

## Work zone safety ads show faces of grieving

Campaign features family who lost father due to reckless driving in construction site

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COLONIE -- If a hefty fine won't do it, maybe a heart-wrenching look at the potential consequences will.

This year, the state's appeal to motorists to slow down and stay alert in construction work zones will include a far more personal touch with five television public service announcements featuring the family of Wayne Bonsell, a 39-year-old husband and father who was killed in a work zone crash in May 2005.

The Binghamton highway worker was one of three paving company employees who died when a speeding charter bus zoomed into a work zone and struck a tractor-trailer on Interstate 81 in Broome County.

The television spots feature those who Bonsell loved talking about life without him. One spot tells how he wasn't alive to see the first no-hitter baseball game pitched by his eldest son.

State Police and transportation officials said at a news conference Wednesday that they hope the messages, which will air this spring and summer, will reinforce other work zone safety efforts that include stepped-up enforcement, the doubling of fines and a \$50 surcharge that motorists who violate traffic laws in work zones now face.

Last year, there were 96 motor vehicle intrusions into state Department of Transportation construction and maintenance work zones, which resulted in 139 injuries and seven deaths, according to the DOT.

Those injured and killed included motorists and their passengers, but speeding, driver inattention and, increasingly, road rage are adding to the danger for workers on the job repairing highways, officials said.

"They're working to protect our safety. We should take a few moments to protect theirs," said acting DOT Commissioner Astrid C. Glynn.

Last year, New York stepped up its enforcement of work zone speeding violations. More than 23,000 tickets were written for violations in and around work zones last year, said Maj. David Salmon, director of traffic services. That was more than double the 10,000 tickets State Police officials reported writing in 2005.

Troopers with Troop G wrote 956 tickets in Capital Region work zones last year, and officials warn that increased radar equipment and staff should give motorists even greater concern this summer.

The Thruway Authority's budget this year funds 20 additional Troop T officers to patrol in work zones, said Executive Director Michael Fleischer. About 50 construction projects are planned on the Thruway highway network this year, he said.

In the Capital Region, the major projects expected to extend through the season include reconstruction of the I-87 bridge near Northway Exit 5, which includes shifting lanes and traffic patterns; another Northway bridge reconstruction of a span over D&H Railroad tracks north of Exit 15 in Saratoga County, and paving of Interstate 90 in Rensselaer County later in the season.

But DOT officials also caution motorists to be on the lookout for crews working on short-term maintenance projects, which can crop up with little warning.

"Our maintenance work is one or two days, so the motoring public may not be as aware," said DOT spokesman Peter Van Keuren.

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