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Three Fatal Collisions Mar Smooth Transition to Winter Driving

(WASILLA, Alaska) – The transition between summer and winter driving has been deadly on Alaska roads. The Alaska Bureau of Highway Patrol is investigating three fatal crashes in this week alone where roads conditions have been an issue in each of the collisions.

When the snow season comes to Alaska, it's like driving in another world. Suddenly, your car is different. It will not start, steer or stop the way it does in warm weather. The roads often become treacherous when covered with snow. Slush is often as slippery as ice and both are a potential danger to motorists.

To adapt, drivers must drive accordingly to these new conditions firstly, by **slowing down**. Leave home early to give yourself more time to get to your destination. Not only drive defensively, but anticipate what might be around that corner to make it easier to avoid something else in the roadway. Snow and slush hamper a car's reaction time so drive so give yourself plenty of room between the car in front of you and more stopping time for a stop light or stop sign. And as always, wear a seatbelt. It could save your life.

For more winter driving tips, go to:

<http://www.dps.state.ak.us/PIO/TrooperTimes/ArchiveStories/12.06.07%20Winter%20Driving.pdf>

ABHP is still investigating to determine the exact cause of the recent fatal collisions. The multi-agency bureau focuses specifically on traffic enforcement and education with the ultimate goal of bringing the number of major injury and fatal collisions down to zero. It is the bureau's position that even one death on Alaska's roadways is unacceptable. The three fatal collisions were:

- At 10:16 a.m. on Nov. 6, Soldotna dispatch was notified by numerous calls of a crash at approximately Mile 18 Kenai Spur Hwy. AST responded to the scene. The Alaska Bureau of Highway Patrol, along with Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, is conducting the investigation into the crash. Preliminary investigation indicates a Peterbilt semi-truck without trailers, driven by Clifford Henderson, 35, of Anchorage, was headed northbound when the truck crossed the centerline and crashed head-on with a 2000 Honda CRV. The

driver of the Honda, Paul J. Trissell, 68, of Wasilla, died on scene. His wife and passenger, Pamela A. Trissell, 55, of Wasilla, was transported to Central Peninsula Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries at 12:48 p.m. Henderson was not injured in the crash. Everyone involved was reportedly wearing a seat belt.

- At approximately 5 p.m. on Nov. 4, 2010, the AST Bureau of Highway Patrol, South Central Team responded to the report of a motor vehicle collision near the intersection of Big Lake Road and Beaver Lake Road. Investigation revealed that James Hettrick, 30, of Big Lake, was driving a 2000 Ford pickup northbound on Big Lake Road when his vehicle and a southbound 1991 Chevrolet Lumina van, driven by Edward Irish Sr., 51, of Wasilla, slid out of control and collided head on in the southbound lane. Hettrick and his passenger suffered minor injuries and were released at the scene. EMS administered medical attention to Irish, who was pronounced dead at the scene as a result of his injuries. Irish was not wearing a seatbelt at the time of the crash. Hettrick and his passenger were wearing their seatbelts.
- At 11:19 a.m. on Nov. 2, Kenai Police Department received a report of a collision near Mile 8 of the Kenai Spur Highway. The case was turned over to the Alaska Bureau of Highway Patrol after a fatality was confirmed. A silver Dodge Van driven by Ronald Malston, 76, of Kenai was heading toward Soldotna when a white Suzuki Grand Vitara, driven by Donald Eide Jr., 43, of Kenai, traveling the opposite direction went into his lane. Malston's vehicle T-boned the Suzuki. Eide's passenger, Rylene Oskolkoff, 14, of Kenai, received fatal injuries in the collision. Both Malston and Eide were transported to a local hospital to receive treatment for their injuries.