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Slow Down, Save Lives: Rural Road Safety Awareness Week is July 17-21

MONTGOMERY – The Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA) is joining the Alabama Transportation Institute in kicking off National Rural Road Safety Awareness Week (RRSAW), which runs today, July 17, through Friday, July 21. The weeklong observance is part of a nationwide campaign spearheaded by the National Center for Rural Road Safety and drives home the need to slow down as speeding is one of the top contributing factors in rural crashes.

The overall theme and question safety partners are asking motorists to consider during RRS AW 2023 is “What’s Speed Got To Do With It?” Throughout the campaign, various topics will be identified to raise awareness and address speed management on rural roads.

ALEA Secretary Hal Taylor said, “Every campaign and initiative that our Agency launches or participates in has tremendous value; however, National Rural Road Safety Awareness Week is structured specifically for states like Alabama. Driving a motor vehicle can be hazardous on any roadway due to varying factors and conditions. While on rural routes, drivers must be especially careful and use extreme caution as it relates to speed management and overall vehicle operation. The key is understanding that every roadway has a specific speed at which motorists can safely travel. When drivers exceed those speed limits, crashes, injuries and fatalities are much more likely to occur.”

According to data compiled from 2018 to 2022 by the Center for Advanced Public Safety (CAPS) in Alabama, rural crashes account for nearly 25 percent of all traffic crashes. In 2022, 4,453 of Alabama’s traffic crashes involved speeding on rural roads, resulting in 159 fatalities. So far in 2023, 1,930 crashes have occurred on rural roads in Alabama due to speeding, resulting in 49 fatalities.

Dr. Steven Jones, Interim Executive Director of the Alabama Transportation Institute, said, “The Alabama Transportation Institute endorses the Rural Road Safety Awareness Week starting Monday, July 17. The Institute, through its Center for Advanced Public Safety, is committed to promoting safety on all roads in Alabama and is especially attuned to the unique challenges in rural areas. In addition to our work in Alabama, the Institute is part of the National Center for Rural Road Safety, and we are working with the national organization to promote the reduction of excessive speeding on rural roads across the nation.”

The RRS AW daily topics are:

- Monday: Rural Speed Challenges
- Tuesday: Why Speed Management is Important
- Wednesday: Speed Countermeasures for Rural Roads
- Thursday: Incorporating Speed into Your Local Road Safety Plan
- Friday: Building a Culture of Safe Speeds

Secretary Taylor said, “Tragically, we have lost too many lives on Alabama roadways, but especially on our rural routes. We must take this campaign seriously and help prevent needless crashes on our roadways. In addition to educating the public on the dangers of speeding, we are also using this safety campaign to stress the importance of seat-belt usage, as well as why driving while under the influence of alcohol and drugs is so dangerous.”

According to CAPS data, rural DUI crashes account for 41 percent of all DUI crashes recorded, and DUI rural crashes also account for 53 percent of all DUI fatalities in Alabama. In 2022, 1,991 DUI-related crashes occurred on rural roads, resulting in 137 fatalities. So far in 2023, 884 DUI-related crashes have occurred on rural roads, resulting in 50 fatalities.

This week’s campaign assets will include social media graphics, post cards, posters, articles, fact sheets, and other resources. For more information on this year’s RRS AW, visit the National Center for Rural Road Safety’s [RRSAW campaign page](#).