

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Study Results Promising For Helping To Reduce Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions

New Hampshire is One of 15 States Participating in Nationwide Research Project

New Hampshire and other states plagued by animal-vehicle collisions are one step closer to being able to use high-tech equipment to address the highway safety problem that kills more than 200 people every year across the country. New research findings show that electronic animal detection systems in use around the world have reduced collisions with large animals by 82%.

A six-year joint research project by 15 states (including the New Hampshire Department of Transportation) has included an experiment that has reviewed, developed and tested animal detection systems that alert drivers to the presence of wildlife on or near the road ahead. Once a large animal is detected, warning signs are activated urging drivers to reduce the speed of their vehicles, to be more alert, or both.

The primary test site for the research project was on U.S. Highway 191 in Yellowstone National Park in Montana. The project resulted in an animal detection system technology, developed by an Arizona company, that detects large animals reliably. The effectiveness of this system in reducing animal-vehicle collisions will be further evaluated over the next two years.

New Hampshire Department of Transportation District One Engineer Greg Placy has been one of the participants in the research effort. "This is a very promising technology that can help make roadways safer," Placy says. Certainly residents of northern New Hampshire have some real safety concerns regarding the potential for moose and deer collisions. I believe we are making real progress in trying to come up with some possible solutions that could reduce the risk of these kind of collisions."

It's estimated that up to 1.5 million crashes between vehicles and large hoofed animals occur every year in the United States. In addition to the 200 human fatalities, there are approximately 29,000 human injuries and over one billion dollars in property damage. In a growing number of states, including New Hampshire, wildlife-vehicle collisions are one of the top highway safety issues that generate public interest and concern.

The researchers calculated the average total costs associated with animal-vehicle collisions at \$28,100 for moose and \$7,800 for deer. The research also concluded that animal detection systems could be cost effective, paying for themselves at locations that have an average of at least five deer or two moose collisions per mile per year.

The full 200-page research report (PDF file) can be downloaded from the following web link: http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP_RES/ResearchReports.shtml