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News Release

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DA Starts First “March Madness” DWI Testing Weekends

Houston, TX – The first “March Madness” anti-DWI enforcement campaign will be deployed during remaining weekends of a month marked by the potent mix of drinking associated with Spring Break, NCAA basketball playoffs and other festivities, District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced Thursday.

Prosecutors and area law enforcement patrols will be using the “No Refusal” program to target widely varying sections of Harris County on Friday and Saturday nights. They can gain expedited court warrants authorizing intoxication tests for suspects who decline voluntary breath or blood testing.

“Impaired drivers are going to find out you can’t ‘beat’ a DWI by refusing to be tested,” explained prosecutor Brent Mayr, head of the DA’s Vehicular Crimes Section. “These March events attract young motorists, and some of them are likely to make the irresponsible decision to drink and drive.”

Reflecting the wide-ranging scope of the operations, testing teams will be based at the Houston Police Department’s Central Intox Facility downtown, the HPD substation in Kingwood, and the Precinct 8 Constable’s station in Clear Lake. That will provide any police agency from around the county with access to testing units during enforcement nights.

The program prioritizes public safety by getting intoxicated drivers off the roadways before they cause what can be deadly crashes.

“During Spring Break, there are a lot of college students going to and from college, and a lot of families on vacation,” Mayr said. “We want to keep all them safe by reducing this threat.”

National statistics show that young adults (from 21 to 34 years old) accounted for almost 40 percent of alcohol-related driving deaths in 2007. Of drivers between 15 and 20 years old who died in 2006 crashes nationally, 25 percent had blood-alcohol levels of .08 or higher.

NOTE: For media ride-alongs and related filming, contact Constable Pct. 8 Capt. John Ray at 281-802-8232 (for Saturday night) or HPD Media Relations/PIO.

(End)

