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NEWS RELEASE

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CLICK IT OR TICKET CAMPAIGN

PLANO – Texas is mounting its most ambitious campaign ever to remind drivers and passengers to buckle up or pay the consequences. Over the last several weeks, larger-than-life *Click It or Ticket* messages have popped up on landmarks from one end of Texas to the other, including Amarillo's Cadillac Ranch, the San Jacinto Monument near Houston and the Fort Worth Stockyards; state officials even buckled up a giant safety belt at what is perhaps the state's most revered icon—the Alamo.

These unconventional reminders are all part of TxDOT's *Click It or Ticket* campaign to boost safety belt use in Texas and save lives. Today, we here in Plano join forces with those across the state to remind motorists and passengers to buckle up.

More than 90 percent of Texas drivers and passengers now routinely use safety belts, thanks to five straight years of *Click It or Ticket* campaigns. Since the statewide campaign began in the Lone Star state, an estimated 1,211 lives have been saved and more than 28,000 injuries prevented as a result of increased safety belt use. While these statistics may be cause for celebration, local officials have a warning for the remaining Texas motorists who still haven't gotten the message: buckle up or pay the consequences.

“A common excuse drivers give for not buckling up is ‘I’m not going that far.’ But the reality is that 75 percent of injury-causing crashes occur within 25 miles of home,” said Rick McDonald, Public Information Officer for the Plano Police Department.

Researchers say pick-up drivers and their passengers as well as teenagers continue to be the least likely to buckle up. Other offenders include front seat passengers, who don’t wear their safety belts as often as drivers. Perhaps most startling: six out of every ten children – age five to nine – ride in vehicles without the benefit of safety belts. That’s nearly one million children.

With these sobering statistics in mind, this year’s stepped-up enforcement campaign begins Monday, May 21 and extends through Sunday, June 3, including the three-day Memorial Day holiday weekend. State troopers, police officers and sheriff’s deputies will be out in force statewide – including, for the first time, night-time patrols – ticketing drivers and front seat passengers who are not wearing safety belts. State law requires drivers, front seat passengers and children under 17, whether riding in the front or back seat, to be buckled up. Child safety seats must be used for children under the age of five and less than 36 inches tall. Adults who don’t use safety belts or fail to secure their children face fines from \$25 to \$200 plus court costs.

For *Click It or Ticket* campaign details, visit www.buckleuptexas.com or contact Safe Riders at 800-252-8255.