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Troopers Notice Disturbing Trend on Seward Highway

(GIRDWOOD, Alaska) – This past month troopers have responded to four major vehicle collisions in the Girdwood-area. Three of those collisions resulted in death and in all of the incidents people were sent to hospitals to be treated for injuries.

On July 26, 2009 Annette Knofel was killed when the vehicle she was a passenger in was struck head on at mile 88 of the Seward Highway. Two days prior, 11 year old Anchorage resident Seth Mandel died after the driver of a van fell asleep at the wheel and slammed into the vehicle he was riding in at mile 76 of the Seward Highway. On the 19th of July a double head-on collision occurred at mile 74.5 of the Seward when a driver fell asleep at the wheel and went into on-coming traffic. July 4, 2009 30-year old Anchorage resident Kimberly VanRoten died after a vehicle crossed the center line in an attempt to pass other vehicles at mile 86.5 of the Seward Highway.

Two other fatal collisions have occurred this month in other areas of the state. Troopers implore motorists to always use safe driving behaviors while on Alaska roadways. Each incident has its own elements that makes it unique; however there are consistently cases where drivers are extremely fatigued from long days of driving and fishing.

Additionally, troopers strongly suggest that motorists have their headlights on at all times. State law already requires motorists on the Seward highway to have headlights on at all times. Headlights make it easier for other motorists to see you, even during daylight hours. The highways are only as safe as the motorists driving on it. Troopers will continue to do their part in reducing the number of fatal and major injury collisions, but we also need the public's help. Always use safe driving behaviors and wear your seatbelt. If you see a driver practicing unsafe driving behaviors, call local law enforcement or the Alaska State Troopers to report the incident. The more information we receive on unsafe drivers, the better chance law enforcement has of getting them off the road.

For more information regarding fatality statistics on Alaska's roadways, visit the [Alaska Highway Safety Office's website](#).