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MEDIA RELEASE

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OHIO HOMELAND SECURITY ENCOURAGES BOATERS TO BE PREPARED AND PARTICIPATE IN NORTHERN BORDER INITIATIVE

Being aware of surroundings on Ohio's waterways is critical

(COLUMBUS) – Warm weather brings a multitude of tourists, boaters, and fishermen to the Lake Erie region. These watercraft can be one of Ohio's greatest security resources, and the Ohio Department of Public Safety (ODPS) is working to encourage boaters and fishermen to be prepared and aware of their surroundings.

Ohio Homeland Security (a division of ODPS) recently established the Northern Border Initiative (NBI), a collaborative Homeland Security effort among federal, state and local partners along Ohio's international maritime border and Lake Erie shoreline. Through both the NBI and the "See Something, Say Something" campaign, Ohio Homeland Security is taking a proactive approach and involving citizens in domestic preparedness efforts.

Lake Erie is a tremendous resource for commerce, recreation and fresh water. Through Ohio Homeland Security, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, US Coast Guard and US Border Patrol, various law enforcement and community leaders from Lake Erie's North Coast region are partnering to encourage boaters and tourists protect the Lake Erie region. The NBI is an extension of the "See Something, Say Something" public awareness campaign, aimed at educating Ohioans on recognizing the possible signs of terrorism.

"The people of Ohio are our most valuable resources," said Henry Guzmán, ODPS director. "Boaters and fishermen who travel our northern maritime border for business and pleasure are in key positions to be able to identify when something is out of place or potentially dangerous."

Ohioans are reminded to contact local law enforcement or the Ohio Terrorism Tipline (1-877-647-4683 or 1-877-OHS-INTEL) if suspicious activity is observed, such as: unattended vessels or vehicles in unusual locations, lights flashing between boats, recovering or tossing items into/onto the waterway or shoreline and/or transfer of people or things between ships or between ship and shore outside of port.

"The Northern Border Initiative is a cooperative initiative for state, local and federal law enforcement to create a fusion of efforts as each entity works to keep these waterways and the mainland as safe as possible for everyone," said William Vedra, executive director of Ohio Homeland Security.

For more information, a list of participating agencies in your area or to schedule an interview with William Vedra, Executive Director of Ohio Homeland Security, please contact Lindsey Wayt at (614)752-6585.

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