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“ACCI-DON’T” PROGRAM PUTS TEENS IN THE DRIVER’S SEAT ON THE ROAD TO SAFETY

Anthem, Ariz. – Last year, more than 18,250 teenage drivers were involved in traffic crashes and accidents in Arizona. A program this fall at the Anthem Civic Building, 3701 W. Anthem Way, aims to steer teens toward safer driving habits and smart strategies on the roadway.

The free “Acci-don’t: Teen Safe Driver Program,” presented by Anthem-based insurance agent Justin Simons, begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 23. The event focuses on a variety of safety issues, tips and the financial impact safe and unsafe and distracted driving can have on teens’ lives. Those who have already completed driver’s education, as well as those who will begin driving in the coming years, are invited to attend. Parents of teen drivers are also welcome.

Smart and safe driving is vital not only to saving lives and preventing injury but also to avoiding financially expensive consequences, such as property damage and insurance rate increases. Many insurance providers even offer discounts to drivers who avoid citation and accident issues, which is especially important for teen drivers, who often pay higher premiums.

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) measures the estimated economic loss caused by vehicle crashes and accidents on an estimate of wage and productivity loss, medical and administrative expenses, vehicle damage and employer costs. The estimated statewide economic effect in 2014 surpassed \$3 billion.

The importance of teen driving safety is also highlighted by these facts, compiled from ADOT information:

- Drivers ages 16-19 represent 3.74 percent of licensed drivers in Arizona. The same group accounted for 8.7 percent of statewide accidents in 2014.
- Sixty-two teenage drivers were involved in fatal accidents last year; 5,690 were involved in accidents resulting

in injury. Seventy-eight victims of fatal crashes, or 10.1 percent, were under age 19; 24 were drivers.

- A total of 72.5 percent of crashes and 47.5 percent of fatalities in Arizona occurred in Maricopa County. Maricopa County's population represents 59.7 percent of the state.
- Fifty-two percent of accidents and crashes in Maricopa County were investigated by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and City of Phoenix Police Department, both of which serve Anthem. The remaining crashes were handled by municipal and community police agencies.
- Of teen drivers involved in crashes, 92.1 wore safety belts; 2.2 did not, while it is unknown whether the remaining 5.7 percent did.
- For each year from 2010-2013, the fatality rate in crashes and accidents in Arizona ranked significantly higher than the national average. Data for 2014 is not yet available.

Attendees will be able to win prizes through a raffle and in-program contests. For more information or to register, visit OnlineAtAnthem.com/acb-programs.

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