

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE 2/15/17



**FATAL CRASH REDUCTION GOAL
Cooperative Enforcement Effort**

Benton and Mille Lacs Counties – Law Enforcement will partner up conducting extra patrol efforts with the goal of reducing fatal crashes on Highway 23 in both counties. Involved in the enforcement project will be Benton County Sheriff's Department, Mille Lacs County Sheriff's Department, Foley Police Department, Milaca Police Department and the Minnesota State Patrol.

This enforcement project will have officers looking for traffic violations including speed, lack of seat belt use, distracted driving, stop sign violations and impaired driving.

- Each year, illegal or unsafe speed is a leading contributing factor in Minnesota fatal crashes. 81 deaths and 211 serious injuries each year.
- Distracted or inattentive driving is a factor in one in four crashes, resulting in at least 70 deaths and 350 serious injuries.
- A record percentage of front seat occupants in Minnesotans are buckling up — 93 percent — yet about 40 percent of all motorists killed in crashes aren't belted — translating into an average of 105 deaths and more than 200 serious injuries each year.

Our goal is not about the number of citations we issue or arrests we make, but to prevent these types of destructive decisions that not only affect them, but all of us. We are asking motorists to make smart choices each and every time they get in a vehicle.

The planned multi-agency saturations as well as frequent additional patrol efforts will be a year-long effort in 2017 focusing on reducing fatal crashes on Hwy 23.