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NEWS RELEASE

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SHERIFF GOLDEN CRACKS DOWN ON DISTRACTED DRIVERS THROUGH UDrive. UText. UPay.

Monmouth County: The Monmouth County Sheriff's Office, along with its partners in law enforcement, will be cracking down on distracted drivers during the month of April as part of New Jersey's UDrive. UText. UPay. enforcement campaign.

Beginning April 1, which marks the start of Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and running through the end of the month, the high visibility law enforcement initiative will target motorists who engage in dangerous distracted driving behaviors, such as talking on hand-held cell phones and sending text messages while driving.

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

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that in 2018 alone, 2,841 people were killed in distracted driving crashes and an estimated 400,000 people were injured. In New Jersey, driver inattention was listed as a contributing circumstance in 50 percent of the state's crashes in 2018. Driver inattention was listed as a contributing factor in crashes at a rate seven times higher than that of the next highest contributing factor (speed).

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Distracted driving is any activity that diverts attention from driving, including talking or texting on your phone, eating and drinking, talking to people in your vehicle, fiddling with the stereo, entertainment or navigation system — anything that takes your attention away from the task of safe driving. Texting is the most alarming distraction. Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for five seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

New Jersey is one of eight states nationally to receive dedicated federal funds this year to tackle the issue of driver distraction. This federal funding will be used for police overtime enforcement grants at the local level as well as a statewide multimedia public awareness campaign on this important issue.

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