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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ROCKFORD CITY COUNCIL TO CONSIDER IMPOUND VEHICLE

The City of Rockford City Council is scheduled to consider a committee report of a new ordinance this evening which would approve impounding the vehicles of drivers who flee from the police. A motor vehicle driven with the express or implied permission of the owner, which is used to flee from the police, would be declared a public nuisance and would be subject to seizure and impoundment under the new Code sections.

The owner of the vehicle would be liable for the towing and storage of the vehicle and for an administrative penalty of \$150.00. For a second offense within a two-year period involving the same vehicle, the owner of each vehicle would be liable to the city for a penalty of \$300.00 in addition to fees for the towing and storage of the vehicle. For a third or subsequent offense within a two-year period, the owner of record of such vehicle would be liable to the city for a penalty of \$750.00 in addition to fees for the towing and storage of the vehicle.

City Council action was prompted on this issue because police vehicle pursuits are one of the most dangerous police activities for officers and the public. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has attributed 1,169 deaths to police pursuits during the three year period of 2006-2008, including the deaths of 349 innocent bystanders.

Officers of the Rockford Police Department are governed by Rockford Police General Order 40.07 in determining whether to engage in a vehicle pursuit. When an officer determines that the risk to human life and property outweigh the benefits of capture, the officer is directed to refrain or disengage from pursuits. A great number of lawless Rockford motorists are taking advantage of the good judgment of the officers of the Rockford Police Department by disobeying the lawful direction of a police officer to pull their vehicle to the curb. In 2010 officers of the Rockford Police Department recorded 196 incidents of vehicles fleeing from an officer's attempts to conduct a vehicle stop. In 2011 Officers recorded 112 such incidents in the first quarter of the year;

Drivers who flee from the police are a daily occurrence often committing numerous traffic violations and needlessly endangering the lives and property of the citizens of Rockford. The City Council of the City of Rockford will consider whether a motor vehicle used in fleeing to elude the City of Rockford Police Department in violation of Ordinance or State Statute should be declared a public nuisance, and order that such nuisance be abated by the passage of the Impoundment Ordinance.

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