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# Zone Safety Stressed This Week

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*By Annabeth Miller,  
ShowMe Times Editor*

JEFFERSON CITY - A new face and voice for work zone safety will be taking the messages statewide this year.

Standing at an impressive 11 feet tall and made from recycled orange and white barrels is the new statewide spokesperson - Barrel Bob.

"Barrel Bob has been immensely popular in Kansas City and has really helped area motorists to pay attention and slow down in work zones," said Don Hillis, director of system management for the Missouri Department of Transportation. "We thought he could help us educate the rest of the state in a positive way and take our current theme of 'Don't Barrel Through Work Zones' even further."

Motorists around the state will begin hearing Barrel Bob's safety messages on the radio during Work Zone Awareness Week April 4-8. Throughout the summer, radio and internet banner ads, safety advertisements on fuel pump tops and information on the electronic message boards will remind motorists to drive safely in work zones.

State officials are joining MoDOT in promoting the work zone safety message.

“As spring finally begins to break through this long winter season, many of us take to the roads to experience new places while our road crews, engineers and construction workers get to work on building and repairing our roadways,” State Sen. Rob Mayer, R-Dexter, said. “As we set out on our journeys, we should be mindful of being safe when we travel, especially when it comes to work zones we may encounter.”

As a part of the week’s events, taking place from April 4-8, the Southeast District of MoDOT enlisted the help of area legislators for a Work Zone Awareness Wall of Fame on Flickr.

MoDOT’s Hillis stressed the importance of work zone safety.

"Work zone safety is personal to all of us," Hillis said. "We want our employees to go home safe and sound every night, and we want motorists to get where they're going quickly and safely."

In 2010, 15 people were killed in Missouri work zones, an increase from 2009 when 13 people were killed. There were 1,033 people injured in 2010 in Missouri work zones, compared to 676 in 2009. This is an increase of almost 53 percent. Between 2006 and 2010, 64 people were killed and 4,294 people were injured in Missouri work zones.

Since 2000, 15 MoDOT employees have been killed in the line of duty.

The top five contributing circumstances for work zone crashes in 2010 were following too closely, inattention, improper lane usage/change, driving too fast for conditions and failure to yield. In 2010, of the 819 traffic fatalities, 632 were vehicle occupant fatalities and 68 percent of them were not wearing a seat belt.

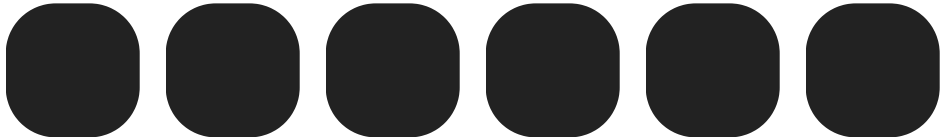
"We're again reminding the public to rate work zones they've driven through because that first-hand information will help us make adjustments and increase safety for motorists and our work crews," Hillis said. To fill out a Work Zone Customer Survey and help improve MoDOT work zones, visit [www.modot.org/workzones/comments.htm](http://www.modot.org/workzones/comments.htm).

For more information about construction projects statewide, look for work zone locations on MoDOT's interactive traveler information map at <http://www.modot.org/> or call 888-ASK-MODOT (275-6636).

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