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MEDIA RELEASE

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Information Available to Help Buyers Avoid Hurricane-Damaged Cars *New Database Available for Car and Watercraft Purchasers*

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles is joining with the National Insurance Crime Bureau to provide potential car buyers with a new tool to avoid being scammed into purchasing a hurricane-damaged car or watercraft.

A new database containing the identification number of every vehicle and watercraft that has been reported damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita is now online at the NCIB. Ohio consumers can access the database through the Ohio BMV website, <http://bmv.ohio.gov>.

“Millions of cars and watercraft were damaged by these two Hurricanes alone, and past history indicates that they will be making their way across the country where unscrupulous sellers will try to hide their true history,” said Franklin Caltrider, Registrar of Motor Vehicles. “This database will allow potential buyers to find out if the car or watercraft they plan to buy is hurricane-damaged, so they can make an informed purchasing decision.”

BMV advises that the information in the database has been gathered from a number of sources, including insurance companies, salvage yards and state and local authorities. As a result, the NCIB has not independently verified most of the information in this database and cannot, therefore, vouch for the accuracy of this information.

In addition, there may be many additional vehicles and watercraft affected by the hurricanes not included in this database. BMV and NCIB are allowing people to check identification numbers free of charge as a public service to help determine whether a specific vehicle or watercraft was involved in either Hurricane.

Also, the database does not attempt to determine the scope of the damage, if any, to a particular vehicle or watercraft. Some vehicles or watercraft on this list may have had no damage or very minor damage, while others had extensive damage and may no longer be safe to operate. The NCIB recommends that any vehicle or watercraft affected by a hurricane be thoroughly inspected by a competent mechanic of choice prior to purchase and/or further use.