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June 28, 2010 – For immediate release

First Drunk Driving Victim Memorial Sign Installed on I-270

Drunk Driving Memorial Signs Now Available under David's Law

JEFFERSON CITY – Twenty-six years after David's Poenicke's death due to an impaired driver, a sign was installed today on Interstate 270 in Florissant in his honor. The drunk-driving victim memorial sign is the first to be installed under the new "David's Law," legislation named after Poenicke that allows families of drunk-driving victims to request memorial signs.

"Impaired driving continues to be a problem among motorists, many of whom don't realize how little of a substance it actually takes to affect driving skills and put themselves and others at risk," says Leanna Depue, director of the Missouri Department of Transportation's Highway Safety Division. "Hopefully these new signs will help to bring extra attention to this issue and get people to think twice before driving impaired."

Poenicke's sister, Gail Rehme, was a leading force in getting legislation passed in the hopes that memorializing drunk driving victims like her brother will also help save lives. Representative Bill Deeken of Jefferson City sponsored the bill.

The blue memorial signs read "Drunk Driving Victim" and include the person's initials and the month and year they were killed. At the bottom it reads "Think About It." The signs can be requested and paid for by the family of a drunk-driving victim.

Poenicke was 19 when he was killed on his way home from a Cardinals baseball game. He pulled his motorcycle over to the shoulder of I-270 when a passing car struck him and his motorcycle. The driver had a blood alcohol level of 0.14 and was charged with manslaughter and vehicular injury.

Applications for the memorial signs are available on MoDOT's website at modot.org/services/HighwayNaming.htm.

In 2009, 280 people were killed, 1,140 seriously injured and 3,719 received minor injuries in crashes involving an impaired driver. Besides the heartbreak to a victim's family and friends, there are some legal consequences of impaired driving to consider:

- If you cause a fatal crash while intoxicated, you can be charged with involuntary manslaughter, a felony resulting in up to seven years of jail time, a \$5,000 fine or both.
- Your license can be suspended for 90 days on your first conviction. You could be fined up to \$500 and spend up to 6 months in jail.
- A second conviction results in a yearlong revocation of your license. You could be fined up to \$1,000 and spend up to one year in jail.
- Any person guilty of a second or subsequent intoxication-related traffic offense will be required to install an ignition interlock device on their car before reinstating driving privileges.
- Insurance coverage will be difficult to find and your rates will be significantly higher.

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