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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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<http://www.ksdot.org/Assets/wwwksdotorg/bureaus/burTransPlan/prodinfo/2016factsbook/Distractions.pdf>

## KDOT launches Red Thumb Challenge for National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April

Topeka, Kan. – The Kansas Department of Transportation is launching the Red Thumb Challenge to raise awareness of the risks of distracted driving. Throughout April, everyone is invited to participate by simply painting a thumbnail red and sharing their support of the initiative on their favorite social media platform using #RedThumbChallenge.

“Every single day, you see it on the roads. You notice someone veering into your lane or driving slower than everyone else, only to see that driver looking at their phone and not focusing on the road,” said Chris Bortz, KDOT Traffic Safety Program Manager. “Distracted driving has no place on our roadways. Not only are you putting you and your passengers in jeopardy, but you’re endangering others as well.”

By painting a thumbnail red, it serves as an instant reminder not to text while driving. Participants are encouraged to challenge everyone they know who gets behind the wheel to take the Red Thumb Challenge pledge.

Distracted driving is an increasing danger - since 2011, vehicle crashes in Kansas known to be related to cell phone distractions have increased by 31 percent, and fatalities have doubled. In 2016 alone, 633 car crashes were the result of a cell phone distraction. Of these, 267 people were injured and seven people were killed.

In addition to the Red Thumb Challenge, KDOT has created a special lock screen image to download on cell phones. The signature red screen reminds users not to use their phone while in motion.

Bortz continued, “Whether you’re male or female, teen or adult, all are invited to take a stand against texting and driving by participating in the Red Thumb Challenge.”

To join the challenge, post an image of your red thumb with the hashtag #RedThumbChallenge on your favorite social media platform. For the Red Thumb Challenge lock screen, other participation tools and more information, please visit @DriveSafeKansas on Facebook.

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