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MSP captain honored for long-term efforts to improve truck safety

LANSING – A 37-year-veteran of the Michigan Department of State Police (MSP) will be honored at the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission (GTSAC) annual awards luncheon Wednesday at the Kellogg Conference Center in East Lansing for his efforts to improve commercial motor vehicle (CMV) safety.

Each year the commission honors organizations, programs and individuals for outstanding contributions to traffic safety. The awards luncheon is part of the 15th Annual Michigan Traffic Safety Summit. Seven traffic safety and three long-term awards are being presented.

Capt. Robert R. Powers, Jr., commander of MSP's Traffic Safety Division, will receive the Richard H. Austin Long-Term Traffic Safety Award, which is presented to individuals or organizations that have made significant long-term contributions to the field of traffic safety.

Powers administers the department's traffic safety programs including Michigan's commercial vehicle safety and enforcement programs, the operation of 19 weigh stations and the School Bus Safety Inspection program. He also directs motor carrier safety and security at three international border crossings.

During his tenure, Powers has promoted partnerships between local, county, state and federal agencies. These efforts have resulted in the creation of CMV enforcement training programs for law enforcement, prosecutors, magistrates and judges; the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police Award for Excellence in Commercial Vehicle Safety that honors law enforcement agencies for innovative programs to enhance truck safety; and the Midwest Multi-State CMV Enforcement coalition, an initiative that coordinates enforcement efforts between Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio and Michigan.

Under his leadership, crashes and fatalities involving CMVs in Michigan have declined 20 percent over the past four years. In 2009, the MSP Traffic Safety Division was honored by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration for having the nation's lowest CMV fatality crash rate.

The GTSAC was formed in 2002 to serve as the state's forum for identifying key traffic safety challenges and developing and implementing plans to address those issues. The GTSAC is comprised of representatives from: Community Health, Education, 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 from local government appointed by the Governor.

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- Robert Morris, Chair, Governor's Office • Anne Corgan, Michigan Department of State • Michael Prince, Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
- John Friend, Michigan Department of Transportation • Linda Scarpetta, Michigan Department of Community Health • Kenneth Micklash, Michigan Department of Education
- Capt. Robert Powers, Michigan Department of State Police • Pamela Hall Webb, Office of Services to the Aging • Steven Puuri, Local Representative
- Chief David Stamm, Local Representative • Sheriff Allen Byam, Local Representative