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NEWS RELEASE

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Kansans can put the brakes on fatalities

On any given day across the U.S. in 2008, more than 800,000 vehicles were driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone, according to the National Safety Council.

Texting while driving is also a serious problem. "Every single time someone takes their eyes or their focus off the road - even for just a few seconds - they put their lives and the lives of others in danger," said U.S. Transportation Secretary LaHood.

"Distracted driving is unsafe, irresponsible and in a split second, its consequences can be devastating."

From 2003 to 2008 in Kansas, 68 people were killed and more than 4,000 were injured in crashes caused by using cell phones or other electronic devices and other distractions.

Reducing distractions while driving is an important part of the national safety campaign Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. The campaign strives to decrease all type of vehicular fatalities. Last year in Kansas, 385 people were killed and more than 21,000 were injured in crashes.

"Every time you get behind the wheel, you need to take responsibility and make driving safely your number one priority," said Kansas Deputy Secretary for

Engineering/State Transportation Engineer Jerry Younger. “That includes avoiding any distractions, not driving while impaired and always wearing a seat belt.”

Many activities have been planned or have ready happened to promote Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day:

- ◆ Cities and counties across Kansas were invited to sign local proclamations in support of Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day. Other activities include:
- ◆ Nearly 700 Kansas kids ages 5-13 participating in a safety poster contest with 18 kids receiving regional and statewide recognition;
- ◆ Public Service Announcements airing across the state;
- ◆ Distributing 20,000 safety brochures throughout Kansas;
- ◆ Gov. Mark Parkinson signing a proclamation designating Oct. 10, 2009, as Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day in Kansas.

Organizations that work together on Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day in Kansas with KDOT include the Kansas Highway Patrol, AAA of Kansas, Kansas Contractors Association, Kansas Corporation Commission, Federal Highway Administration, Kansas Turnpike Authority and the Kansas Society of Professional Engineers.

For more information on Put the Brakes on Fatalities Day, go to the Web site www.brakesonfatalities.org.

Remember - drive as if your life depends on it because, the truth is, it does.

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This information can be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

For information about obtaining an alternative format, contact the Bureau of Transportation Information, 700 SW Harrison St., 2nd Fl West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754 or phone 785-296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired – 711.