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October and November Are Dangerous Months For Deer/Vehicle Crashes

(LANSING, MI) — One in every five motor vehicle crashes in Michigan involves deer. With the two most dangerous months for deer crashes approaching — October and November — a traffic safety coalition is unveiling a new video aimed at deer crash safety messages for young people.

“Don’t Veer for Deer” will be distributed to driver education programs throughout the state, according to Lori Conarton, Michigan Deer Crash Coalition Chair.

In 2013, there were 49,205 deer vehicle crashes, up from 48,918 during 2013. Oakland County had the most deer/vehicle crashes with 1,801 crashes. The remaining top nine were Jackson (1,480), Kent (1,447), Lapeer (1,229), Eaton (1,076), Montcalm (1,073), Sanilac (1,071), Calhoun (1,059), Washtenaw (1,058) and Clinton (1,056).

Last year, 12 motorists were killed and another 1,200 were injured in deer/vehicle crashes.

“Most injuries and deaths occur when motorists veer to avoid the deer,” said Conarton, who represents the Insurance Institute of Michigan on the coalition. “So when a deer crash is unavoidable, it is important to have your hands on the steering wheel, slow down and stay in your own lane.”

The state has a 1.75 million-strong deer herd. Deer frequently travel in groups. If you see one deer cross the road, chances are there are more nearby.

“Deer are often seen calmly feeding near highways, but when they panic, they may appear in front of your windshield in no time at all,” said Brent Rudolph, Deer Program Leader, Michigan Department of Natural Resources. “Drivers must be prepared – look for other deer following the first in a line and keep an eye for deer doubling back once they have moved out of a traffic lane.”

Safety experts say motorists can help avoid dangerous encounters with deer.

“With the changing of the seasons, deer are on the move and motorists need to be alert,” Secretary of State Ruth Johnson said. “Wearing a seat belt, keeping your eyes on the road and taking extra caution when driving at dawn or dusk will help drivers minimize the risks of a vehicle-deer crash.”

The Coalition offers the following safety tips:

- Stay awake, alert and sober;
- Always wear a safety belt
- Be especially alert at dawn and dusk;
- If you see one deer, slow down. Chances are there are others nearby.
- If a crash is unavoidable, don't swerve, brake firmly, hold onto the steering wheel, stay in your lane and bring your car to a controlled stop.

The MDCC – a broad affiliation of groups representing law enforcement, traffic safety, insurance, natural resources, higher education and strategic regional planning in the public and private sectors – seeks to increase awareness of the problem among the driving public and reduce the number of deaths and injuries occurring each year on state roads. Members are: AAA Michigan • Insurance Institute of Michigan • Michigan Department of Natural Resources • Michigan Department of State • Michigan Department of Transportation • Michigan Driver & Traffic Safety Education • Michigan Sheriffs' Association • Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning • SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments • State Farm Insurance and Traffic Improvement Association of Michigan. For more information, visit the coalition's website, www.michigandecrash.com and join us on Facebook.

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	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>			
			Delta	613	584
			Dickinson	518	394
Alcona	375	435	Eaton	1,000	1,076
Alger	120	105	Emmet	519	490
Allegan	956	866	Genesee	995	952
Alpena	341	360	Gladwin	413	419
Antrim	402	424	Gogebic	102	79
Arenac	363	372	Grand Traverse	559	568
Baraga	205	198	Gratiot	914	933
Barry	734	586	Hillsdale	687	807
Bay	390	413	Houghton	339	191
Benzie	286	290	Huron	1,082	967
Berrien	728	739	Ingham	1,065	1,044
Branch	673	805	Ionia	630	532
Calhoun	997	1,059	Iosco	188	258
Cass	424	401	Iron	388	310
Charlevoix	498	532	Isabella	989	917
Cheboygan	505	408	Jackson	1,281	1,480
Chippewa	382	316	Kalamazoo	933	989
Clare	458	541	Kalkaska	227	267
Clinton	1,032	1,056	Kent	1,572	1,447
Crawford	274	288	Keweenaw	53	33

Lake	243	258
Lapeer	1,175	1,229
Leelanau	349	330
Lenawee	580	706
Livingston	669	785
Luce	118	94
Mackinac	257	317
Macomb	479	516
Manistee	442	465
Marquette	431	392
Mason	677	723
Mecosta	852	820
Menominee	546	417
Midland	848	865
Missaukee	382	412
Monroe	336	348
Montcalm	1,182	1,073
Montmorency	200	222
Muskegon	514	490
Newaygo	578	498
Oakland	1,683	1,801
Oceana	491	445
Ogemaw	444	439
Ontonagon	272	210
Osceola	630	648
Oscoda	141	180
Otsego	231	230
Ottawa	1,013	944
Presque Isle	363	382
Roscommon	296	364
Saginaw	874	954
St. Clair	702	749
St. Joseph	472	464
Sanilac	999	1,071
Schoolcraft	214	188
Shiawassee	769	881
Tuscola	903	874
Van Buren	547	592
Washtenaw	925	1,058
Wayne	412	410
Wexford	469	430
TOTAL	48,918	49,205