



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

BETTY J. MERCER  
CHAIRPERSON

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
GOVERNOR'S TRAFFIC SAFETY  
ADVISORY COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lynn Sutfin  
(517) 333-5754

## **Metro Detroit area programs honored for traffic safety contributions**

LANSING, April 25, 2003 – Two Detroit-area traffic safety advocates will be honored by the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) at its annual awards luncheon Wednesday, April 30, at the Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids. Those being honored include the Freeway Courtesy Patrol – Detroit and the Farmington Hills Police Department.

Each year, organizations, programs and individuals are honored for outstanding contributions to traffic safety in Michigan. Prior to this year, these awards were presented by the Michigan State Safety Commission (MSSC) which was replaced by the GTSAC when the MSSC and the Michigan Traffic Safety Management System were merged in 2002.

At the luncheon, the GTSAC will recognize two individuals and six programs, including Freeway Courtesy Patrol – Detroit, along with two individuals and one program, the Farmington Hills Police Department, with the Richard H. Austin long-term traffic safety award.

GTSAC Chair and Office of Highway Safety Planning Division Director Betty J. Mercer will deliver the annual State of Traffic Safety Address. The awards luncheon is part of the Eighth Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit.

The Freeway Courtesy Patrol – Detroit program is being honored for providing a traffic safety network of highway "angels" who patrol Detroit area freeways and provide mechanical and personal assistance to stranded motorists. In addition to offering free help to these motorists, the program insures a safer driving environment by reducing potential traffic crash situations and relieving traffic congestion by cleaning up at crash scenes and towing away disabled vehicles. The service, currently led by AAA Michigan and Emergency Road Response, has assisted at more than 53,000 incidents since its inception in 1994. Its services range from changing tires and providing gasoline to detecting and reporting abandoned vehicles.

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TBD, Governor's Office • Linda Scarpetta, Community Health • Greg Lantzy, Education • Rose Jarois, State  
Captain Dan Smith, State Police • John C. Friend, Transportation • Steve Betterly, Office of Services to the Aging  
Sheriff Allen Byam, Local Representative • R. Miles Handy, Local Representative • Chief Gary Gibbons, Local Representative

The Richard H. Austin Long Term Traffic Safety Award being presented to the Farmington Hills Police Department is awarded to individuals or organizations who have made significant long-term contributions to the field of traffic safety.

The Farmington Hills Police Department is being honored for its proactive approach to traffic safety. With an extensive history of seeking community involvement and working closely with the citizens it serves, the department has found that high on the priority list for the community is the ability for citizens to feel safe as they travel city roads. By maintaining existing safety programs, establishing new ones, working in partnership with other agencies, and addressing the traffic needs of the community, the department has worked to provide that feeling of security.

The GTSAC was formed by an Executive Order of the Governor in 2002 to serve as the state's major forum for identifying key traffic safety challenges and developing and implementing action plans to address those issues. In addition, the Commission focuses on improving traffic crash data acquisition, storage and management issues.

The agencies of Michigan state government that comprise the GTSAC are: Community Health, Education, Secretary of State, State Police, Transportation, Office of Services to the Aging, Office of Highway Safety Planning, and, the Office of the Governor. There are also three representatives of local government appointed by the Governor.

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