March 26, 2010

News Release

*For Immediate Release*

**February Crash Report Card**

The February 2010 Crash Report Card (pdf) shows there have been four fatality crashes through the first two months of the year, compared to two during the same time period in 2009.

The number of injury and total crashes has increased by 4 percent and 1 percent respectively compared to the same time period last year.

**March Safety Message**

National Work Zone Awareness Week will be April 19-23, 2010. This year’s theme, “Work Zones Need Your Undivided Attention,” will be presented in the kick-off event on April 19 in New York City to promote worker and motorist safety.

On a state level, the Missouri Department of Transportation launched Operation Orange in 2007, which also has a proven to be a successful safety program.

Nationwide, many road construction projects are underway as part of the federal economic stimulus package. In Missouri, MoDOT plans to improve 5,600 miles of roadway by 2011 and repair or replace more than 800 bridges by end of 2013.

In 2009, Springfield had 132 reported crashes within or in proximity of construction zones, leaving 50 people injured. While Springfield had no work-zone related fatalities in 2009, a young driver was killed in February 2010 in a crash within a construction site.

National statistics show that each year about 1,000 people die in work zones throughout America; 85 percent of those fatalities are drivers and their passengers. In 2009, 13 people were killed in Missouri work zones and 670 were injured.

Motorists are advised to be aware of safety hazards as they approach work zones:

- Expect the Unexpected: Normal speed limits may be reduced, traffic lanes may be changed, and people may be working on or near the road.
- Keep a safe distance between your car and the car ahead of you. The most common crash in a highway work zone is the rear-end collision, so leave space to stop between you and the car ahead. Do not tailgate, and do not speed.
- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and construction workers and their equipment. The closer you are, the slower you should go.
- Obey road-crew flaggers and warning signs. The flagger knows what is best for moving traffic safely in the work zone. A flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so you can be cited for disobeying his or her directions.
- Stay alert and minimize distractions. Dedicate your full attention to the roadway.
- Keep up with the traffic flow. Motorists can help maintain traffic flow and posted speeds by merging as soon as possible.

For a live view of traffic flow and incidents go to: www.ozarktraffic.info

To see MoDOT work zone maps:
http://maps.modot.mo.gov/travelerinformation/TravelerInformation.aspx

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