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DEER CAN BE A DEADLY AND COSTLY DRIVING HAZARD, SAYS WIA

MADISON, October 4, 2007 -- Deer are a deadly and costly driving hazard on Wisconsin highways.

Last year there were more than 45,000 deer/auto collisions in Wisconsin resulting in six deaths, more than 600 injured and \$100 million in property damage. Many of these accidents occur in November.

Deer/auto collisions also cost the auto insurance industry about \$2,000 per claim, according to the Wisconsin Insurance Alliance (WIA).

WIA reports that in excess of five cents of every auto insurance premium dollar goes to pay for the costs of deer/auto collisions.

To avoid hitting a deer, the WIA suggests the following defensive driving tips:

- Be extra cautious during early morning and evening hours, the most active time for deer. Use your high-beam headlights, which reflect in the deer's eyes, to see the deer better.
- Slow down and blow your horn with one long blast to frighten the deer away.
- Brake firmly when you notice a deer in or near your path. Do not swerve. It can confuse the deer as to where to run. It can also cause you to lose control and hit a tree or another car.

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- Be alert and drive with caution when you are moving through a deer crossing zone.
- Always wear your seat belt. Most people injured in deer/auto crashes were not wearing their seat belt.
- Look for other deer after one has crossed the road. Deer seldom travel alone.

If your vehicle strikes a deer, do not touch the animal. The frightened animal, in attempting to move, could hurt you or itself. According to WIA, the best procedure is to get your car off the road, if possible, and call the sheriff.

Contact your insurance agent or company representative to report any damage to your car. Collision with an animal is covered under the comprehensive portion of your auto insurance policy.