

April 5, 2007

MDOT event brings awareness to work zone safety

The Clarion-Ledger

The Mississippi Department of Transportation kicks off the eighth annual National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week today.

The event aims to make motorists aware of the dangers of speeding recklessly through work zones.

At 11 a.m., MDOT officials are asking citizens to walk for work zone safety. Participants should meet at Smith Park in downtown Jackson where they will register and receive a T-shirt for the walk. From there, attendees will walk a course from Smith Park around the Capital, with the walk concluding at Smith Park.

Because of the 1987 Four-Lane Highway Program and other legislatively mandated programs, highway construction and reconstruction has reached an all-time peak in Mississippi, according to MDOT Executive Director Larry L. "Butch" Brown.

"With dozens of crews working on highway projects daily, it is paramount that motorists slow down and obey all signage in work zones," he said. "We can improve safety for workers, pedestrians, and construction workers by exercising caution and following good safety practices in highway work zones."

More than 40,000 people are injured each year as a result of motor vehicle crashes in work zones. Over the last five years, the number of persons killed in motor vehicle crashes in work zones has risen from 989 in 2001 to 1,074 in 2005. Eighty-five percent of those killed in a work zone are drivers or occupants.

In case of rain, the event will take place on April 10.