

# ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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## New Releases for 2009

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This document is a compilation of the press releases that were released for the during 2009 by ALDOT due to weather conditions, debris cleanup, road construction, rail crossing signal installations, etc. For more information on any of the releases please contact the Communications & Community Relations Department.



## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Jan. 7, 2009**

### **Combined Safety Measures Greatly Reduce Highway Deaths in 2008**

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** – Gov. Bob Riley, Alabama Department of Transportation Director Joe McInnes and other state officials today announced that 2008 was the safest year on Alabama’s highways since 1985. In 2008, preliminary numbers show 633 people lost their lives in accidents worked by state troopers compared to 618 deaths in 1985 – a 17 percent reduction from 2007 and the lowest number of fatalities worked by state troopers in 23 years.

“When it comes to saving lives, Alabama is moving in the right direction,” Governor Riley said during a news conference at the Department of Public Safety in Montgomery. “What’s especially important to realize is this: our 17 percent drop in highway deaths is well above the 10 percent drop recorded nationally. That means while a decrease in highway travel has played a role, it isn’t the only reason why deaths are down in Alabama,” the Governor said.

Officials also credit the decline in deaths, crashes and injuries to the work of several state agencies, which pooled their resources to make highways safer. Those efforts include the “Take Back Our Highways” enforcement campaign by the Department of Public Safety, the deployment of vehicles with blood alcohol testing equipment called BAT mobiles that take drunk drivers off the roads more quickly and construction by ALDOT of new barriers along interstate medians and wider lanes on many rural highways.

“Our combined highway safety efforts have reduced fatalities since 2006 and I believe that decrease is the result of increased enforcement and safety improvements made along our highways,” said McInnes. “We are closing gaps in Alabama’s transportation network by completing projects to widen some of the state’s two-lane highways into four-lane highways and during the past six years, we’ve made more progress on projects to close those lingering gaps than any time in our history because we are focusing on safety and need.”

Projects include completing U.S. 280 from Birmingham to Auburn in 2006, State Highway 157 from Cullman to the Shoals in 2007, and by late 2009, the completion of U.S. 431 as a four-lane from Opelika to Dothan. More work continues on U.S. 331 south of Montgomery, U.S. 98 in Mobile and other highways around Alabama.

While about 90 percent of all crashes are caused by driver error or driver behavior, ALDOT is doing everything it can to achieve safer highways through engineering. ALDOT has spent more than \$15 million since 2003 to add guardrails along busy sections of interstate highways where cross-median crashes are most likely. Fatalities in cross-median crashes have decreased annually from 50 in 2005 to 10 or fewer in the past few years.

ALDOT is also spending about \$50 million to add two additional feet per lane to rural two-lane highways when those roads are resurfaced to help reduce run-off-the-road crashes. “Based on a reduction in crashes and fatalities, our statistics indicate that we’ve saved over 150 lives since 2003 by installing guardrails and other protective barriers along 180 miles of interstate highway to prevent cross-median crashes,” McInnes said. “We’re also confident that our rural road widening project will begin showing reductions in fatalities in rural areas.”

Additionally, ALDOT has given State Troopers \$10 million in overtime enforcement grants and funding for radar and on-board computer equipment. McInnes credits a good working relationship with DPS because of the common goal of making Alabama’s highways safer.

The BAT mobiles, a key component of “Task Force Zero” a state trooper initiative to combat drunk driving, have played a major role in reducing highway fatalities. The BAT mobiles equipped with custom alcohol testing gear provided by the Department of Forensic Sciences and other equipment needed to process impaired drivers and gather evidence for court are funded by a \$1.4 million grant awarded by Gov. Riley and administered through the Department of Economic and Community Affairs.

ALDOT’S mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Jan. 13, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **ALDOT Prepared for Winter Weather Conditions That May Affect Alabama Roads and Bridges**

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** – Alabama Department of Transportation personnel and resources across the state are on standby to respond to icy bridge/road conditions and other adverse impacts as overnight temperatures are expected to fall into the teens during the next few days.

ALDOT personnel will monitor bridge/road conditions along with local authorities to determine what actions may be necessary. Resources including sand are on reserve and extra personnel will be on duty.

“We’re committed to keeping Alabama’s transportation network open and avoiding closures if at all possible should freezing conditions affect bridges/roads,” said ALDOT Director Joe McInnes. “We maintain a constant state of readiness to respond to any adverse weather conditions, and we will have resources and personnel standing by to keep state roads and bridges open if possible.”

One of the biggest issues, though, is how motorists react to the potential for more freezing conditions on Alabama’s roads and bridges, McInnes cautioned. Motorists are urged to use extreme caution, allow extra travel time, slow down near bridges and overpasses and other places where icy conditions may exist, allow extra distance between other vehicles and ensure their vehicles are in good operating order.

For road closures and additional information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Feb. 9, 2009**

### **ALDOT Road Improvements Continue in Montgomery Area**

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** – Work continues on an ALDOT project designed to improve six roadway locations in Montgomery and Elmore counties. The beginning phase of the \$896,483 project began in January with the addition of a turn lane on U.S. 80 at Felder Road near the Montgomery Regional Airport.

Construction is also underway on County Road 2 (Cobbs Ford Road) to install a dedicated left-turn lane for eastbound traffic turning from Cobbs Ford Road to Edgewood Drive in Elmore County. Road work on the heavily travelled four-lane and other project sites should be completed by late summer.

Additional project sites include:

- One on U.S. 231 North at Wellington Place and a second at Rivercrest Drive - Elmore County;
- State Road 14 at Elmore County Road 17; and
- State Road 271 (Taylor Road) and EastChase Boulevard.

The Taylor Road and EastChase Boulevard site will include construction of turn lanes and extensions from Vaughn Road to Interstate 85. The work includes the construction of an additional lane at the entrance EastChase and the extension of the right turn lane onto I-85 northbound.

ALDOT will update motorists on project phases as they progress.

Motorists are requested to consider using alternate routes, adjust arrival/departure times, observe work zone speed limits and other work zone signs, and use extreme caution in these areas. ALDOT thanks motorists for their patience during this construction to improve Alabama's roadways.

For additional road closure information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Feb. 10, 2009**

### **Flashing Message Signs Installed in Huntsville Alerting Motorists to Approach Intersections with Caution**

**HUNTSVILLE, Ala.** – ALDOT has positioned four variable message boards on the northbound and southbound approaches of State Road 255, conveying the message, **“Intersection Ahead. . . Speed Limit 45. . . Use Caution.”**

The signs are positioned to warn motorists of where two local roads – Dan Tibbs Road and Blake Bottom Road – intersect with SR 255 (Research Park Boulevard).

The flashing message boards will remain in place until permanent caution lights are installed at both intersections. Additionally, the existing “Intersection Ahead” roadway signs (36 x 36 inches) will be enlarged to expressway size (48 x 48 inches).

Transportation Director Joe McInnes ordered the improvements after visiting the area last week with Governor Bob Riley. McInnes is working with local officials to schedule a follow-up meeting in Montgomery to discuss other ways of reducing crashes along SR 255.

“We share the safety concerns of local residents and officials, and safety is a cornerstone of our mission at the Department of Transportation,” McInnes said. “We’re committed to doing everything we can from an engineering standpoint and working with local officials across Alabama to make our highways safer.”

Motorists are reminded to obey safety and regulatory signs, to drive with caution and to slow down when approaching intersections.

“Most serious crashes involve driver behavior or driver error,” McInnes said. “It’s heartbreaking to hear so many stories from all over Alabama about crashes involving driver behavior and bad decisions, so we work closely with law enforcement and local officials to use engineering and enforcement to make Alabama safer. It’s a big challenge, but we achieve more and make Alabama safer when we work together.”

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 10, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **ALDOT CLOSES STATE WELCOME CENTER AND REST AREA *Unknown Substances Found in Restroom Soap Dispensers***

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** – The I-10 West Welcome Center in Baldwin County and I-65 North Rest Area in Chilton County are closed following the discovery of unknown substances in the restrooms. An investigation is underway to identify and determine the origin of unknown substances found in the I-10 Welcome Center on Monday, and I-65 Rest Area on Tuesday.

Personnel at the I-10 Welcome Center reported finding an undetermined substance in the soap dispenser in the men's restroom Monday afternoon. ALDOT closed the welcome center and ordered immediate and ongoing inspections of the state's remaining seven welcome centers and 19 rest areas. A subsequent inspection resulted in an additional discovery of an unknown substance in the men's restroom at the I-65 Rest Area at mile marker 213 in Chilton County on Tuesday morning.

ALDOT on Tuesday morning asked the Alabama Bureau of Investigation to join the investigation. Identification testing is underway on both substances. There have been no reports of exposure to visitors. There are no indications at this time that the two discoveries are related. The Welcome Center and Rest Area will remain closed until additional information is available about the materials discovered.

"We've initiated a proactive response designed to ensure safety at all our rest area facilities, to include increased inspections throughout our facilities and grounds," said Transportation Director Joe McInnes. "We've also communicated with the DOTs in neighboring states to share information."

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2009**

### **ALDOT's Chilton County Rest Areas, Closed to Test Unknown Substance, Open after Tests Indicate Material Is Harmless**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation has opened its Interstate 65 Chilton County rest areas after they were closed earlier today to test a suspicious substance found in the soap dispenser in the men's restroom.

The concerns originated at the northbound rest area, and the southbound center was closed as a precaution.

On-scene tests revealed the substance was a soap product, but not the normal soap used in the restroom soap dispensers. ALDOT officials are exploring whether a product labeling mistake caused the confusion.

The on-scene tests were conducted by the Alabama National Guard's Civil Response Team based in Montgomery. Additional tests may help confirm if a product labeling mistake resulted in a different soap being used.

Meanwhile, the I-10 welcome center in Baldwin County remains closed until tests confirm the nature of a suspicious substance discovered in a men's restroom soap dispenser on Monday. It was that discovery that prompted ALDOT officials to order the scrutiny of all welcome center and rest area facilities.

ALDOT on Tuesday asked the Alabama Bureau of Investigation to look into the suspicious substances. ABI, in conjunction with state Emergency Management officials, asked the National Guard's Civil Response Team to become involved because of its expertise in testing for chemical and biological agents. The CRT on Wednesday will conduct additional tests on the substance discovered in the Baldwin County welcome center, which is also being tested in other state labs.

Pending final test results, ALDOT officials hope to open the Baldwin County welcome center on Wednesday.

"The test results from the Baldwin County welcome center will determine our course of action, but we're optimistic that we can open that facility sometime on Wednesday," said ALDOT spokesman Tony Harris. "We've approached these different situations from the standpoint that public safety is our top concern, but we need to see additional test results in Baldwin County before we proceed. We're pleased that our response procedures have helped us safeguard the public and inspect our facilities in an effective way."





## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 10, 2009**

### **Metal Coil Securement Act Provides for Safer Roadways**

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** – Alabama Transportation Director Joe McInnes today issued the following statement regarding the passage by both houses of the Alabama Legislature of a law that sets higher standards for transporting steel coils on Alabama highways:

“After failed attempts during the two previous legislative sessions, the Alabama Legislature has sent a strong message by passing a new law that requires training for steel coil transporters and imposes possible penalties when coils are not properly secured. This is a positive step forward in Alabama’s efforts to make our highways safer. I hope the Legislature will move with the same expedience and commitment in passing other important transportation and safety-related legislation.”

The Metal Coil Securement Act; SB 136, addresses the danger to motorists caused by metal coils dropping, falling, and/or shifting from commercial motor vehicles onto public roads and highways, damaging roadways and bridges. The new law creates specific violations of motor carrier safety laws regarding the proper securement of metal coils, enforceable through increased monetary and criminal penalties to motor carriers and drivers. The law provides for training, certification and aggressive inspection and weighing of vehicles transporting metal coils.

**The Alabama Department of Public Safety is charged with setting the training standards. For certification inquires and additional information on SB 136, call 334-242-4395.**

Additional transportation and safety-related bills under consideration in the 2009 Legislative Session address the use of cell phones and texting while driving and toll roads and bridges.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Wednesday, March 18, 2009**

### **I-10 Welcome Center Re-opens after Tests Reveal No Threat**

**MONTGOMERY** – Alabama Department of Transportation officials this morning re-opened the Interstate 10 Welcome Center in Baldwin County after tests detected nothing harmful in the contents of a restroom soap dispenser.

Officials were concerned last week after welcome center attendants reported soap in a restroom soap dispenser appeared to be a different color than normal. The attendants also reported an unusual odor in the restroom. ALDOT closed the entire welcome center while tests were conducted on the contents of the soap dispenser.

Extensive and redundant testing as part of an investigative process involving the Alabama Bureau of Investigation did not detect anything unusual about the soap, nor did it detect the presence of harmful substances. There were no reports of anyone experiencing injury or illness from using soap from this restroom soap dispenser.

The welcome center was closed for eight days while tests were conducted. ALDOT operates eight welcome centers and 19 rest areas across Alabama, and attendants conduct frequent checks of all facilities for signs of anything unusual or suspicious.

“We take security seriously at our welcome centers and rest areas, and we closed our Baldwin County welcome center for tests out of an abundance of caution,” said Transportation Director Joe McInnes. “This is an example of how we react in a serious way to the possibility of anything that may pose a threat to the public. We remain vigilant in our efforts to provide safe, clean facilities for the traveling public.”

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 20, 2009**

### **SPRING MEANS RED-BELLIED TURTLES ARE ON THE MOVE** ***Hatching Season Underway – Nesting Season Begins in April***

**SPANISH FORT** – On this first day of spring, ALDOT Transportation Director Joe McInnes would like to remind motorists travelling along coastal highways to be aware that red-bellied turtles are on the move. This time of year, young turtles may be emerging from their nests before female turtles come to shore to lay their eggs beginning in April.

In October 2008, ALDOT announced completion of a 3.4 mile, low-barrier fence along both sides of the Mobile Bay Causeway designed to reduce fatalities of the Alabama red-bellied turtle, an endangered species and the state's official reptile. To alert motorists of the turtle's activities, McInnes announced banners would be hung at various points of the fencing during hatching and nesting seasons.

Females nest from April to early August with a peak in July, leaving their aquatic environment to lay their eggs on dry land. Nests are concentrated in openings or sparsely vegetated areas near levees, roadsides, river banks or dredge spoil sites. Newborn turtles may emerge in the fall, primarily October to November, or over-winter in the nest to emerge in March and April.

The most dangerous and alarming threat a turtle faces is being run over by motorists while crossing the Causeway or other roads. McInnes pointed to several ways the public can help ALDOT's effort to save the endangered and sparse population of Alabama's red-bellied turtles. These include be aware of nesting and hatching habits and times, slow down when approaching habitat areas and brake safely for turtles in the road if traffic conditions allow.

A new study by Dr. David Nelson, of the University of South Alabama's department of biological sciences, contends the fence is already working. "The sections of chain-link fencing financed and installed by the Alabama Department of Transportation to reduce roadway mortality of turtles along the eastern Causeway has made a big difference," said Nelson. "Since the construction of the fencing, turtle mortalities have declined significantly from a total of 109 in 2007, to 28 in 2008.

The Alabama red-bellied turtle is only found in four coastal counties – Baldwin and Mobile in Alabama and Harrison and Jackson in Mississippi.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 3, 2009**

### **PUT DOWN THE PHONE! SLOW DOWN IN WORK ZONES!**

**MONTGOMERY** – Gov. Bob Riley, Transportation Director Joe McInnes, and the Alabama Struck-By Alliance are urging drivers to slow down, pay attention, limit the use of hand-held devices and be aware of workers along roadways during National Work Zone Awareness Week.

ALDOT is stressing ***R-U-IN-TEXT-ICATED? Put Down the Phone!*** as part of its observance of National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 6-10, 2009. Billboards, located statewide, enforce the message that texting while driving is very dangerous and the lives of transportation employees and construction workers depend on motorists paying strict attention and eliminating risky driving behaviors.

According to research conducted at the University of Alabama, there were 2,296 crashes in highway work zones in Alabama in 2007. Of those, there were 35 fatalities and over 700 injuries. Nationally, a work zone fatality occurs once every eight hours. In Alabama, there is a work zone fatality once every 10 days. From 2005-2007, 101 people died statewide in road zone crashes.

The primary reasons for work zone-related crashes include alcohol, speeding and inattention. “Numerous accidents in Alabama and elsewhere continue to make clear the dangers of not paying attention in a work zone,” said Transportation Director Joe McInnes. “Most work zone accidents can be avoided if drivers slow down and pay attention when driving in work zones.”

“We want people to understand the dangers of driving through work zones while distracted by cell phones, especially texting” said Charlotte Kopf, Chair of the Alabama Struck-By Alliance Committee.

Gov. Riley has issued a proclamation marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National Work Zone Awareness Week. ALDOT is promoting the safety campaign through the billboards, public service announcements, flashing electronic message boards and other promotional materials.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 7, 2009**

### **Citations Issued to Illegal ATV Riders in Mobile County**

**MOBILE** – The Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and the Mobile County Sheriff's Department have joined resources to eradicate illegal all terrain vehicle (ATV) operations that cause erosion, slope damage and landslides along state roadways.

Over the past weekend, Mobile County sheriff's deputies gave 27 drivers of ATVs citations for illegally riding on the Interstate 10 right-of-way in Mobile County. Of those, three were arrested and their ATVs seized.

As a first offense, riders caught on an ATV on state rights-of-way are given a warning citation. Second offenses result in arrest and seizure of the ATV, which leads to a court appearance, fines and possible jail time.

Initial efforts will concentrate on three areas where ATV damage has been most severe. These include I-10 between Exits 10 and 13, Alabama Highway 158 between Schillinger Road and U.S. 98, and the unopened portion of the new U.S. 98.

"It is estimated that ATVs have caused more than \$300,000 in damage this year alone," said Tony Harris, special assistant to the transportation director. "We spent more than \$100,000 to repair slope damage caused by ATVs in 2008."

Harris said ALDOT has posted no trespassing signs throughout the problem areas.

He said surveillance of illegal ATV activity won't be a passing fad or limited to problem areas. "We have an obligation to Alabama taxpayers to protect their existing and under construction roadways," said Harris. "This effort will be ongoing and we will actively pursue those who cause the damage."

While the final numbers from 2008 are not yet in, Harris said the 128 ATV crashes statewide have already surpassed the total of 119 in 2007. There were a total of 23 ATV fatalities for the two years combined. Along with this enforcement effort, ALDOT encourages safe riding habits and urges riders to avoid trespassing on privately owned or state property.

- more -

"While ATV damage to our rights-of-way is rapidly increasing, the age of the riders is decreasing," Harris said. "According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, four out of every 10 people treated in emergency rooms for ATV injuries are under the age 16."

It is estimated more than 15 million Americans ride ATVs.

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**PHOTO CUTLINE: This is the type damage being caused by ATVs along state rights-of-way. Once this damage is detected, ALDOT crews must repair it immediately.**

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## ***ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 9, 2009**

### **ALDOT Chief Engineer and Deputy Director Receives Esteemed Award from Auburn University**

**MONTGOMERY** – D.W. Vaughn, chief engineer and deputy director of the Alabama Department of Transportation, has been selected as the Outstanding Civil Engineering Alumnus for 2009 by the Samuel Ginn College of Engineering at Auburn University.

Vaughn was joined by family members when he was presented the award March 27 during the College of Engineering's annual award's ceremony in Auburn.

"As chief engineer of the largest civil engineering organization in Alabama, you have certainly distinguished yourself as very deserving of this honor," said Professor and Department Head Michael Stallings. "We in the Department of Civil Engineering at Auburn University are honored to call you one of our own."

A 1971 civil engineering graduate from Auburn University, Vaughn was appointed ALDOT's chief engineer in June 2005. He served as assistant transportation director under two different governors. Additionally, he has served as deputy transportation director since February 2003.

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**Photo attached.**

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 10, 2009**

### **ALDOT Opens Bids on First Stimulus Projects**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation today opened bids on the first round of projects to be funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Ten projects are included in the first letting including a major rehabilitation project on Interstate 59 in Etowah County.

State and federal highway officials will review the bids as part of the process of awarding these projects to contractors, and expect construction on these projects to begin in about 60 days.

The federal stimulus economic package earmarks \$417 million for transportation projects on Alabama's system of state, U.S and interstate highways. Bids on additional stimulus projects will be taken monthly for the next few months. Complete project letting information is available on ALDOT's Web site at [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 13, 2009**

### **More Citations Issued to Illegal ATV Riders in Mobile County**

**MOBILE** – The Alabama Department of Transportation’s (ALDOT) and the Mobile County Sheriff’s Department’s joint effort continues to eradicate illegal all terrain vehicle (ATV) operations along state roadways resulted in two additional citations and two arrests this past weekend.

Over the past two weeks, deputies issued 31 drivers of ATVs citations for illegally riding on the I-10 and unopened portion of the new U.S. 98 rights-of-way in Mobile County. Of those, three people were arrested for trespassing and had their ATVs seized. Two were taken into custody last Saturday, one on an outstanding warrant and the other charged with drug possession.

Operating ATVs cause erosion, slope damage and landslides along state roadways. Continued enforcement is helping curb those damages.

“Damage caused by ATVs along state roadways and rights-of-way has a bottom-line impact on the taxpayers, because it’s their resources that must be used to repair the damage. It’s estimated that ATVs have caused more than \$300,000 in damage this year alone,” said Tony Harris, special assistant to the transportation director. “In 2008, the state spent more than \$100,000 to repair slope damage caused by ATVs, so there is an obvious worsening trend. That’s why we’re working with local law enforcement to prevent illegal riding and to be good fiscal and environmental stewards.”

As a first offense, riders caught on an ATV on state rights-of-way are given a warning citation. Second offenses result in arrest and seizure of the ATV, which leads to a court appearance, fines and possible jail time.

Initial efforts are concentrating on three areas where ATV damage has been most severe. These include I-10 between Exits 10 and 13, Alabama Highway 158 between Schillinger Road and U.S. 45, and the unopened portion of the new U.S. 98.

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While the final numbers from 2008 are not yet in, Harris said the 128 ATV crashes statewide have already surpassed the total of 119 in 2007. There were a total of 23 ATV fatalities for the two years combined. Along with this enforcement effort, ALDOT encourages safe riding habits and urges riders to avoid trespassing on privately owned or state property.

“While ATV damage to our rights-of-way is rapidly increasing, the age of the riders is decreasing,” Harris said. “According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, four out of every 10 people treated in emergency rooms for ATV injuries are under the age 16.”

It is estimated more than 15 million Americans ride ATVs.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 17, 2009**

### **ALDOT Safety Campaign Focuses on Speed Limit**

**MOBILE** – The Alabama Department of Transportation is partnering with the Alabama Department of Public Safety and the Creola Police Department to establish a “Take Back our Highways” safety awareness campaign the week of April 20-26, on U.S. Highway 43 in Creola.

During the campaign, there will be strict enforcement of the 50 miles per hour speed limit on the four-lane, divided highway leading into and out of the Creola town limits. Alabama State Troopers and the Creola Police will aggressively enforce the speed limit and other traffic laws, and ALDOT will position variable message signs at each town limit reminding motorists to slow down and drive the posted speed limit. There will be a zero-tolerance for speeding during the week.

“This week and always, drivers should make sure their speed is within the limit,” said Transportation Director Joe McInnes. “Additionally, the research gathered on U.S. 43 in the Creola vicinity during the week will help to determine if the posted 50 miles per hour is the best speed entering and exiting town.”

At the request of local officials, ALDOT will study the U.S. 43 corridor through the town limits and determine if a lowered speed limit is justified based on federal speed limit criteria.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 17, 2009**

### **Portion of Highway 51 Named for Lee County Native Charles Lawler**

**OPELIKA, Ala.** – A 13-mile stretch of Alabama Highway 51 in Opelika was formally dedicated and named in honor of longtime local businessman Charles Lawler today. Gov. Bob Riley, ALDOT officials, state Rep. Mike Hubbard and other distinguished guests were on hand as signs designating Highway 51, between mile markers 100 and 113, as the Charles Lawler Highway were unveiled to the public.

During the ceremony, Mr. Lawler was also presented a commendation by Gov. Riley for his many years of service in the road construction business in and around Opelika and Lee County. As noted in the commendation, under Charles Lawler's leadership, his company, East Alabama Paving Company tackled many major road projects including U.S. 280, U.S. 431, and I-85 as well as other road projects for the Alabama Department of Transportation.

"Charles Lawler has been a pillar in his community and in the road building industry," said Transportation Director Joe McInnes. "His dedication, leadership and accomplishments are appreciated and naming a section of this highway for him is of merit."

Charles W. Lawler was born in Lee County in 1936, attended Auburn University, and started East Alabama Paving Company with partner and friend Jack Tatum in 1970. He worked until his retirement in January of 2004.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**May 19, 2009**

### **ALDOT I-65 Hurricane Evacuation Exercise is Wednesday, May 20**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation on Wednesday, May 20, will lead a rehearsal of the plan that helped safely evacuate the Gulf Coast during Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and Hurricane Dennis in 2005.

Since 2000, ALDOT annually conducts rehearsals of its plan to reverse southbound traffic on Interstate 65 to allow four northbound lanes to evacuate the Gulf Coast. The term “contraflow” describes the condition when an interstate highway’s lanes carry traffic in the opposite direction for an evacuation (for instance, when I-65’s southbound lanes carry northbound traffic).

On Wednesday, around 200 ALDOT workers and a contingency of state troopers will be positioned along I-65 between Baldwin County and Montgomery to simulate the activity associated with reversing I-65 traffic.

Alabama developed a hurricane evacuation plan to reverse traffic on I-65’s southbound lanes after Hurricane Floyd hit the East Coast in 1999. Planning and annual rehearsals since spring 2000 made Alabama’s lane reversals during Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis a success, helping to evacuate the Gulf Coast without any hurricane-related loss of life.

The plan for reversing I-65 traffic consists of 110 steps and requires 200 Department of Transportation employees, about 100 state troopers, and additional personnel from state and local emergency management and local law enforcement agencies.

The rehearsal simulates the lane reversal activities that may occur during a real hurricane. It provides an opportunity to practice the dozens of steps required, and to fine tune the process. Personnel involved in the rehearsal will pre-position themselves and their equipment, just as they would during their response to a real hurricane.

Traffic **will not** be reversed or detoured anywhere along I-65 during the reverse lane training exercise, but every portion of the plan will be simulated. Personnel will be pre-positioned at checkpoints along I-65 between the initial crossover point south of State Road 225 in Mobile County and the north terminus points in Montgomery. There are 29 assigned checkpoints and 22 interchanges along I-65 that are involved in the lane reversal plan.

ALDOT will simultaneously conduct training sessions for its Emergency Call Center. The Call Center staffs operators to take calls from the public about evacuation routes during I-65 lane reversals and disasters.

- more -

MEMBERS OF THE NEWS MEDIA ARE INVITED TO VISIT THE EMERGENCY CALL CENTER TRAINING EXERCISE ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, BETWEEN 10:15 A.M. AND 11:45 A.M.

PLEASE CONTACT THE ALDOT PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE TO COORDINATE COVERAGE OF THE REVERSE LANE EXERCISE.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 8, 2009**

### **Officials and Townspeople Celebrate Notasulga's New Main Street Bridge**

**NOTASULGA, Ala.** – Transportation Director Joe McInnes joined federal, state, and local officials and citizens today for a ribbon cutting marking the official opening of the Main Street Bridge (Macon County Road 54) in Notasulga.

The newly completed bridge replaces the 100-year old bridge that once spanned across the CXS railroad tracks and connects the town with the surrounding community. State and federal funding helped construct the new \$1,410,797 bridge.

The local bridge was closed in June 2004 after failing inspections, creating the need for a detour. The old bridge was torn down in 2006. When estimates for replacing the 100-year-old local bridge came in at more than \$1 million, city and county officials turned to ALDOT for help. State officials stepped in and provided state and federal funds and managed the construction. A groundbreaking ceremony was held Feb. 15, 2008, with the low-bid construction project awarded to McInnis LLC of Montgomery. The new bridge opened for traffic June 8, 2009.

“Our mission at ALDOT is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network to the people of Alabama, and sometimes that mission extends into local communities to help meet needs that might otherwise be too big for some of our smaller towns and counties,” McInnes said. “Rebuilding this bridge is an important part of what we do, and it helps maintain safety and preserves the quality of life in towns like Notasulga that are the backbone of Alabama.”

For further information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 17, 2009**

### **ALDOT Mails Postcard to Inform Residents and Businesses About Hurricane Evacuation Impacts**

**MONTGOMERY** – Over 8,000 West Montgomery residents and business owners in zip codes 36105 and 36108 will soon be receiving an information card from the Alabama Department of Transportation outlining procedures taken during an Interstate 65 lane reversal.

The purpose of the card is to inform local citizens of preparations they may need to take because of heavy traffic along I-65 and local roads when a lane reversal occurs.

During hurricane evacuations, ALDOT helps move traffic north, away from an approaching storm. If needed, ALDOT will use all lanes of I-65 as northbound lanes between Mobile and Montgomery, meaning traffic is reversed on the southbound lanes of I-65. This process is called contraflow.

During contraflow, traffic may be heavy on I-65, U.S. Highways 31 and 80, Hyundai and South Boulevards, Fairview Avenue and Day Street. These local roads will be used to reroute southbound traffic off the interstate as well as redirect drivers back into the normal northbound flow of traffic.

“We believe it’s very important to let people who live and work along I-65 in West Montgomery know what happens when we reverse the lanes on I-65 if a major hurricane evacuation is called for,” said Transportation Director Joe McInnes. “Being informed, planning ahead and avoiding areas of heavy traffic during reverse laning can help people make the best of the situation.”

ALDOT’s mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For further information on hurricane evacuation and traffic conditions, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**July 29, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **Great Deals on All Types of Equipment during ALDOT Public Auction** *Bid on Vehicles, Tractors, Construction Equipment and More during Two-Day Event*

**MONTGOMERY** – People in the market for used vehicles at a low price should not miss the Alabama Department of Transportation’s Absolute Public Auction on Saturday, Aug. 1, beginning at 9 a.m. The auction site is located at 537 Traffic Operations Drive in Montgomery.

All types of vehicles including trucks, vans, SUVs, farm tractors, lawn and construction equipment, and miscellaneous surplus will be sold. Special truck and equipment financing will be available to qualified buyers.

Potential buyers can view inventory at the ALDOT facility beginning Thursday at 7 a.m.

Additionally, an offsite and live Internet auction featuring miscellaneous items will be held on Friday beginning at 9 a.m. Items may be previewed at [www.jmwood.com](http://www.jmwood.com).

This is an excellent opportunity for people to buy quality vehicles at a low market price,” said ALDOT Equipment Bureau Chief Deborah Clark. “Purchasing auction items is a win-win for all concerned because the money goes back into ALDOT’s fund to purchase newer equipment for state service and the buyer gets a great deal. In today’s economy, that’s a big plus.”

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 18, 2009**

### **Southern Transportation Civil Rights Executive Council Training Symposium August 18-20 in Birmingham**

**BIRMINGHAM** – The Southern Transportation Civil Rights Executive Council’s Training Symposium 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting began today at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham with opening remarks from Gerald Ross, P.F., Chief Engineer with the Georgia Department of Transportation.

The three-day event, hosted by the Alabama Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration, is a “one-stop” opportunity for participants to receive training on major FHWA civil rights programs. The purpose of the Training Symposium is to assist Civil Rights Practitioners in sharing, guiding, and providing remedies, and to discuss regulations and best practices for various civil rights challenges facing transportation officials today and in the future.

As part of the Symposium, the FHWA is hosting a full-day National Title VI Forum on Wednesday, August 19. Featured speakers include the Honorable Victor Mendez., Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration and former director of Arizona’s Department of Transportation. The forum will provide critical information and key resources needed to implement a viable Title VI program to state transportation agencies, local governments, and other DOT recipients and sub recipients.

The Southern Transportation Civil Rights Executive Council’s is comprised of eight southern states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee and provides organizational networking and training regarding the implementation of civil rights compliance programs.

The event will end on Thursday following all day training programs and the annual Awards Banquet recognizing states DOT’s and individuals for their service and outstanding achievement in the arena of civil rights in transportation.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Ardmore to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the Davis Avenue crossing in the city of Ardmore in Limestone County.

ALDOT issued the notice to proceed on this project to CSX Transportation Aug. 7, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For additional information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Ashford to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the Sixth Avenue and Tenth Avenue crossings in the city of Ashford in Houston County.

ALDOT issued the notices to proceed on these projects to CSX Transportation Aug. 3, and 4, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Septmeber18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Athens to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the Piney Chapel Road crossing in the city of Athens in Limestone County.

ALDOT issued the notice to proceed on this project to CSX Transportation Aug. 7, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Brundidge to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the Wood Lane crossing in the city of Brundidge in Pike County.

ALDOT issued the notice to proceed on this project to CSX Transportation Aug. 3, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **Cullman to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the Phelan Road crossing in the city of Cullman in Cullman County.

ALDOT issued the notice to proceed on this project to CSX Transportation Aug. 7, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **Hanceville to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the Garden City Heights Street and County Road 530 crossings in the city of Hanceville in Cullman County.

ALDOT issued the notices to proceed on these projects to CSX Transportation Aug. 4, and 7, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **Stevenson to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the County Road 69 crossing in the city of Stevenson in Jackson County.

ALDOT issued the notice to proceed on this project to CSX Transportation Aug. 10, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 18, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

## **Troy to Receive New Rail Crossing Signals and Gates**

**MONTGOMERY** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announced today that funding to install new highway-railway grade crossing signals and gates has been approved at the Church Street and Walnut Street crossings in the city of Troy in Pike County.

ALDOT issued the notices to proceed on these projects to CSX Transportation Aug. 3, 2009. CSXT will inform ALDOT of installation dates after a reasonable time for procurement of equipment and supplies.

The goal of installing this safety equipment is to save lives by increasing the number of active signals at the 3,200 public crossings statewide. In 2008, there were 67 accidents involving vehicles and trains in Alabama in which five people were killed and 39 injured. Nationally in 2008, there were 2,398 highway-rail incidents resulting in 287 fatalities.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 2, 2009**

### **Alabama Walk Our Children to School Day is October 7**

**MONTGOMERY** – Elementary schools across Alabama will participate in National Walk Our Children to School Day on Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2009. The event is an official part of ALDOT’s Alabama Safe Routes to School Program. It is a great resource to kick off a walking program or to raise awareness regarding walking safely in your community. Go to [www.adph.org/srts](http://www.adph.org/srts) or [www.walktoschool.org](http://www.walktoschool.org) to find events for the day and to register your school to participate.

Some additional events to consider include:

- Walk on Wednesday Program
- Pedestrian Safety DVD “Walk Safety Tips”
- Pedestrian Safety Interactive Game; “A Safer Journey”
- On-Line Bike Safety Game “La-Banda-Del-Patio” at [www.shegame.com/view](http://www.shegame.com/view)

Visit the ALDOT website at [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us) for more information.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Oct. 13, 2009**

### **Construction Begins on Last Segment of the Anniston Eastern Bypass**

**ANNISTON, Ala.** – Gov. Bob Riley, U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers and Transportation Director Joe McInnes today joined local officials from throughout Calhoun County to break ground on the final segment of the Anniston Eastern Bypass (State Route 192). The event signals the beginning of construction on the \$29.4 million federal Stimulus project on the eight-mile, four-lane highway that runs through Ft. McClellan between I-20 and U.S. 431.

This project is for roadbed construction, drainage and bridges from south of Lake Yalaha to U.S. 431. Construction on the project by contractor L & T Construction Inc., of Hernando, Miss., will begin immediately. Funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, this segment of construction is expected to be completed in early 2011 and will be followed by a paving project prior to the opening of the entire length of the bypass.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ALDOT, MOBILE BAYKEEPER SETTLE HIGHWAY 98 CIVIL SUIT**

**MONTGOMERY, Alabama, October 19, 2009**—Mobile Baykeeper and the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) have reached an agreement that settles claims in separate state and federal lawsuits filed regarding the relocation and construction of a portion of U.S. Highway 98. The agreement has been filed with the Mobile County Circuit Court and was approved by the Court on Friday.

The settlement resolves Baykeeper's role as an intervenor in a state lawsuit filed by the Alabama Attorney General's Office and a federal lawsuit filed by the Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (MAWSS). ALDOT signed a settlement agreement in May with the Attorney General's office. The MAWSS lawsuit is now the only legal challenge remaining against the project. State transportation officials remain hopeful a settlement can be reached with MAWSS.

"We're pleased to have resolved our legal issues with Mobile Baykeeper and the Attorney General's office, and I appreciate Baykeeper and the Attorney General's office for being fair and reasonable in our settlement efforts," said Transportation Director Joe McInnes. "From the beginning, ALDOT took corrective actions and made design changes, and the lessons from this project will be carried into the remaining phases of Highway 98 construction. We've fully addressed our initial problems, now it's time to continue our efforts to provide a safer Highway 98."

Casi Callaway, Executive Director and Baykeeper for Mobile Baykeeper, said that: "All of us wish the lawsuits were unnecessary, but we are glad to have achieved a settlement that greatly improves the Highway 98 project in a variety of respects. We were able to agree to this settlement because our major objectives were achieved: 1) erosion problems associated with the construction have been addressed; 2) ALDOT has agreed to limit access to three points and agrees that we must limit access to the highway to prevent increased development which would harm Mobile's drinking water source; 3) ALDOT has agreed to extend the bridge across the Big Creek headwaters from 300 feet to 1,700 feet to allow flow of the creek and wetland waters; 4) storm water and hazardous material containment has been significantly improved; 5) mitigation will be focused within the watershed to the extent possible; and 6) these changes will be considered statewide to guard against future problems."

Under the terms of the settlement, ALDOT also agrees to provide \$50,000 to the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources for acquisition of additional land within the Escatawpa River watershed or to study possible improvements to Mobile's Causeway.

Also in the settlement, ALDOT has implemented construction methods and/or design changes to address concerns about slope stability and high groundwater at certain locations on the project, including flattening slopes, installation of chimney drains, installation of a slope tie-back

system and the extension of a bridge across Big Creek from 300 to 1,700 feet. The agreement also acknowledges that ALDOT has spent approximately \$125,000 for sediment removal in or near a tributary to Scarbo Creek and will take additional remedial measures required by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management in the Escatawpa and Big Creek watersheds.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**November 5, 2009**

### **ALDOT RESPONDS TO SAFETY CONCERNS BY FUNDING EXTRA TROOPER PATROLS ON U.S. 98**

**MONTGOMERY** – Responding to citizen concerns expressed through community groups, the Alabama Department of Transportation will begin funding state trooper overtime patrols Nov. 7 to “Take Back Highway 98.”

Members of ALDOT’s Highway 98 Community Outreach Group and the Wilmer Community Action Group have expressed concerns about growing congestion, speeding and reckless driving on Highway 98 in West Mobile County. In response to those concerns, ALDOT will use highway safety funds for extra trooper patrols along the two-lane section of Highway 98 from the Mississippi state line to Snow Road in an effort to reduce dangerous and illegal driving practices.

The initial overtime enforcement effort will run for one week, but beefed-up patrols using ALDOT safety funds will be conducted at random. This initiative is similar to others ALDOT has funded across Alabama to keep Alabama’s highways safer.

Highway 98 has already seen occasional increased enforcement efforts, but this new safety campaign is in direct response to resident concerns and will be backed by the resources of ALDOT and the highway patrol division of the Alabama Department of Public Safety.

“Local residents recently expressed concerns about the number of speeders, crashes and amount of traffic on the current two-lane section of Highway 98,” said ALDOT Ninth Division Engineer Vince Calametti. “Residents in the Wilmer area are troubled by speeders and those who illegally use turn lanes to pass slower moving vehicles. Hopefully these enforcement efforts will address local concerns until we can complete the new four-lane divided highway project that will realign the existing Highway 98.”

Safety concerns are justified, Calametti said. Since 1995, there have been 2,157 crashes resulting in 1,038 injuries and 50 fatalities. “A four-lane divided highway like what will be provided by our new Highway 98 will take a lot of traffic off existing 98 and provide safer conditions because of the extra capacity and a wide median,” Calametti said.

In addition to increased trooper patrols, variable message boards will be placed on either end of the route to alert drivers to expect strict enforcement of traffic laws.

- more -

Similar enforcement campaigns in other parts of Alabama have had positive impacts on other highways, such as U.S. 431 in Russell County where no fatal automobile crashes have occurred

since 2007 after troopers began overtime enforcement in conjunction with a four-lane widening project. Prior to that enforcement effort, from 1995 to 2005, 20 people were killed in automobile crashes along a 16-mile stretch of highway. A similar effort earlier this year in Creola resulted in 103 speeding tickets and about 100 other assorted traffic citations in just one week.

ALDOT's U.S. 98 Community Outreach Group was created in an effort to keep the public more involved and better informed. The group provides feedback to plans, suggesting alternatives, asking pertinent questions and keeping the community updated on the project. The Wilmer Community Action Group is an independent, local group organized by area residents.

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nov. 10, 2009**

# **MEDIA ADVISORY**

### **ALDOT Announces Mobile Bay Ferry Service Resumes**

**BALDWIN COUNTY, Ala.** – Normal scheduled service on the M/V Ft. Morgan ferry across Mobile Bay between Dauphin Island and Ft. Morgan will resume, Thursday, November 12.

The Ft. Morgan will be moved from safe harbor at the Port of Mobile on Wednesday.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For further information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Nov. 23, 2009**

### **ALDOT Urges Motorists to Buckle Up and Stay Safe This Thanksgiving**

**MONTGOMERY** – Highway travel during the 2009 Thanksgiving holiday week is expected to be heavy in Alabama as families pile into their cars and head off for holiday destinations. But there's one sure recipe that can turn a joyful holiday into a tragedy: failure to buckle up.

As an added precaution during the heavily travelled holiday, Alabama Department of Transportation Director Joe McInnes announced there will be no road construction on Alabama interstates beginning at 12 noon, Wednesday, Nov. 25, through midnight, Sunday, Nov. 29. Emergency lane closures may be possible dependant on specific circumstances on interstates and other state roadways.

“Limiting construction during higher traffic volumes helps ensure safer conditions for the travelling public, construction industry workers and our maintenance crews,” said McInnes. “I urge everyone driving on our state’s highways this holiday to drive carefully, don’t drive impaired and, most important, buckle up each and every trip.”

Nationally during the Thanksgiving holiday period in 2008 (which ran from 6 p.m. Wednesday, November 26, to 5:59 a.m., Monday, December 1), there were 389 fatalities from traffic crashes. In Alabama, 10 people were killed during the 2008 Thanksgiving holiday period.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, regular seat belt use is the single most effective way to protect people and reduce fatalities in motor vehicle crashes. Research has shown that when lap and shoulder belts are used properly, the risk of fatal injury to front-seat passenger car occupants is reduced by 45 percent, and the risk of moderate to serious injury is reduced by 50 percent.

For more information about highway safety during Thanksgiving, please visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us) or [www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov](http://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov).

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## **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Dec. 8, 2009**

### **Latest Phase of Corridor X Opens Wednesday**

**BIRMINGHAM** – The Alabama Department of Transportation announces the opening of another phase of Corridor X. The 1.8-mile section of newly paved four-lane from mile marker 90.529 (Cherry Avenue) to Exit 93 (Coalburg Road) will open to local traffic on Wednesday, December 9 at 7:30 a.m. Construction began on the project in April.

Part of the Appalachian Development Highway Program, Corridor X was designated by Congress in 2004 as “Future Interstate 22.” When completed, it will provide a 96-mile connection from I-65 in Birmingham to Memphis.

ALDOT's mission is to provide a safe and efficient transportation network across Alabama. For additional information, visit [www.dot.state.al.us](http://www.dot.state.al.us).

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