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For Release Wednesday, October 23, 2019

MISSOURI PROGRAM TO REDUCE CRASHES AT HIGHWAY INTERSECTIONS WINS 2019 NATIONAL ROADWAY SAFETY AWARD

WASHINGTON, DC -- The Missouri Department of Transportation's (MoDOT) Central and northeast Districts were honored today in a ceremony on Capitol Hill with a 2019 National Roadway Safety Award for their successful program to reduce the high rates of fatal and serious injury crashes at three dangerous intersections on US 63 in Central Missouri.

"Today we honor seven projects with innovative solutions for reducing crashes and saving lives," said Federal Highway Administration Executive Director Tom Everett. "We commend Missouri and this year's other winners for their success not only in saving lives on our nation's roads, but also for maximizing the cost effectiveness of federal, state, and local funds that were used."

The National Roadway Safety Awards are a biennial awards program sponsored jointly by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Roadway Safety Foundation (RSF). The awards recognize roadway safety achievements that move the United States toward zero deaths and serious injuries on the nation's roadways.

After identifying three particularly dangerous intersections on US Route 63, a four-lane expressway, and engaging in extensive public outreach, the MoDOT team proposed construction of "median U-Turn" intersections at each location. "These three intersections along Route 63 are now safer to all drivers as a result of constructing the median U-turns at Clark, Atlanta and Hinton Roads," said Kevin James, assistant district engineer for MoDOT, who accepted the award in Washington, DC on behalf of the agency.

Prior to the work, the intersections had experienced numerous severe injury crashes, including four fatal crashes. Since their installation over four years ago, the overall crash rate has been reduced by 50% and there have been no severe injury or fatal crashes at those locations.

Motor Vehicle crashes are among the nation's leading killers, costing more than 37,000 deaths and nearly 2.7 million injuries in 2017, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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“While our roads and vehicles have gotten safer over the years, clearly motor vehicle crashes still take a tremendous toll,” said Roadway Safety Foundation Executive Director Greg Cohen. “Unfortunately, deficiencies in our roadway environments still contribute to nearly one-third of all crashes, so making improvements to our roadway infrastructure is a critical part of reducing these devastating crashes.

“Our Roadway Safety Awards honor those who successfully identified dangerous issues in their systems, as the Missouri team did, and applied the latest research and technology to implement effective and cost-efficient fixes,” Cohen continued. “We congratulate and salute our winners and urge DOTs across the nation to look at these innovative solutions and replicate them wherever possible.”

The National Roadway Safety Award projects were evaluated on three criteria: Effectiveness, Innovation, and Efficient Use of Resources. The program honors outstanding projects involving infrastructure, operational or program-related innovations. The seven winners were selected from a nationwide pool of applicants.

The other awardees were: Arizona for its Wrong-Way-Driving (WWD) detection program that detects and then alerts drivers and police when a WWD vehicle is detected; Florida for two programs, a pedestrian and bicycle safety initiative and for creating a process that dramatically decreased the time to design and install safety fixes; South Dakota for its high friction surface treatments to address road departure crashes in winter weather; and Virginia for two programs, one to better manage guardrails in critical areas and the other for development of its innovative statewide pedestrian safety plan.

Winners were selected by an expert panel of judges from a variety of disciplines. This year's judges included: Bruce Hamilton, Managing Director, Roadway Safety Foundation; Ivan Horodyskyj, NOVA district engineer, Virginia Department of Transportation; Bernardo Kleiner, senior program officer/transportation safety specialist, Transportation Research Board; Norah Ocel, acting team leader—safety operations, FHWA; Brian Roberts, principal, BCR Consulting, LLC; Dr. Marie B. Walsh, director, Louisiana Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) Terecia W. Wilson, Institute for Global Road Safety and Security, Clemson University.

For complete details on each of the winners, and for more information on the national awards program, visit <http://www.safety.fhwa.dot.gov/roadwaysafetyawards/>.

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The Roadway Safety Foundation is a 501(c) (3) charitable and educational organization. Our mission is to reduce the frequency and severity of motor vehicle crashes, injuries, and fatalities through improvements to roadway systems and their environment.