

ODOT reminder: Safe driving conserves fuel, saves lives

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

The Oregon Department of Transportation is encouraging motorists, during the busy summer traveling season and beyond, to practice safe driving and conserve fuel at the same time. Studies show the faster you drive, the more fuel you use: and speed is the number one factor in crash fatalities in Oregon. So "slow down" is the phrase everyone is using. "With the Fourth of July falling on a Wednesday this year, we're anticipating heavy traffic on the weekends before and after the holiday, as well as during the week," said Troy Costales, ODOT Safety Division administrator. "We thought this would be a great chance to remind people that driving within posted speed limits helps save fuel as well as lives." In 2006, fatalities in Oregon resulting from vehicle crashes dropped 2.1 percent, from 487 in 2005 to 477. Safety advocates continue to be diligent, however. A new campaign running throughout the state focuses on the dangers of speeding and tailgating. Billboards, bus boards and public service announcements are reminding drivers to "slow down and back off." "Asking people to slow down fits right in with nearly everyone's desire to save gas," Costales said. "And our ultimate goal is to save lives." The U.S. Department of Energy offers consumers several tips for conserving fuel:

Stay within posted speed limits. For example, driving 65 mph rather than 55 mph increases fuel consumption by 15 - 20 percent.

Remove excess weight. An extra 100 pounds in your vehicle could reduce your mpg by up to 2 percent.

Drive sensibly and don't tailgate. If you practice safe driving, you can avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration, improving your fuel economy by 5 - 10 percent.

Combine errands. Several short trips from a cold start can use twice as much fuel as one trip covering the same distance when the engine is warm. Visit the "Drive Less. Save More." Web site for more information, www.driveless.savemore.com.

For more tips on saving gas, visit www.fueleconomy.gov, and for more information about transportation safety in Oregon, visit www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/index.shtml.

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