



# INFORMATION RELEASE

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### **Arkansans a Furlong Closer Toward Zero Deaths on U.S. Highway 70**

**SALINE & GARLAND COUNTIES (1-15)** – Approximately a month after establishing additional safety measures on the stretch of U.S. Highway 70 between Hot Springs and Interstate 30, officials of the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD) and the Arkansas State Police (ASP) are still urging drivers to be cautious.

The start of horse racing season at Oaklawn Racing & Gaming is sure to bring more traffic to this highway, and both AHTD and ASP officials want to take this opportunity to urge motorists to take safety seriously.

“Troopers will continue their stepped-up patrols along this route with an emphasis to stop and ticket speeding violators and suspected drunk drivers,” said Captain Forrest Marks, commander of the Arkansas State Police Highway Patrol, Troop K. “Speed typically proves to be a contributing factor in most rural highway fatal crashes. This is why we will be closely monitoring the expected increase in traffic as the horse racing season continues in the coming weeks.”

In December, AHTD set up three radar speed trailers to alert drivers if they are exceeding the speed limit. Additionally, ASP stepped up its enforcement along this route. These measures have yielded encouraging results.

In the past month there have been zero fatal crashes along this corridor and the 85th percentile speed has dropped approximately 5-10 miles per hour (mph), but is still over the posted speed limit of 55 mph. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed is a measure of what free-flowing traffic is traveling at or below.

“We are encouraged by the results after a month of having our safety measures in place,” stated Scott Bennett, Director of Highways and Transportation, “but we are still concerned that the 85th percentile speed is above the posted limit. It only takes one unsafe driver to cause a tragic accident.”

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In January 2014, Arkansas launched a "Toward Zero Deaths" (TZD) program. There are about 500 roadway fatalities each year in Arkansas, but the TZD program goal is to eventually shrink that number to zero. The TZD implementation team includes the AHTD, the Arkansas State Police, and the Arkansas Department of Health. The TZD program promotes an interdisciplinary approach to reducing traffic crashes, injuries and deaths on the roadways by employing proven countermeasures through education, enforcement, engineering and emergency services strategies.

Additional travel information can be found at [IDriveArkansas.com](http://IDriveArkansas.com) or [ArkansasHighways.com](http://ArkansasHighways.com). Additional highway safety information can be found at [tzdarkansas.org](http://tzdarkansas.org) or [asp.arkansas.gov](http://asp.arkansas.gov). You can also follow us on [Twitter @AHTD](https://twitter.com/AHTD) and follow TZD Arkansas [@TZDarkansas](https://twitter.com/TZDarkansas) or [facebook/TZDarkansas](https://facebook.com/TZDarkansas).

