



## **ODOT Safety Study reveals Dangerous Deer Accidents in Urban and Rural Regions**

**COLUMBUS** (*Wednesday, October 7, 2009*) – Updated safety statistics from the Ohio Department of Transportation reveal that motorists in both rural and urban regions of the state need to watch out for dangerous - and sometimes deadly - accidents involving deer-vehicle crashes.

The concern is even greater as the seasons change from summer to fall, when the average number of deer-vehicle crashes typically jumps 200 percent from September to October.

In 2008, there were a total of 24,582 deer-vehicle crashes reported in Ohio, resulting in six people killed and 1,127 injured. Nearly half of the accidents occurred between the beginning of October and the end of December. The ODOT safety study shows there were 5,176 accidents in November 2008 alone - roughly 172 accidents each day.

The study also reveals that deer-vehicle crashes are not limited to rural areas of the state. In fact, the total deer crashes were greatest in the Akron area (601 crashes in Summit County) and the Cincinnati area (593 crashes in Hamilton County) last year.

Because many deer-vehicle collisions go unreported to police and local authorities, the actual number of crashes throughout Ohio may be as high as 60,000 each year.

Fewer daylight hours, combined with the increased movement of deer due to mating season and hunting season, increases the risk of collisions between deer and vehicles. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) advises motorists to use these driving tips to help avoid collisions with deer:

- **Watch for deer-crossing signs and drive with extreme caution, especially in the posted areas.**
- **If you see one deer near the road, expect that others will follow.**
- **Watch for deer especially at dawn and after sunset. About 20 percent of these crashes occur in early morning, while more than half occur between 5 p.m. and midnight.**
- **Always wear safety belts and drive at safe, sensible speeds for road conditions.**

If a vehicle strikes a deer, motorists should report the crash by calling local law enforcement, the sheriff's department, the Ohio State Highway Patrol, or the Ohio Department of Natural Resources – even if there was no damage to the motorist's vehicle.

When deer-vehicle crashes occur, deer carcasses must be moved from the main roadway to prevent further accidents. In 2008, ODOT workers spent 30,060 hours handling 17,185 deer, at a cost to the state of \$1.8 million.

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