

## Steer It and Clear It

### New campaign informs motorists to move vehicles after minors collisions



ROB THOMPSON/THE CONNECTOR

Transportation officials stand by a newly unveiled sign that tells motorists involved in minor traffic crashes to move their vehicles to the highway shoulder. From left, SCDOT Safety and Systems Engineer Dick Jenkins, Federal Highway Administration SC Division Administrator Bob Lee, SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry, SCDPS Director James K. Schweitzer, SCDOT Safety Director Terecia Wilson, SCDPS Colonel Russell Roark and Program Coordinator Amelia Glisson.

By Bob Kudelka

SCDOT, the South Carolina Division Office of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the South Carolina Department of Public Safety (SCDPS) have teamed up to educate the public about an important new highway safety law.

The "Steer It and Clear It" campaign is aimed at informing motorists of a new law requiring motorists involved in minor traffic crashes with no injuries to move their vehicles to the highway shoulder.

The "Steer It and Clear It" law protects motorists, law enforcement and emergency personnel while helping to keep travel lanes clear and moving freely.

SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry, South Carolina Division Administrator for FHWA Bob Lee, and SCDPS Director James K. Schweitzer spoke at a news conference March 29 at SCDOT Headquarters in Columbia. They unveiled a new sign that will be installed throughout the state's interstate highway system beginning in the next few weeks. The new highway signs read, "Crash Notice - If No Injury Move Vehicles From Roadway."

In addition, SCDOT, FHWA, and SCDPS are working together to distribute information brochures to the public and a CD-ROM to provide driver's education teachers.

"The number one priority of South Carolina Department of Transportation is safety, and we

are proud to partner with the South Carolina Department of Public Safety and FHWA on this important initiative," said SCDOT Executive Director Elizabeth S. Mabry.

"Everyone is in danger when vehicles are traveling at 55, 65, or 70 miles per hour and come to an abrupt stop due to a traffic incident prohibiting the use of a travel lane. Our goal is to prevent secondary collisions from occurring at the scene of crashes," said James Schweitzer, Director of the South Carolina Department of Public Safety.

"This new law states that if a driver of a vehicle is involved in a crash resulting in only damage to a vehicle, and if that vehicle is obstructing traffic, the driver of the vehicle shall make every reasonable effort

to move the vehicle out of the travel way." Schweitzer added.

Mabry said the new law is critical because 30 percent of all crashes occur as the result of another crash. "Moving your vehicle out of the travel way after a fender-bender reduces the chances of more serious crashes, and provides a safer work area for our incident responders."

Mabry said, "For every minute a freeway lane is closed, it takes four additional minutes for traffic to recover. Incidents on the highway account for 60 percent of urban congestion."

FHWA Division Administrator Bob Lee said, "I am very pleased that South Carolina has joined the ranks of several other southeastern states that have enacted similar laws to improve safety and enhance

the efficiency of highway operations. Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida already have similar laws. Steer It and Clear It will help to reduce total congestion; save time and fuel; and lead to decreased vehicle emissions. It will allow for more reliable, predictable, and consistent travel, and ultimately improve safety."

The General Assembly passed ACT 286 "Steer It and Clear It" on June 3, 2004. Governor Sanford signed it on July 22, 2004. The law in its entirety can be found in the 1976 South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 2, 56-5-1220. Since that time, SCDOT, FHWA, and SCDPS have been designing the new signs, and developing materials to educate the public about the law.

## 2005 STEP-21 class supports March of Dimes

In keeping with tradition of prior classes, the Step 21 class of 2005 supported the March of Dimes national campaign, which is focused on helping premature babies.

Donations received from the campaign aid with research funding, education and support of families, and advocating for better access to insurance to name a few. March of Dimes chose this cause due to the alarming increase of premature babies—29% increase in the last two decades.

All across the state, the Step 21 class of 2005 hit the streets in

search of people who were willing to help babies who are not able to help themselves. We made a grand slam with our donation efforts. At the end of the fund raising campaign, we received donations totaling \$4,638.00. This was accomplished by selling "shoes", breakfast and hot dogs sales, candy and walk donations. The Step 21 class collected donations, walked in the "Walks", and exceeded our goal by more than \$700.00.

Thank you fellow SCDOT employees for making our contributions to the March of Dimes a resounding success!



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Step-21 Class members show the cash for the March of Dimes with a breakfast sale in the basement. From left: Gail Dia, Kimberly Murdaugh, Stacy Eargle, Tabitha Crawford, Jeffery Jordan and Lance Hall.