



TRAFFIC SAFETY NEWS RELEASE

TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

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REALISTIC DISTRACTED DRIVING CRASH VIDEO RELEASED TO RAISE AWARENESS

ROMEO, Michigan --- The Traffic Improvement Association of Michigan (TIA), and its partners, hosted a press conference earlier today at Romeo High School to kick off the "Remembering Ally: Distracted Driving Awareness Campaign." A powerful and realistic video, filmed for TIA by the Michigan Department of Transportation, was shown at the event.

"Distracted driving is a serious, life-threatening behavior that steals loved ones from us and puts innocent drivers in danger every time they hit the road," said Jim Santilli, executive director of TIA.

The awareness campaign includes a TV public service announcement, a poster, a multimedia presentation, and wristbands. These materials will be available to high schools, colleges and universities, and law enforcement agencies in Michigan, and nationally using the TIA website and social media sites. The new video, and PSA, can be viewed online at www.youtube.com/tiamichigan.

The campaign was named in memory of Ally Zimmerman, a 16-year-old Romeo High School student and Oakland County resident, who was hit by a distracted driver on December 28, 2010. She later died from her injuries. More than twenty law enforcement agencies are participating in the campaign, in addition to numerous high school and college students, concerned citizens and businesses, and members of Ally's family.

"We must continue to educate our young drivers even after they receive their operator's license," said Macomb County Sheriff Anthony Wickersham. "Through education and peer support, we can produce safer drivers for Michigan, and ensure that we protect the future of tomorrow."

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Speakers at the press conference included: Santilli; Wickersham; Michael Witter, regional administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Michael Prince, director of the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning; Captain Monica Yesh, district commander of the Michigan State Police; Steve Kenner, global director of automotive safety at Ford Motor Company; and, Garrett Marcum, Ally's brother.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 5,474 people were killed in crashes involving driver distraction, and an estimated 448,000 were injured in 2009. That's 16 percent of all fatal crashes and 20 percent of all injury crashes for that year.

"Drivers who use a hand-held device are 4 times more likely to get into a crash serious enough to cause injury," said Witter, who was representing U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood at the press conference. "Texting drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash."

Numerous agencies were involved in the development of the realistic distracted driving crash video and public service announcement. For a complete list, and more information on the awareness campaign, visit www.tiami.us/rememberingly.html.

ABOUT THE TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

Headquartered in the City of Auburn Hills, the Traffic Improvement Association of Michigan (TIA) is a non-profit traffic safety agency that serves approximately seventy member communities in Michigan. Created in 1967 by more than two-hundred business and government leaders, TIA's mission is to identify traffic safety trends that negatively impact society, and develop solutions that can be implemented to save lives, reduce injuries, and improve mobility in Michigan. The Board of Directors consists of representatives from the accounting, automotive, civil engineering, education, law enforcement, and public official sectors. TIA's successful traffic management model is unique worldwide. In a 2006 Federal Highway Administration publication titled, "Innovative Intersection Safety Improvement Strategies and Management Practices: A Domestic Scan," TIA and the Road Commission for Oakland County were recognized as a best practice. As a result of a strong partnership between TIA, the Road Commission for Oakland County, law enforcement, and member communities, Oakland County roads are now among the safest in the world.

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