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DA to Deploy Anti-DWI Forces to Help Protect Travelers to Rodeo and Spring Events

Houston Tx – Beginning this weekend, three new No Refusal operations will target DWI motorists to help protect citizens during peak travel periods for upcoming Spring events such as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Harris County District Attorney Patricia Lykos announced Thursday.

The District Attorney will work with the Houston Police Department and other area law enforcement agencies in deploying the No Refusal program this Friday and Saturday night (February 26-27). It will continue during weekend evenings on March 12-13 and March 19-20.

Lykos noted that the dates coincide with major Spring events that attract large crowds of the traveling public. They range from the estimated 2 million attendees at the Houston Rodeo, St. Patrick's Day celebrants, fans drawn to sports bars or parties for telecasts of the "March Madness" NCAA basketball tournament, and Spring Break college revelers.

"We encourage citizens to enjoy the events and festivities," Lykos said. "Just remember that if you are driving, act responsibly. The No Refusal program will be in place, ready to protect law-abiding citizens going to and from these annual Spring attractions."

During a similar period in March 2009, the No Refusal program resulted in 426 DWI-related arrests. Teams of law enforcement officers, prosecutors and medical personnel get search warrants to obtain blood samples from DWI suspects who do not voluntarily submit to testing for alcohol or other intoxicants.

Catherine Evans, Chief of the District Attorney's Vehicular Crimes Section, says that new and tougher DWI laws have eliminated the need for many of those warrants.

"We encourage people to make better choices to keep themselves and our community safe," Evans said. "Designate a driver or take a cab to avoid criminal prosecution." (end)

