

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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Public Safety Opens New Mobile State Trooper Post, *Announces 2008 Highway Safety Initiative*

MOBILE — The Alabama Department of Public Safety officially opened Mobile’s new State Trooper Post Wednesday at an open house attended by legislators, law enforcement officials, DPS staff and others.

The new post, located next to ABI and Driver License offices at 3402 Demetropolis Road, replaces the aging, dilapidated Government Boulevard facility troopers had worked from since 1965, according to Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy.

Murphy credited Gov. Bob Riley and the Alabama Legislature with facilitating the move, saying that Riley signed the lease on the new facility after sending his chief of staff to view firsthand the inadequate conditions at the old post.

“Thanks to Gov. Riley and our legislators, we now have a serviceable, secure Mobile State Trooper Post,” said Murphy. “Without their support, we still would be struggling to work under deplorable conditions at the old post.”

The new facility is an essential support for trooper services in south Alabama, including a new highway safety initiative, “Take Back Our Highways: 50/4,” Murphy said. He said “Take Back Our Highways: 50/4” is the next generation of “Take Back Our Highways,” the aggressive highway safety initiative DPS pioneered in 2007, that spurred a reduction of 61 rural highway deaths statewide last year.

Murphy said “Take Back Our Highways: 50/4” will focus 50-trooper saturation enforcement details in four targeted high-fatality areas. The first detail will target Baldwin and Mobile counties, which saw a total of 90 rural traffic deaths last year. “Take Back Our Highways: 50/4” then will target Chilton (with 24 rural fatalities), Cullman (with 39 rural fatalities), and Tuscaloosa (with 31 rural fatalities).

“We know that enforcement works,” said Murphy. “Our purpose is to save lives by preventing fatal crashes and instilling safer driving behavior.”

The new initiative features four-day periods of intensive, 24-hour patrols in targeted areas with aggressive DUI enforcement, including sobriety checkpoints. Troopers also will target seat belt and child restraint usage, and the range of violations that cause crashes and contribute to more severe injuries and fatalities. These include speeding, following too closely and failure to yield.

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In addition to “Take Back Our Highways: 50/4,” Murphy said DPS will schedule at least one interval of the original TBOH program each year, involving all sworn personnel in a week of intensive enforcement activity statewide.

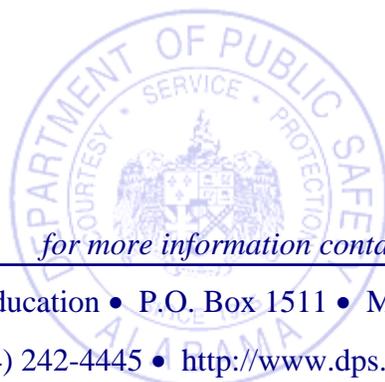
Murphy also noted Public Safety conducted its first regional recruiting and testing initiative in Baldwin and Mobile counties earlier this month. More than 380 individuals applied, and Public Safety is conducting background investigations on 192 prospective trooper applicants.

Murphy said the department plans to hire a class of new troopers to begin training in June, a significant number of whom will be assigned to the Mobile Post.

The new post provides 6,000 square feet of space and houses post communications, command and administrative offices, interview rooms, and a briefing room. A 2,100-square-foot addition will house communications engineering and fleet maintenance operations.

The facility provides a base of operations for the more than 50 Public Safety employees assigned to the Mobile Post, which includes Baldwin and Mobile counties.

Jan. 30, 2008



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