

NEWS RELEASE

Alabama Department of Public Safety

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DPS Announces ‘Aggressive Driving’ Crackdown, *Adds More Interceptor Vehicles, Motorcycles to Patrol Fleet*

MONTGOMERY — Alabama state troopers have launched a new program cracking down on aggressive drivers, especially in the vicinity of commercial vehicles, according to Public Safety Director Col. J. Christopher Murphy. Murphy announced the new traffic safety initiative at a Wednesday news conference during which DPS issued 11 new Dodge Charger interceptor patrol vehicles to Highway Patrol troopers.

Murphy said the crackdown will target violations that commonly define “aggressive driving,” which usually involves a combination of two or more of the following offenses: unsafe lane changes, tailgating or following too closely, failing to yield the right of way, and speeding. The program will target high-crash, high-traffic corridors.

In concert with the new enforcement initiative and the upcoming July 4 holiday period, DPS also showcased 11 new semi-marked Dodge Chargers being added to the department’s patrol fleet. Murphy said nine fully marked Chargers in service since March 2007 have proven effective as “interceptor” vehicles, enabling troopers to quickly apprehend speeders and other violators.

He said 23 additional semi-marked Chargers are being equipped and readied for patrol in the coming weeks, bringing the total number of Chargers to 43. Public Safety also recently purchased two additional motorcycles for patrol use, bringing the total number of DPS motorcycles to 18. The department has plans to purchase eight more motorcycles this year.

“The Chargers, our use of motorcycles and semi-marked vehicles are valuable enforcement tools that supplement and enhance our Highway Patrol fleet,” said Murphy. The Ford Crown Victoria remains the department’s mainstay patrol vehicle, comprising approximately 90 percent of the patrol fleet.

Murphy said special initiatives such as “Take Back Our Highways” and this latest aggressive driving crackdown enhance and support Public Safety’s daily work to promote traffic safety in the state.

“Alabama’s troopers have shown outstanding dedication to their mission of protecting the safety of all who travel our roadways,” said Murphy. “Alabama state troopers are saving lives, and as a result of their efforts, in cooperation with our local law enforcement partners, the gains in traffic safety in Alabama have been extraordinary.”

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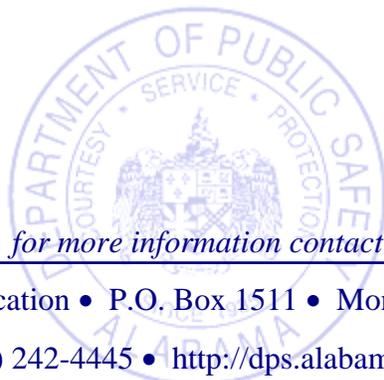
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Murphy cited the downward trend in Alabama traffic crashes, deaths and injuries in 2007, and the continuing positive trend in 2008, with 78 fewer trooper-reported traffic deaths this year compared with the same period in 2007.

DPS's focus on aggressive drivers is patterned after the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's TACT program. TACT — Ticketing Aggressive Cars and Trucks — seeks to reduce risky driving behaviors by passenger car and commercial truck drivers through enforcement and safety awareness.

Murphy said Alabama is currently working with the FMCSA to develop a framework for full implementation of the TACT program. Currently five states — Washington, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, North Carolina and Georgia — receive federal funding to support the aggressive driving enforcement initiative.

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