



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2010

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LAST 11 DAYS — A DEADLY STRETCH ON THE ROAD

ST. PAUL — According to preliminary Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) traffic crash report information, at least 10 people died during March 14–24, making it the deadliest period of the year since Jan. 12–22 when eight people were killed. The fatalities include seven reported deaths from the State Patrol and three known deaths reported by other law enforcement agencies.

The violent period on the roads is a concern for DPS officials as motorists roll into the warmer and deadlier driving months. DPS reports to-date in 2010, there have been 59 traffic deaths, compared to 67 at this time in 2009.

“These tragedies serve as a reminder to motorists that despite progress to limit road deaths, traffic fatalities remain far too common,” says Cheri Marti, director of the DPS Office of Traffic Safety. “Motorists need to use this news to re-engage behind the wheel, stay focused and practice safe driving behavior.”

Marti stresses seat belt use, driving at safe speeds, paying attention while driving and never driving impaired.

The three known deaths reported by other agencies include: a 1-year-old boy killed on March 18 in Columbia Heights when a distracted driver rear-ended the vehicle the boy was in; a 39-year-old man was killed by an SUV in a hit-and-run incident in Crystal on March 20; and a 6-year-old boy was killed by a school bus on March 22 in Pine River.

The seven State Patrol-reported road deaths during March 14–24 include:

7:51 a.m., March 14 — Jacob Hancock, 25, and Carey Bissett, 26, both of Madison, Minn. Hancock was driving on Hwy. 75 in Lac qui Parle County. Hancock drove straight through a curve, hit gravel road and vaulted; the vehicle landed on its roof.

10:03 a.m., March 15 — Edward Swope, 68, of Boone, Iowa. Swope was a passenger in a vehicle traveling northbound on I-35 in Freeborn County. His driver attempted a U-turn at a crossover and collided with another vehicle also traveling northbound.

6:53 p.m., March 18 — Danielle Solberg, 26, of Hastings. Solberg was a passenger in a vehicle traveling on Hwy. 52 in Goodhue County. The vehicle ran off the left-side of the road, vaulted through the median and rolled.

3:41 a.m., March 21 — Thomas Blum, 61, of West St. Paul. Blum was driving on I-90 in Faribault County when he lost control of his vehicle, entered median and rolled several times.

1:49 a.m., March 22 — Lee Comstock, 26, of Wykoff. Comstock was a passenger in a vehicle traveling on Hwy. 80 in Fillmore County. The vehicle went onto the shoulder, over-corrected and traveled back across the road into a ditch.

5:50 p.m., March 22 — Larry McCulley, 56, of Brainerd. McCulley was driving on Hwy. 210 in Crow Wing County. He was traveling at a high rate of speed and rear-ended another vehicle making a left turn to go north on Hwy. 25. McCulley’s vehicle spun across Hwy. 25.

Driving Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths.

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