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Media Release

Nevada Traffic Fatalities Rise in First Quarter of 2012

CARSON CITY – The Nevada Departments of Public Safety and Transportation are reminding motorists to always drive safely after Nevada traffic fatalities rose by more than a third in the first three months of 2012 compared to the same time last year.

Preliminary numbers show that 57 traffic fatalities occurred on Nevada roads in the first quarter of 2012, an increase of 11 deaths over the same time last year. Traffic fatalities in Clark County have risen nearly 50 percent, and pedestrian deaths have risen 200 percent, in the same time.

“One death on Nevada roads is absolutely too many, and we are working together to reach zero fatalities,” Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) Director Susan Martinovich said. “Safety stakeholders across the state are implementing strategies to save lives. But, traffic safety ultimately relies on each and every driver.”

“No matter if you’re the driver or a passenger, wearing your seat belt is very critical every time you get in a vehicle.” explained Nevada Highway Patrol Trooper Loy Hixson. “The brief moment it takes to buckle up may save your life and it definitely will reduce the level of injuries sustained during an unplanned event (accident).”

Also, don’t drive while impaired. There is never a good reason to get behind the wheel while impaired. Make a plan, designate a sober driver and get home safe. Remember, Buzed Driving is Drunk Driving. And of course, always pay attention while driving. Get rid of distractions when operating a vehicle. Look up, look out and always drive safe.

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Overall, Nevada traffic fatalities dropped to 246 in 2011 after reaching an all-time high of 432 in 2006 when the Nevada Strategic Highway Safety Plan was developed. The plan brings Nevada traffic and safety advocates together to implement strategies for cutting the yearly traffic fatality average in half by 2030, with the ultimate goal of zero traffic deaths on Nevada roads.

“Nevada’s Zero Fatalities traffic safety goal is about making a decision each time you’re on the road as a driver, bicyclist or pedestrian,” said Traci Pearl of the Nevada Department of Public Safety Office of Traffic Safety. “How many deaths are OK in your family circle? Zero. It’s about deciding to always drive safely for yourself, your family and everyone else on the road.”

Motorists should always follow these safe driving tips:

Buckle Up/Click It or Ticket: *Nearly 50 percent of fatality crashes that Nevada law enforcement agencies investigated this past year involved unbuckled vehicle occupants. It only takes two seconds to click your seat belt, and the life you save might just be your own.*

Don’t Drive Impaired/Buzzed Driving is Drunk Driving: *On average, more than 50 people are arrested for driving under the influence every day in Nevada. A first DUI arrest will likely result in a 90-day loss of driving privileges, an impounded vehicle, legal fees, court fees, two days in jail and attendance at a Victim Impact Panel, with harsher penalties for subsequent offenses.*

Be Pedestrian Safe: *To date in 2012, there have been 12 pedestrian deaths on Nevada roads, double the number from the same time last year. Pedestrians should always cross safely, making eye contact with drivers, and drivers should always look for and yield to pedestrians.*

Stay in Your Lane/Eyes on the Road: *Distracted and/or sleepy driving are just one of the factors that can lead drivers to unintentionally leave their lane. Put away the distractions and drive with your full attention.*

Stop on Red: *In a recent five-year span, 467 people died in Nevada intersection crashes. Whether at a traffic signal or stop sign, always stop on red!*

To learn more about Nevada traffic safety, log on to www.zerofatalitiesnv.com or call (775) 684.7470.

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