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INTERSTATE 64 AND HAMPTON ROADS FOCUS OF UPCOMING OPERATION AIR, LAND AND SPEED ENFORCEMENT

Phase Also Includes: Interstates 264, 464, & 664

RICHMOND – Virginia State Police will launch the next phase of *Operation Air, Land and Speed* on Thursday, March 12, and Friday, March 13, 2009, along interstates within Hampton Roads as well as the entire length of Interstate 64. Motorists can expect to see an enhanced presence of troopers taking part in this important traffic safety initiative. The purpose of the campaign is to save lives by preventing traffic fatalities and reminding drivers to buckle up and slow down through high visibility and strict enforcement.

“This highway safety campaign is a chance to remind all drivers how serious state police take traffic safety,” says Colonel W. Steven Flaherty, Virginia State Police Superintendent. “The locations and the dates of the *Operation Air, Land & Speed* are based on the frequency of highway fatalities, anticipated heavy travel times and in consideration of other major events and activities associated with a particular interstate corridor.”

This is the second time *Operation Air, Land & Speed* has targeted I-264, I-464 and I-664 in the Hampton Roads region. Last July, the safety campaign focused enforcement efforts in the same area and yielded 3,303 violations during a two day period. The *Operation Air, Land & Speed* initiative resulted in 1,684 speeders being stopped, 298 reckless drivers being cited, five impaired drivers being arrested and 189 safety belt violations being cited by state police. The enforcement project also resulted in 21 drug and/or felony arrests.



Unfortunately, also during last summer's operation, two senior troopers with the Chesapeake Division were injured after being struck by vehicles. Virginia State Police reminds motorists that if they see an emergency vehicle on the side of the road to comply with Virginia's "Move Over" law. The law requires drivers to change to another travel lane, or to slow down and cautiously pass emergency personnel stopped on the side of the road.

At the same time, troopers will also saturate the length of I-64 from its interchange with I-81 at Staunton to its conclusion in Hampton Roads. This is the fifth time since the inception of *Operation Air, Land and Speed* in which I-64 has been targeted.

The previous *Operation Air, Land and Speed* initiative took place Dec. 5-6, 2008, on Interstates 64 and 66. So far, 86,489 summonses and arrests have resulted from operations conducted since 2006.

The comprehensive enforcement project will utilize troopers, supervisors, motorcycle units and motor carrier troopers.

State police operational duties on other interstates, primary and secondary roads will not be affected during the operation. Funding for the enforcement initiative is provided through federal highway safety monies.

Virginia State Police is also encouraging motorists to buckle up. According to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Virginia Highway Safety Office, safety restraint rate use is up 80.6% compared to 79.9% in 2007. Despite the slight increase, 20% of the motoring public in Virginia is still not wearing a safety belt. By increasing the use of safety restraints, the rate of serious injury and death will decrease and more lives will be saved.

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