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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Miami County Public Health Partners with State Farm for Teen Driver Safety

TROY, OHIO (09/05/2018) Lisa Cano State Farm Agency in Troy and the Miami County Safe Communities Coalition are working together to combat the incidents of teen driver crashes in Miami County. This fall, they will challenge high school students to design a safe driving awareness billboard. Students in grades 9-12 will be encouraged to design and submit a billboard addressing the issue of distracted driving, being a safe passenger, avoiding drinking and driving and any other issue that might lead to a crash.

The student with the winning billboard design will receive a \$500 cash award, and their design will appear on billboards around Miami County. Billboards will be displayed leading up to or during National Teen Driver Safety Week in October.

Based on results of the eighth annual State Farm distracted driving survey released in 2017, drivers continue to have a hard time putting down their cell phone while behind the wheel. The report follows major trends in cellphone use and explores many of the distractions that take eyes, hands and minds off driving.

Nearly all drivers, 91 percent, reported owning a smartphone, and more than half say they use them while driving. After several years of steady increases in distracting cellphone activities, taking pictures and recording videos saw significant increases this year.

Survey Results:

- ✓ 50% talk on a hand-held phone
- ✓ 35% text while driving
- ✓ 29% access the internet while driving
- ✓ 26% read email behind the wheel; 21% respond
- ✓ 22% access social networks
- ✓ 23% take pictures; 14% record video
- ✓ 93% talk to passengers; 23% attend to children; 21% attend to pets in the car

Drivers also report listening to loud music, eating, speeding and driving tired as other risky behaviors.





Drivers know the risk, but can't resist

Survey respondents reported using smartphones while driving despite finding them distracting - and despite thinking the behavior increases the likelihood of a crash. When asked why, they provided reasons such as improved efficiency, need to stay in touch, habit, searching for information on the internet, and seeing something they want to share.

Young drivers are particularly in danger, as motor vehicle crashes continue to be the number one killer of teens. The goal of the billboard contest is to educate the student billboard designers as well as all those who use the roadways.

For more information contact Miami County Safe Communities Coordinator, Vicky Knisley-Henry at Miami County Public Health at 937-573-3512 or vhenry@miamicountyhealth.net.



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