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Troopers Encouraged to Keep Up the Good Work

(GIRDWOOD, Alaska) – On the evening of August 7, 2009, Chief Chadwick of Girdwood Fire Department hosted a community forum. Alaska State Troopers, along with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and a few state and local lawmakers, participated in a community forum to address numerous concerns of traffic safety along the Seward Highway.

What we heard from the public was that there are too many fatalities and injuries on the Seward Highway. AST agrees that even one is too many. While other issues need to be addressed, the community would like troopers to dedicate more resources to the area.

Department of Public Safety has made efforts to safeguard the well being of Alaskans, through diverting resources to address this serious issue. The Alaska Bureau of Highway Patrol was recently created at Commissioner Joe Masters' direction because the Department realized the need for dedicated and vigilant traffic enforcement in various areas of the state. Due to what is happening this year on the Seward Highway, ABHP patrols are directing attention to the Seward Highway in and around the safety corridor.

The residents at the forum pledged to set an example for other motorists utilizing the highway. They also pledged to report bad and erratic driving behaviors of other motorists to troopers.

Currently, the three E's (Engineering, Education and Enforcement) are all being addressed. The public affirmed that the three E's are the key to solving the problem. Community members recognize the need to concentrate on these areas if we want to reduce and ultimately eliminate fatal and major injury collisions. The forum reaffirmed the community's strong desire for AST and other state entities to continue down this path.

AST has been actively working on recruiting quality troopers. Currently there are approximately 40 men and women in training, either in the academy or in field training. Once their training is complete, AST will place those needed resources in the field and the public will continue to see more troopers on Alaska's roads.

"AST is grateful to all the citizens who came out to express their concerns, positive thoughts and encouraging support," said Col. Audie Holloway, Director of the Alaska State Troopers. "We will take your comments and use them to better our enforcement efforts and to address public concern. AST is also pleased that the community has volunteered to act as our eyes and ears so we can track down the motorists making our roads unsafe."