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Pa. Turnpike Prepares for Independence Day Weekend

HARRISBURG, PA – Nearly 3 million vehicles are expected to take a trip on the Pennsylvania Turnpike this Fourth of July weekend, and Turnpike officials are reminding motorists to use extra caution as they drive across the Commonwealth during the heavily traveled holiday.

“Independence Day falls on a Sunday this year which translates into a long weekend for most travelers,” says Turnpike Chief Executive Officer Joseph G. Brimmeier. “We urge customers to make safety their number-one priority as they drive the Turnpike and all other roadways.”

To better accommodate increased traffic volumes, all Turnpike travel lanes will be available; construction and maintenance activity is going to be suspended from 3 p.m. on Friday, July 2 through 6 a.m. Monday, July 12. Additionally, there will be increased Pennsylvania State Police patrols throughout the entire holiday period. Troopers will enforce the state’s traffic laws and all Turnpike safety officials will be available to assist motorists.

“We are fully prepared to deal with any emergency that might arise over the weekend, and we will be focusing a lot of our energies on traffic enforcement,” said Pennsylvania State Police Captain James J. Garafolo, commanding officer of Troop T. “So we strongly recommend that all travelers slow down and buckle up.” He reminded motorists to pull over to a wide area before using cell phones and emphasized there will be state and local sobriety checkpoints in the vicinity of some Turnpike interchanges.

Brimmeier reminded motorists that holiday weekends are an ideal time to take advantage of E-ZPass. “With increased holiday traffic, E-ZPass members enjoy the ease and convenience the technology offers, avoiding backups and delays at toll lanes,” Brimmeier said. “And E-ZPass members in western Pennsylvania now have the added convenience of an Express E-ZPass lane, the state’s first ‘highway-speed’ toll plaza.” To join E-ZPass or learn more about the program, call 1-877-736-6727 or visit the Turnpike’s website at www.paturnpike.com.

Motorists who will be driving the Turnpike this holiday period are reminded to be alert for stopped or slow moving traffic. If an emergency occurs, call for help by using the bright-yellow Emergency “Help” Boxes located at one-mile intervals, or call star 1-1 (*11) or 1-800-332-3880 on a cell phone. If traffic delays or severe weather conditions occur, Pennsylvania Turnpike motorists can tune their car radios to 1640 AM for travel updates and watch for Variable Message Signs stationed along the highway.

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