



## **News Release**

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## **GOVERNOR MCDONNELL DECLARES SEPTEMBER 12 – 18 BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN AWARENESS WEEK**

**RICHMOND, VA (September 7, 2010)** – Governor Bob McDonnell has proclaimed the week of September 12 – 18, 2010 as Virginia Bicyclist and Pedestrian Awareness Week, a move supported by safety advocates committed to protecting all travelers throughout the Commonwealth.

DRIVE SMART Virginia, BikeWalk Virginia and DMV: The Virginia Highway Safety Office, have joined the Governor to support efforts that raise awareness about the importance of sharing the road in order to reduce the number of crashes, injuries and deaths in the State. As Americans are becoming more concerned with their health and the environment, bicycling and walking are increasingly viewed as sustainable, inexpensive and efficient forms of transportation.

In 2009, 84 people died walking or cycling on Virginia's roadways. In addition, 607 cyclists and 1,402 pedestrians were injured. Many crashes can be attributed to a lack of knowledge of traffic laws and/or to high risk behaviors. "It is our goal to raise awareness about the importance of sharing the road and about road users showing respect for one another," said Janet Brooking, Executive Director of DRIVE SMART Virginia. "For example, many people don't realize that a bicycle is considered a vehicle in Virginia and has the same duties and rights as a motor vehicle on the road." This means cyclists and motorists have to obey all traffic signs, signals, lights and markings. A bicycle should always travel in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic.

Taking the time to more clearly understand one's role and responsibility on the road is a key factor in keeping all travelers safer on the roadways. "With area schools back in session and many students walking, cycling or driving to school, it is critical to follow traffic laws and be particularly alert on the road," said Dr. Kimberly Perry, Executive Director of BikeWalk Virginia.

In addition, it's critical to make sure that all safety precautions are used. Helmets and reflective clothing can help keep pedestrians and cyclists safe, while safety belts protect motorists. "Long ago, I jumped on a bicycle without wearing a helmet. In an instant that poor decision led to a concussion after a crash" said DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb. "It was the worst way to learn the importance of wearing the proper gear while riding. Now, as DMV Commissioner and the Governor's Highway Safety Representative, I share my experience with hopes that other casual cyclists will make the decision to be safe. Just as you click your seat belt every time you get in a car, snap on a helmet every time you ride a bike. Regardless of your method of transportation, no matter how safe you're trying to be, you face potential dangers at every turn. On a bike, wearing a helmet is your best protection from serious injury."

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Sept 12- 18, 2010 is Virginia Bicyclist and Pedestrian Awareness Week. Safety advocates call for citizens to share the road with respect and to use safety precautions to help reduce crashes and injuries on the roadways of Virginia.

### **LAWS AND SAFETY TIPS FOR BICYCLISTS, PEDESTRIANS AND MOTORISTS:**

A key goal of Bicyclist and Pedestrian Awareness Week is to educate citizens understand the importance of sharing the road responsibly and with respect.

- Motorists should approach and pass bicyclists at a reasonable speed and allow at least two feet between their vehicles and bicyclists when passing.
- Motorists must yield to pedestrians and permit them to cross the roads safely.
- Motorists are required to come to a full stop for a blind person with a cane or guide dog.
- Pedestrians should use sidewalks if available. When walking on roads, walk facing traffic and travel on extreme edge.
- Pedestrians and cyclists can improve safety by wearing bright colors during the day and reflective material or blinking lights at night. Light colored clothing is slightly helpful in making you visible at night, reflective tape or reflective fabric is much better.
- Bicycles are considered vehicles when ridden on roads and streets and therefore must follow rules that apply to motor vehicles, including riding on the right side with traffic and yielding to pedestrians.
- Bicyclists must obey all traffic signs, signals, lights and markings.
- When riding at night, bicyclists must use rear reflectors; if using roads with speed limits of 35mph or more, use red taillights visible 600 feet.
- If involved in a crash, stop to determine injury or damage; report personal information and property damage to police within 24 hours.
- Violation of a traffic law is a civil penalty or traffic infraction punishable by a fine or points against your driver's license.

*Now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> year, Bicyclist and Pedestrian Awareness Week is a DRIVE SMART Virginia and Bike Walk Virginia initiative with approximately 160 companies and organization partners statewide.*

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***DRIVE SMART Virginia and BikeWalk Virginia coordinated the 2010 Bicyclist and Pedestrian Awareness Week in Virginia. Safety Partners include:***

*28 Media, AAA Tidewater Virginia, Active Williamsburg Alliance, Adventures Bike Shop, Alfa Insurance, Alliance for Community Choice in Transportation, Allstate Insurance, Annandale High School, Anthem, Arlington County Police Department, Arlington County: BikeArlington, Ashland Police Dept., Atlantic Transportation Services, Bedford Police Department, Blackstone Police Department, Blue Ridge Parkway National Park Service, Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce, Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital Level 1 Trauma Center, Carver Elementary, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Chesapeake Police Dept., Chesterfield County Police Dept., Chesapeake Police Department, Christiansburg Police Dept., Citizens Telephone Cooperative, City of Charlottesville, City of Danville Police Department, City of Falls Church, City of Virginia Beach, City of Williamsburg, CNA Insurance, Colony Insurance, CommonHealth, Commonwealth Sports Medicine, Community Design Assistance Center at Virginia Tech, Culpeper County High School, Culpeper Police Dept., Cyclist for the Bay, Danville Parks & Recreation, Deep Creek High School, DMV: The Virginia Highway Safety Office, DR100, Drive Safe Hampton Roads, Dumfries PD, Electric Ink Graphic Design, Emporia PD, Erie Insurance Group, Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling, Fairfax County Dept. of Transportation, Fairfax County Police Dept., Falls Church Police Department, Farmers Insurance Group, Front Royal Police Department, Frontier Culture Museum, GEICO, George Mason University, Gloucester County Monday Night Bike Group, Gloucester High School, Gloucester Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Godsey & Gibb Associates, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys, Inc., GRTC Transit System, Grundy High School, Hampton Health Dept., Hampton Police Dept., Harrisonburg Police Dept., Haymarket Police Department, Henrico County Police, Henry County Public Schools, Heritage High School, Herndon Police Dept., Horizon Milling, JD Miles and Sons, Kenbridge Construction, Kettle Run High School, La Crosse Police Dept., Law Offices of Jay R. Peluso P.C., Liberty Mutual Insurance, Little River Elementary School, Longwood University Cycling Club, Loudoun County Office of Transportation Services, MadCyclists, Mathews High School, Mobjack Bay Coffee Roasters, LLC, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, National Institute for Fitness & Sport, Nationwide Insurance, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Navy Expeditionary Combat Command, New Kent County Sheriff's Dept, New Market Police Department, Norfolk State University Police Department, Northumberland*

County Sheriff's Office, Norton City Police Dept., Old Dominion University, Osage BioEnergy, Parsons Brinckerhoff, Partnership for Smarter Growth, Patrick Henry Community College, Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office, Poquoson Police Dept., Portsmouth Police Dept., Powhatan County Public School, Prince William County Police Dept., Printpack, Inc., Progress Printing, Progressive Insurance Group, Project Single Moms- Hampton Affiliate, Purcellville Police Dept., REI, Remington Police Department, Richmond Area Bicycling Association, Richmond Pro Cycling, Richmond Triathlon Club, Roanoke Fire-EMS, Robert E. Lee High School, Rockingham Group, Safe Kids Virginia, Salem City Schools, Sam Perry Photography, Sandy Creek Pet Resort, SaveShoreDriveDay.net, Smithfield Police Department, Southwest Virginia Community College, State Farm Insurance, Studio Organics, Team Natures Path, Teens Drive Smart, Tennaco, The Town of Purcellville, Thomas Rutherford, Inc., Thompson Trucking Inc., Town of Berryville, Town of Herndon Police Department, Town of Orange Police, Town of Purcellville, Truck Enterprises, VAMAC, Inc., Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police, Virginia Automobile Dealers Association, Virginia Capital Trail Foundation, Virginia Dept. of Health, Division of Injury and Violence Prevention, Virginia Dept. of Labor & Industry, Virginia Dept. of Transportation, Virginia Farm Bureau, Virginia Motor Vehicle Dealer Board, Virginia Operation Lifesaver, Virginia Retirement System, Virginia State Parks, Virginia State Police, Virginia Tech, Virtexco Corporation, VML Insurance Programs, West Point Police Dept., Wythe County Sheriff's Office, Youth of Virginia Speak Out