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NHTSA Reminds Drivers:

Don't Drive Distracted. Eyes Forward.

Allison, Iowa— April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. In 2024, Iowa saw a 70% increase in traffic deaths related to distracted driving compared to the 5-year average. **Through April 8**, the Iowa Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau is partnering with law enforcement to curb this alarming and unsafe trend.

As part of its efforts to prevent distracted driving and enhance road safety, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Butler County Sheriff's office reminds drivers to prioritize safe road practices and avoid distractions while driving with this clear message: *Don't Drive Distracted. Eyes Forward.*

Distracted driving, which involves cellphone use or any activity that takes attention away from the task of driving, is risky driving behavior that endangers everyone on the road, from the distracted driver and other drivers to passengers, pedestrians, and pedalcyclists. According to NHTSA, 15,960 people died and around 1.8 million people were injured in distraction-affected crashes over the five-year period from 2018 to 2022. In 2022 alone, there were 3,308 people killed in traffic crashes involving at least one distracted driver, 8% of all traffic fatalities that year. An estimated additional 289,310 people were injured in traffic crashes involving distracted drivers in 2022.

Though life-threatening, distracted driving can be prevented. Drivers can prioritize safe driving by keeping their hands on the wheel, their eyes on the road, and their focus on driving, and by following these steps for a safe drive:

- If a text message is expected or needs to be sent and can't wait, the driver should pull over and park their car in a safe location before using the phone.
- Ask a passenger to be the "designated texter," and give them access to your phone to respond to calls or messages.
- Do not engage in social media scrolling or messaging while driving.
- Listen to your passengers: If they see you texting while driving and tell you to put your phone away, put it down.
- Cell phone use is habit-forming. If struggling to not text and drive, drivers can activate their phone's "Do Not Disturb" feature, silence notifications, or put their phone in the trunk, glove box, or back seat of the vehicle until they arrive to their destination.

Cell phone use while driving is dangerous. Break the cycle. Remember: *Don't Drive Distracted. Eyes Forward.* Help save lives and be an example to others by committing to that message. For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/distracted-driving.