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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Nationwide safety campaign to target employers**

*Focus on safe driving practices seeks to reduce preventable motor vehicle crashes*

The Kansas Department of Transportation and the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office, a program of KDOT, are teaming up from Oct. 6-10 to promote *Drive Safely Work Week*, a national campaign sponsored by the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety.

The campaign is designed to help employers emphasize the importance of driving safely both on and off the job to reduce preventable injuries or death on America's roadways.

This year's campaign theme, *Take the High Road · Share the Road · It Belongs to Everyone*, addresses the special needs and considerations of vulnerable roadway users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, truck drivers, senior and teen drivers.

Every day, motorists share the road with drivers of various ages, skill levels, personalities and habits. They also share the road with pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists and varying vehicle types and sizes. This year's *Drive Safely Work Week* will strive to educate motorists so they can better understand the different limitations and challenges of the various individuals encountered on roadways each day. This understanding will enable each individual to be more respectful and considerate of their roadway companions and instill positive attitudes toward other road users.

Each day many motorists multi-task, speed, tailgate, run red lights and take their aggression out on other road users, putting themselves and others sharing the road at risk. These and other hazardous driving practices and conditions, coupled with other unsafe driver attitudes, make the time employees spend in their vehicles the most dangerous part of their day.

According to NETS, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of occupational fatalities in the United States. As well, forty-one percent of the average vehicle miles traveled per household are from commuting to and from work and driving on work-related business.

NETS research also found in 2000, the economic cost of crashes to employers was \$60 billion resulting in 3 million lost workdays. Two-thirds of the cost (\$40 billion) was from on-the-job crashes while one-third was from off-the-job crashes for employees and their benefit-eligible dependents.

Norraine Wingfield, program director for KTSRO, said recognizing the economic impact of traffic crashes on or off the job is only part of the issue.

“According to NETS, the average on-the-job crash costs an employer about \$16,500 and crashes involving injury or death can cost substantially more,” Wingfield said. “Still, the economic impact pales in comparison to the impact caused by the preventable injury or death of an employee or their loved ones.”

During the *Drive Safely Work Week* campaign, KTSRO, KDOT, NETS and other traffic safety advocates hope drivers will become more aware and understanding of the dangers on the roadway each of us face whether traveling on four wheels or 16, two feet or two wheels. As road users everyone has something in common – we are on this road together. It’s everyone’s responsibility to take the high road and share the road. Focus on driving rather than distractions, wear your seat belt and never drink and drive.

During this special week and throughout the year, KTSRO will demonstrate its commitment to protecting the health and well being of individuals on the road and their loved ones by offering free comprehensive traffic safety education, materials and training to individuals, employers and other organizations.

For more information, materials or employer training opportunities, please contact KTSRO at 800-416-2522 or [ktsro@dcca.org](mailto:ktsro@dcca.org).