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UDOT/UHP Announce Record Low Number of Traffic Fatalities in 2010

SALT LAKE CITY – UDOT, the Utah Highway Patrol and Zero Fatalities presented the fatal crash statistics for 2010 today. The report identifies the major causes of Utah's traffic fatalities, which ages have the highest number of fatalities and where they occurred.

Utah traffic fatalities are at the lowest point they have been in 36 years, with 235 fatalities (including pedestrians and motorcycle fatalities). That represents a 17 percent drop since 2005 and a 37 percent drop since 2000. Behaviors contributing to deadly crashes have also dropped since 2005; with fatigue-related fatalities dropping by 61 percent, a 21 percent drop in speed-related fatalities and an 11 percent drop in fatalities attributed to lack of seat belts.

"We do our best to engineer the roads for safety and make improvements that will prevent crashes," said Carlos Braceras, UDOT deputy director. "But there's only so much that we can do. We can't make you put down that cell phone. We can't make you give the keys to someone who hasn't been drinking. We can't make you put on your seat belt. That's up to everyone who gets in a car. Reducing crashes on our roads is a shared responsibility."

Major Mike Rapich from the Utah Highway Patrol mentioned the importance of seat belts, saying, "Lack of seat belt use contributed to nearly 40 percent of fatalities on Utah's roads last year. It amazes me that some people still fail to wear their seat belts. This year, the Utah Highway Patrol and Utah Highway Safety Office will make extra efforts to focus on helping the public understand just how important it is to buckle up."

Eighteen year-old Mallorie Martinez from Price knows the importance of wearing her seat belt. At the event, she explained how she was distracted by her iPod when she hit the car in front of her, causing her to roll her car off the side of the road. "I'll never look at my iPod again while I'm driving," she said. "It could have been so much worse if I wasn't buckled. My seat belt saved my life."

To view the complete 2010 traffic fatalities report, visit ZeroFatalities.com.

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