

Wisconsin State Assembly

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 13, 2003

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Legislators Call for Safer Roads Task Force

Traffic Deaths Continue to Soar

Madison - On the heels of recent news that Wisconsin is on pace to see 900 motor vehicle fatalities by year end, two legislators are calling for a task force to come up with solutions to the deadly trend. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation last week announced more than 500 people have been killed on the roads so far this year, the earliest the 500-death threshold has been reached since 1981. In that year 927 people died in traffic crashes.

“I have been involved in highway safety issues for years,” said State Representative Jerry Petrowski (Marathon). “We need to stop skirting the edges of the traffic safety issues and come up with solutions that are going to save peoples lives.”

State Representative Garey Bies (Sister Bay), a former law enforcement officer, echoed the need for real solutions and said one of the difficulties in reducing traffic deaths is that driver behavior must be changed. “People are dying and we must do a better job at stopping this trend. What is extremely tragic is that so many of the fatalities are preventable.”

“There are so many factors that come into play,” added Petrowski.

Drivers are overloaded with distractions, vehicles are lighter and many do not withstand impacts like vehicles from years ago, our lives seem busier and patience is often lost on the roadway.

“It is tragic and very troubling that we are approaching a record number of deaths, even in the midst of increased public awareness efforts about seat belt use and drunk driving standards,” said Petrowski.

Petrowski and Bies agreed they envision a task force that brings together experts and policy makers to develop stronger means for reducing crashes and reducing deaths.

“If someone walked into an office building and gunned down 900 people the outcry would be deafening,” said Bies. “Yet, where is the outcry for all the people that have been killed on our roads? Families and loved ones are crying. It is time their cries are heard.”

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