

Memorial Day, Click It or Ticket Open Summer Driving Season

Memorial Day weekend has long stood as the beginning of the summer travel season, and Alabama state troopers geared up for increased traffic during the holiday period. Coinciding with the national Click It or Ticket campaign running through June 5, troopers aggressively enforced the state's seat belt and child restraint laws throughout the holiday.

While recent statistics are encouraging – 90 percent of Alabamians buckled up in 2010 – hundreds of lives continue to be lost in Alabama each year simply because people fail to use seat belts. Two-thirds of those killed in trooper-reported



traffic crashes last year were not wearing safety restraints.

The focus of this year's CIOT initiative is round-the-clock enforcement of safety restraint laws

as statistics indicate more unbelted drivers are killed or injured at night than during the day.

“Seat belts save lives,” said Sgt. Steve Jarrett. “Always, always wear a seat belt, no matter when you leave, where you go or how long your trip lasts.”

While the message hasn't altered much over the years, perhaps drivers' habits have been.

Motorist Kevin Kelley of Wetumpka was involved in a major head-on collision on Alabama 170 in Elmore County the morning of May 25. When Tpr. Joe Champion arrived at the scene of the crash to investigate, he was surprised to see Kelley at the crash site relatively unharmed, based on the severity of the collision.

Kelley admitted to Champion he usually does not wear a seat belt, but had a change of heart after see-



Kelley's truck at the scene of the crash on Alabama 170.

ing a Click It or Ticket PSA earlier that morning.

“It saved my life,” said Kelley.

Numerous seat belt checkpoints were set up throughout Alabama during CIOT to spread the message to those that missed it elsewhere. One checkpoint was in Saraland where troopers worked with Mobile, Saraland, and Prichard Police departments.

“The Click It or Ticket kickoff in Saraland was a total success,” remarked Tpr. Greg Eubanks. “Local media were on the scene shooting footage and taking interviews, and I’ve personally received many great compliments from several members of the community in Mobile and Baldwin counties.”

“I don’t know how many tickets were written in that two-hour period,” Eubanks added, “but I do know that several cars were being pulled over, many to receive paper.”

Seven fatal crashes occurred during the 78-hour holiday weekend period, two fewer than in 2010. Unused seat belts were a factor in five of those fatalities, and alcohol was a factor in at least five of those crashes.



Too Many Are Not Getting the Message...

- ▶ There were 23,382 occupants of passenger cars, pickups, vans and SUVs killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes in 2009, and 53 percent of fatally injured passenger vehicle occupants were not wearing seat belts at the time of the fatal crashes.
- ▶ In 2009, 11,593 passenger vehicle occupants were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes at night (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.). Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) were not wearing seat belts (compared to 44 percent of occupants killed during the daytime hours of 6 a.m. to 5:59 p.m.)
- ▶ Almost half (42 percent) of the 754 passenger vehicle occupants 12 and older killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes were not buckled up.
- ▶ Passenger vehicle occupants 13 to 15 years old have the highest percentage (67 percent) of all age groups to be fatally injured and unrestrained in traffic crashes.
- ▶ Among young adult passenger vehicle occupants 18 to 34 who were killed in crashes, 63 percent were not buckled up — the second highest percentage for any age group.
- ▶ Men are less likely than women to buckle up. This is especially true of young men. In 2009, 66 percent of men 18 to 34 killed in pas-

senger vehicles were not wearing their seat belts.

- ▶ Pickup drivers and passengers continue to have lower restraint-use rates than occupants of other passenger vehicles. In 2009, 68 percent of pickup occupants who were killed in traffic crashes were not buckled up.

Seat Belts Save Lives!

- ▶ Seat belts, when used by passenger vehicle occupants 5 and older, saved an estimated 12,713 lives in 2009 – more than 72,000 lives from 2005 through 2009 – and 267,890 lives from 1975 through 2009.
- ▶ Worn correctly, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent for front-seat passenger car occupants — and by 60 percent for pickup, SUV and van occupants.
- ▶ In fatal crashes in 2009, 77 percent of passenger vehicle occupants who were thrown from their vehicles were killed. However, only 1 percent of crash victims who were buckled up were totally ejected from their vehicles, compared to 31 percent of those who were unbuckled.
- ▶ Motorists are 75 percent less likely to be killed in rollover crashes if they are buckled up.

Nature's Wrath Proves No Match for Human Spirit

The DPS community sprang to action to coordinate disaster relief efforts immediately following April's devastating tornadoes that leveled countless homes and businesses throughout the state, leaving hundreds dead and disrupting the lives of thousands more.

Partnering with the Department of Human Resources, DPS opened temporary locations in Tuscaloosa and Birmingham strictly to provide assistance to tornado victims by offering replacement driver licenses and non-driver identification cards.

As the need for various sundries grew, DPS quickly opened a donation drop point at headquarters and invited all employees from DPS, the Department of Corrections



and the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles to bring donations of bottled water, canned goods and non-perishable food, clothing, diapers and various paper supplies to

be distributed throughout northern Alabama.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration contacted DPS directly asking how they could help. Darrell Ruban, FMCSA Southern Service Division field administrator, had originally planned to personally deliver a load of supplies to areas hard hit by the storm. After discovering that DPS had already established a supply chain, he instead opted to deliver the items directly to headquarters for distribution.

In caring for the many Alabamians affected by the disaster, the DPS community also pulled together to care for its own. Sgt. Anthony Riley's home was among those lost in the storm, and on the very next day, Tpr. André Roper presented Riley a \$1,000 check on behalf of the Ala-



bama State Trooper Association. Also, after hearing of Riley's loss, Ret. Sgt. Clarence "Bubba" Blue, Alabama state director of the American Association of State Troopers, told the AAST board of Riley's situation, which qualified him to receive AASP's Brotherhood Assistance, even though he is not a member of the AAST.

"I have served in the military and have been around the world, and I can tell you, I have never seen anything like the destruction these storms have caused," said Latent Print Examiner Trainee Janet Baggett. Residing in Sand Mountain, just one-half mile from a tornado's path, Baggett said, "As sad as it all is, and with every heartbreaking story, there are more stories of survival and triumph. My husband and I were helping neighbors clean and remove debris, and we came across a church that was leveled. All the pastor of the church wanted was to dig out a pew or two so he could hold a service on Sunday. My son grabbed a chain saw, and we managed to clear enough debris to remove two pews from the rubble."

"Although that was not our usual church, we made sure to attend that service," added Baggett. "I'm glad we did, because it ended up being the best service we have ever attended!"



Thomas Receives Life Saving Award

Josh Thomas, the son of ABI Agent Terry Thomas in Huntsville, received the National Sheriffs' Association Life Saving Award.

Thomas is credited with possibly saving the life of a victim of the tornado that hit Tuscaloosa on April 27.

Following the storm, Thomas climbed and crawled over a mile of downed power lines, trees, and debris to reach the victim. He then used duct tape and pieces of lumber to stabilize the victim's substantial injuries.

Thomas also assisted with landing the rescue helicopter that air-lifted the victim to a hospital, where it was discovered the victim suffered severe head trauma and multiple compound fractures. Doctors later



stated that without Thomas' assistance, the victim could have died from her extensive injuries.

Thomas is a 2005 graduate of Scottsboro High School and 2010 alum of the University of Alabama. His bachelor's is in nursing and he is currently serving as an intern at UAB Hospital.

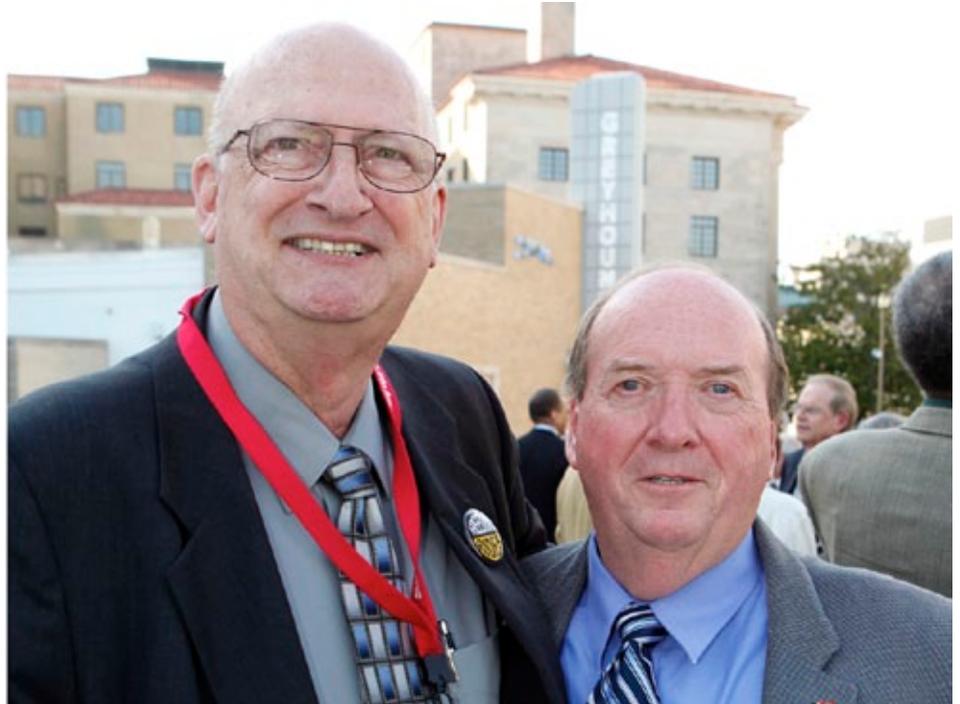
Zwerg and Giles Reunite 50 Years After Freedom Ride

Fifty years after Freedom Riders were beaten at Montgomery's bus station in what would become a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement, Jim Zwerg greeted DPS photographer Tommy Giles with a firm handshake and a warm smile.

"I know who you are, Tommy," said Zwerg. "You drove me to the hospital."

Five decades ago, Zwerg was a 21-year-old exchange student at Beloit College in Wisconsin. Upon his arrival in Montgomery, the Freedom Rider was violently beaten by several members of the Ku Klux Klan.

Giles, then working as Gov. John Patterson's photographer, witnessed the events unfold alongside plain-clothed Lts. Bob Godwin and Willie Payner, both of I&I.



Zwerg with Giles at the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Riders' Arrival in Montgomery, May 20.

"Ambulances, like everything else at the time, were segregated," Giles explained. "After the brutal beatings, ambulances came to take away those injured, but white ambulanc-

es refused to pick up Zwerg because he was a Freedom Rider, and black ambulances didn't pick him up because he was Caucasian."

"After seeing the catastrophe, Col. Floyd H. Mann told me to get my car and personally drive him to the hospital," said Giles. "Mann then fired shots to get the crowd's attention and announced that no one was getting killed here today."

According to Giles, Mann then mobilized approximately 20 Highway patrolmen and Driver License employees to assist and disperse the



Left, Numerous Alabama Highway Patrol cars are seen at the Montgomery bus station in 1961.

crowd.

“City police were reluctant to step in and help, but Mann knew something needed to be done,” said Giles.

The grim scene is contrasted upon the joyous celebration 50 years later, as Zwerg and other Freedom Riders reflected on their accomplishment of helping end segregated transportation. This celebration of history also marked the grand opening of the Freedom Rides Museum, located inside the Montgomery Greyhound station on South Court Street.

“Montgomery was a city of firsts for me,” Zwerg said happily. “It was the first time I ever got the crap kicked out of me, yes, but it was also the first time I ever got a bouquet of flowers. One of you folks sent me flowers in the hospital, and I’ll always remember the card: ‘Not everyone in Montgomery is like those you met at the bus station.’”



THI School Held at ACJTC



The Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center held a Basic Traffic Homicide Investigation training course May 9-20.

The final day of the course included a training session on photography techniques to best capture images to assist in investigations.

Traffic homicide investigators are highly trained members of law enforcement, skilled in identifying and collecting roadway evidence, analyzing vehicle damage and calculating physical actions of vehicles to determine the cause of fatal crashes.

ABI Awards Employees of Year

The Alabama Bureau of Investigation, one of the Department of Public Safety's six divisions, announced the 2010 Agent of the Year, Support Employee of the Year and two finalists May 10 during a luncheon in Montgomery.

During the celebration, Major Neil Tew, chief of the ABI, said that two employees in each of the two categories distinguished themselves, demonstrating through exemplary performance their devotion to duty.

This year's recipients are: Sgt. Scott Bartle, Agent of the Year, Birmingham; analyst Sean Collins, Support Employee of the Year, Alabama Fusion Center, Montgomery; Special Agent Derek Jones, Agent of the Year finalist, Birmingham; investigative technician Tasha McGee, Support Employee of the Year finalist, Alabama Fusion Center, Montgomery.



Capt. Karl Youngblood accepts on behalf of Sgt. Scott Bartle.



Sean Collins



Special Agent Derek Jones



Tasha McGee



Tew Receives Oak Leaf Insignia in Pinning Ceremony

DPS's newest division chief, Maj. Neil Tew, formally received his oak leaf insignia in a pinning ceremony May 5 in the director's office. Tew's family, Col. Hugh B. McCall, Lt. Col. Kevin L. Wright and all other division chiefs were in attendance for the joyous occasion. Tew was promoted to chief of ABI in March.

People You Know!



New Employee

Andrea Watson	5.02.11	Clerk	ABI/Sex Offender
---------------	---------	-------	------------------

Transfer

Angra Coachman	4.16.11	DL Examiner I	DL/Jacksonville Examining
----------------	---------	---------------	---------------------------

Military Leave

Jerod Peak	4.22.11	Trooper	HP/Dothan
------------	---------	---------	-----------

Return from Military Leave

Rita Chapman	5.01.11	Capitol Police Corporal	ADM/Capitol Police
--------------	---------	-------------------------	--------------------

Resignations

James Andrews	4.30.11	Capitol Police Officer	ADM/Capitol Police
Angela Craig	4.30.11	PCO III	HP/Tuscaloosa
Emily Hodges	5.03.11	PCO II	HP/Tuscaloosa
Evelyn Dillard-Rogers	4.30.11	PCO I	HP/Evergreen
John Sanders	5.13.11	Capitol Police Officer	ADM/Capitol Police

Retirements

Dwayne Allums	5.01.11	Trooper	HP/Montgomery
Thomas Bates	5.01.11	Lieutenant	HP/Quad Cities
Sharon Gilliland	5.01.11	DL Examiner I	DL/Huntsville
Kenny Waldrop	5.01.11	Sergeant	HP/Quad Cities
Jimmy White	5.01.11	Trooper	DL/Birmingham Fraud
Ralph Wright	5.01.11	Trooper	HP/Montgomery

Alabama Department of



Public Safety

CONTRIBUTING:

Capt. Marty Griffin, ABI
Chief Pilot Lee Hamilton, SER
Capt. Jack Clark, HP
Tpr. Greg Eubanks, ADM
Tommy Giles, Photography
Reserve Tpr. Tony Dickey
Robyn Bradley Litchfield

EDITOR:

Ryan Godfrey

**RSA Criminal Justice Center
Montgomery, Ala.**



WE'RE ON THE WEB!

DPS.ALABAMA.GOV



Questions? Comments? Concerns?

STAY IN TOUCH WITH *THE BLUE LIGHT*.
PLEASE E-MAIL ALL REQUESTS TO:

RYAN.GODFREY@DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

On Your Calendar

Monday, June 6

Jefferson Davis's Birthday

Monday, July 4

Independence Day

Monday, September 5

Labor Day

Monday, October 10

Columbus Day

I was cold, alone, scared and completely panicked just before Tpr. G.W. Parker responded to my car crash on May 16. No one was hurt, but the driver fled the scene of the crash, afraid he would be held liable. Now, I am sure that troopers are used to hearing all sorts of crazy stories, and when I explained what happened, I fully expected my story to be questioned. Tpr. Parker was remarkable, and he believed me, making it easier for me to accept what just happened. Tpr. Parker went above and beyond his duty that day, and I only hope that all troopers are as helpful as he was to me when I was in this terrible situation. Thank you for keeping us all safe.

Sincerely,
Melinda

I wanted to thank the fine Alabama state troopers for their contribution to the tornado victims. I lost two loved ones and nearly lost a third in the EF-5 tornado that ravaged Hackleburg. After receiving word of the tornado, my wife and I drove there only to find pure carnage and destruction. That, and a heavy trooper presence, driving around, checking on people and just generally being seen. The many troopers that came onto our property to check on us were amazing, fantastic, honest and genuinely wanted to help us in any way. The troopers were very helpful, caring, and hands-on. They also prevented looters from stealing what property we could salvage. We are so thankful for this. Working as a Tennessee Highway Patrol communication dispatcher, I know what a simple letter of thanks can mean, so I wanted to send a special thank you to the many fine Alabama state troopers for all their help. They truly came to our rescue.

Thanks again, and God bless.

Sincerely,
Brian Parris