

  
James L. Oberstar

NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK

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**HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*April 1, 2009*

Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight the 10<sup>th</sup> annual National Work Zone Awareness Week, which is taking place next week.

During National Work Zone Awareness Week, almost every State across the country will be holding some type of educational event to highlight the importance of work zone safety on our nation's roadways.

Over the past decade, more than 10,500 fatalities were reported in work zones. In 2007, 835 traffic-related fatalities were reported and over 39,000 people were injured in accidents that took place in work zones in across the country. Most disturbingly, 305 of the fatalities in 2007 involved workers being struck by moving vehicles while on the job. These statistics are alarming and illustrate the dangers posed to the men and women charged with rebuilding America.

We can help to reduce this number dramatically by taking a number of important steps including: encouraging responsible driving and greater understanding of the dangers involved with work zones, enhancing enforcement of speed limits and laws that protect workers, and installation of protective devices and equipment.

As a result of the nation's aging highway infrastructure, the country is faced with unprecedented levels of reconstruction and maintenance projects. And these levels will only increase in the near future.

With the influx of ready-to-go projects getting under way this summer as a result of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, every Member of Congress must make a greater effort to educate their constituents about the need to obey traffic signs, speed limits, and construction workers themselves while traveling through work zones.

As the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure begins to develop the next surface transportation authorization, our top priority will be improving the safety of our nation's roadways to reduce the astounding number of traffic-related fatalities and injuries that we, as a nation, endure year after year. Providing a greater commitment to increasing work zone safety will be a central aspect of this effort.

I look forward to working with national, state, and local organizations in reducing work zone and roadway deaths and injuries. Events such as Work Zone Awareness Week serve as an important first step in this endeavor.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to actively participate in promoting the goals and ideals of National Work Zone Awareness Week throughout their districts.