

Transportation News

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 22, 2010

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Illinois Transportation Secretary Announces Fewer Injuries in Crashes Involving Deer

IDOT/IDNR Partner to Prepare Motorists for Increased Deer Activity This Fall

SPRINGFIELD - Illinois Transportation Secretary Gary Hannig announced today a significant reduction in injuries from crashes involving deer statewide. The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) partnered to remind motorists to be alert for increased deer activity in the fall season.

Statistics show that the number of people injured in crashes has decreased from 842 in 2007 to 752 in 2008 and 708 in 2009. Six people were killed in Illinois in 2009, due to vehicle crashes involving deer.

“The number of injuries resulting from crashes involving deer has dropped significantly in the last few years and we want to see that trend continue,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Gary Hannig. “Crashes involving deer are very difficult to avoid, which is why we strongly urge motorists to slow down, be alert and always wear a safety belt to help prevent injury or even death. We also strongly encourage motorcyclists to wear a helmet to help prevent injuries in crashes.”

Following standard safety practices can save lives, in the event of crashes involving deer. A nationwide study of vehicle-animal crashes conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety shows that 60% of people killed riding in vehicles were not wearing seat belts, and 65% of motorcyclists killed were not wearing helmets.

“As the leaves and temperatures drop in Illinois, motorists need to be on the lookout for deer on the roadways, especially at dawn and dusk when both drivers and deer are most active,” said IDNR Director Marc Miller. “It’s everyone’s responsibility to stay safe on the road. If you see a deer nearby, alert your fellow motorists by gently tapping your brakes or flashing your headlights. Help yourself and help each other this fall and winter.”

The top 10 Illinois counties for deer-vehicle crashes in 2009 were:

Cook – 639

Peoria – 483

Madison – 478

Pike – 470

Sangamon-456

Fulton – 433

LaSalle – 409

Will – 401

Lake – 367

Kane – 361

Suggestions for motorists to avoid deer-vehicle crashes include:

- *Be particularly cautious at dusk and dawn, when deer are most active.*
- *Reduce speed and be prepared to stop on roads where deer may be present.*
- *Deer may cross the roadway and double back across the road surface. Make sure deer have moved away, before proceeding.*
- *Be mindful that several others may follow a single deer near or across a road.*
- *Keep track of locations where deer have been seen in the past, to avoid being surprised by deer crossing roads.*
- *Avoid swerving into oncoming traffic or off the road if deer are on the roadway. Instead, slow to a stop and wait for the deer to move along.*
- *Drivers encountering deer on the roadway should try flashing their headlights from bright to dim or honking their horn to encourage the deer to move on.*
- *Drivers can alert other motorists to the presence of deer by tapping their brakes.*

A law regarding the reporting threshold for property damage crashes was amended on January 1, 2009. The change in law prevents an accurate comparison of 2009 and later data involving **total** and **property damage only crashes** with such crashes reported in previous years.

The amendment does not affect the reporting of injury or fatal crashes.

Under a newly implemented road kill policy, individuals who wish to claim a deer killed in a vehicle collision must report the possession of road-kill deer to the IDNR through the internet or by phone. Individuals claiming road kill deer must report the possession within 24 hours using the new online IDNR Road Kill Deer Reporting Form, which can be found through this link on the department's website: http://dnr.state.il.us/law3/images/Road_kill.pdf.

Possession may also be reported to the IDNR by calling (217) 782-6431 no later than 4:30 p.m. on the next business day. Individuals involved in deer-vehicle accidents who do not want to take possession of the deer are not required to file a report with the IDNR.

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