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FDOT Announces Florida's All-Time Record for Safety Belt Usage Rate Exceeds 90 Percent

TALLAHASSEE, FL – Today, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) announced that Florida's statewide safety belt usage rate has reached an all-time record of 90.2 percent. FDOT released the *June 2017 Safety Belt Use in Florida* report which affirms that FDOT and its traffic safety partners are providing effective occupant protection programs. Florida's educational efforts, *Click It or Ticket* campaigns and high visibility law enforcement have helped to increase Florida's safety belt usage rates. The previous record for Florida safety belt compliance was 89.6 percent (*June 2016 Safety Belt Use in Florida* report).

Governor Rick Scott said, "I'm proud of the work FDOT does each day for our state. The increase in the usage of safety belts highlights the success of FDOT's efforts to keep our roads safe for Floridians and our visitors."

FDOT Secretary Mike Dew said, "Safety is the number one priority at the Florida Department of Transportation. We recognize the integral role safety belts play in protecting drivers and passengers in a crash. Every day lives are saved and people avoid serious injury in Florida thanks to increased safety belt usage."

For the study, observations were randomly scheduled for all days of the week during daylight hours, between 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Observers recorded information on vehicle type, driver sex, driver race, driver age, and driver safety belt use. They also recorded information on passenger sex, race, age, and belt use, when an outboard passenger was present in the front seat of the vehicle.

Research has found that lap and shoulder combination safety belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent (NHTSA, 2011).

Florida's first statewide survey was completed in 1999 and an annual survey has been conducted every year since. Florida's statewide safety belt use rate continues to trend upward every year since the implementation of a primary safety belt law in 2009.

For additional information, please visit www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/seat-belts. To view the *June 2017 Safety Belt Use in Florida* report, please visit: www.fdot.gov/info/CO/news/newsreleases/2017-Florida-Statewide-Belt-Use-Final-Report.pdf

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