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FLORIDA HIGHWAY FATALITIES DROP TO EIGHT-YEAR LOW

~ State crash records show decline in crashes and fatalities ~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Throughout Florida, more lives are being saved and fewer traffic crashes are occurring. The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles is pleased to highlight these facts as it releases its *Traffic Crash Statistics Report 2008* today. The Department compiles the crash data from traffic crash reports completed by law enforcement agencies statewide. The statistics indicate positive trends in the following areas:

- Traffic-related fatalities on Florida roadways decreased 7.4 percent between 2007 and 2008, from 3,221 to 2,983. This is the first time there have been less than 3,000 traffic fatalities in Florida since 2000.
- The number of deaths per 100 million miles traveled decreased to 1.5 last year - the lowest the state has ever reported and less than half the fatality rate of 1986.
- Alcohol-related traffic fatalities decreased six percent from 2007 to 2008. Despite the decline, drinking and driving contributed to nearly 40 percent of traffic fatalities.
- Motorcycle fatalities (drivers and passengers) decreased by 3.3 percent from 2007 to 2008.
- Pedestrian fatalities decreased by 5.3 percent between 2007 and 2008.
- Fatalities of teen drivers and passengers decreased by 22.5 percent from 2007 to 2008. Teen drivers (ages 15-19) had the highest rate of crash involvement at 399 per 10,000 licensed drivers.

“This is the third year in a row that Florida has seen a decrease in traffic fatalities, and we are excited to see such an improvement in the safety of Florida’s roadways. While these statistics are influenced by various factors, including economic conditions, increased safety of vehicles, and fewer vehicles on the road, it is also a testament to the work of the many safety partners in our state who share this responsibility with us,” said DHSMV Executive Director Electra Theodorides-Bustle. “Enhanced education and outreach efforts, vigilant law enforcement, and the strengthening of state traffic laws are effective in leading the way to a safer Florida.”

A complete copy of the *Traffic Crash Statistics Report 2008* is available at www.flhsmv.gov/html/safety.html.

The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles provides highway safety and security through excellence in service, education and enforcement. The Department is leading the way to a safer Florida through the efficient and professional execution of its core mission: the issuance of driver licenses, vehicle tags and titles and operation of the Florida Highway Patrol. To learn more about DHSMV and the services offered, visit www.flhsmv.gov.

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