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NEWS RELEASE

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SHERIFF'S OFFICE URGES SAFETY THROUGHOUT THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Freehold: The holiday season is upon us and Sheriff Shaun Golden wants to ensure it's a safe one throughout Monmouth County. There will be an increase in travelers this Thanksgiving weekend and well into the month of December, as people celebrate with holiday festivities. As a result, law enforcement will remain vigilant to keep the roads free from drunk drivers.

"We want everyone to enjoy this wonderful holiday season, but if you are going to drink, don't drive, it's as simple as that," said Sheriff Golden. "Law enforcement will be out in full force and on the lookout for drunk drivers."

In New Jersey, an individual is considered over the legal limit if he/she operates a motor vehicle with a blood alcohol level concentration of .08 or greater. According to the New Jersey State Police, in 2015, there were 522 fatal crashes on New Jersey roadways and 562 people died as a result. Of those fatalities 25.3 percent had consumed alcohol to some extent.

In an effort to avoid presenting a danger to oneself or others, it's important to follow these safety tips:

- Before going out, designate a driver who will not consume any alcohol the entire night.
- DO NOT DRIVE if you are impaired. Call a cab, a sober friend or family member.
- If you don't have a ride, stay where you are. If you live nearby, do not attempt to walk or ride a bicycle home.
- If you see someone about to get behind the wheel or on a motorcycle after they have been drinking, take their keys and find them a ride with someone who is sober.

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- Under no circumstances should adults provide alcohol to a minor or allow anyone under 21 to consume alcohol while at their home.

In addition, distracted driving is especially dangerous during the holidays, or any time of year. According to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, 3,477 people were killed and 391,000 injured due to distracted driving in 2015. Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for five seconds. At 55mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed. Don't text and drive.

There is also a tremendous increase of shoppers this season. It's important to not be careless or look vulnerable during shopping. The best way to stay safe while shopping, and not become a victim of theft, is by using a common sense and cautious approach.

- Park your car in well-lit areas of shopping center parking lots.
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Limit the number of trips back to your car.
- Don't leave packages exposed in your car. Lock them in your trunk.
- Have keys ready before you get in your car.
- Don't shop alone especially at night.
- Look in your car before entering - do not enter if something does not seem right.
- ELFS-Enter the car, Lock the doors, Fasten Seat Belt, Scram

"By applying these important initiatives, we can all help ensure a safe, secure and joyous holiday season in Monmouth County," said Sheriff Golden.

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