of teens respond to a text message once or more every time they drive. 20 percent of teens and 10 percent of parents admit that they have extended multi-message text conversations while driving.

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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