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STENEHJEM TEAMS WITH AD COUNCIL ON CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE TEEN CAR CRASHES

BISMARCK –Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem has partnered with The Advertising Council on a new campaign aimed at putting the brakes on fatal car crashes involving teens and young adults.

The “UR the Spokesperson” campaign targets young adults between the ages of 15 and 21 to encourage them to speak up when they are in the car with friends and do not feel safe. The campaign also seeks to increase awareness about the dangers of reckless driving and educate teens on how to be safe drivers by focusing on safe speeds, avoiding distractions, and wearing seat belts. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, there were 24 fatalities in North Dakota crashes involving drivers between the ages of 15 and 20 in 2005.

“The goal of this campaign is to prevent youth reckless driving, and ultimately save lives. Research shows that teens worry they’ll be seen as ‘uncool’ if they complain about a friend’s driving. But the research also shows that when it is a friend who speaks up, a teenage driver will listen because they don’t want to damage the friendship or be labeled a bad driver,” said Stenehjem.

Car crashes are the number one cause of death among teens and young adults. NHTSA data show that, on average, more than 300,000 teens are injured in car crashes each year, nearly 8,000 are involved in fatal crashes and more than 3,500 are killed. NHTSA research also shows that teen drivers are involved in more than five times as many fatal crashes as adults. Young drivers are more likely to speed, run red lights, make illegal turns and die in an SUV rollover.

“We want it to become not only socially acceptable, but socially expected for teens to speak up when they are riding with a friend and don’t feel safe,” said Peggy Conlon, President and CEO of the Ad Council. “We also want to educate them about the dangers and consequences of reckless driving by reminding them to drive safely, wear their seat belts and limit distractions.”

For more information on the campaign and to see the ads, please visit www.URtheSpokesperson.com.

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