



News from the Ohio Turnpike

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For Immediate Release:

Turnpike dedicates Memorial Sign to fallen maintenance worker from Norwalk

The sign will serve as a reminder for motorists to Move Over for emergency vehicles

BEREA (May 11, 2018) – The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission today dedicated an Ohio Turnpike Memorial Sign in honor of Kermit Starkey, Sr. of Norwalk, Ohio. The program is part of the turnpike’s Work Zone Awareness Campaign and its efforts to remind motorists to move over for vehicles with flashing lights.

Participants at the ceremony dedicated the sign in memory of Starkey. Representing the Ohio Turnpike was Randy Cole, Executive Director. Lt. Richard Reeder represented the Ohio State Highway Patrol. Among the family members in attendance were Starkey’s sons Kermit C. Starkey, Jr., and Ken Starkey. They each received a replica sign.

Starkey, Sr. was only 46 years old when he was struck and killed (by a train at nearby Middle Ridge Road) while at work for the Commission. He was as a mechanic at the Amherst Maintenance Building for 12 years. The sign is located at MP 141.3 westbound (in Lorain County) in his memory. The signage will now also serve as a stark reminder for motorists to Move Over (or Slow Down) for workers and first responders.

“We continue our efforts to prevent this type of tragedy from occurring ever again on the Ohio Turnpike,” said Randy Cole, Executive Director. “In fact, by working closely with our partners at the Ohio State Highway Patrol on education and enforcement, there were no fatalities in turnpike work zones in 2017.”

The OSHP and Ohio Turnpike teamed up in 2017 to conduct and publicize aerial speed enforcement in and near work zones and is doing so again in 2018. Because of these efforts, together, the Patrol and Commission saw a 21.5 percent decrease in the number of traffic crashes in work zones in 2017 (from 349 to 274).

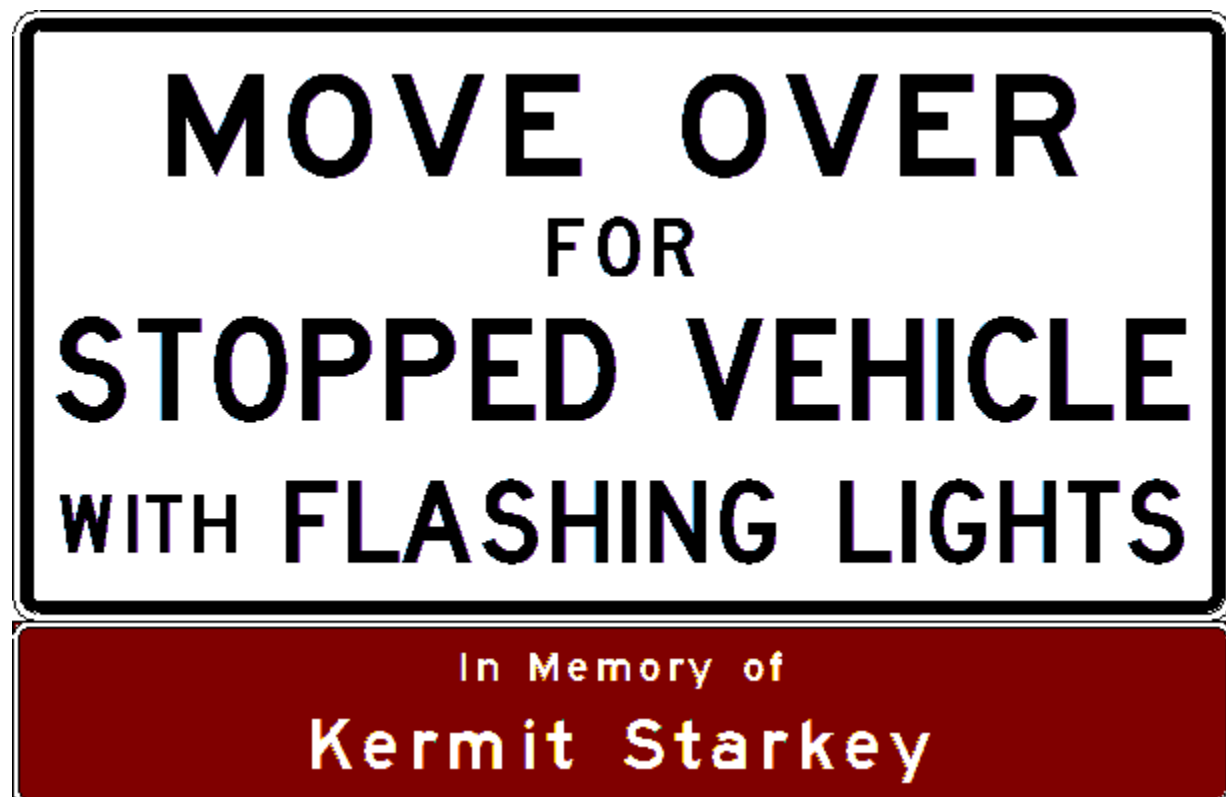
This campaign also led to a 44 percent decrease in the number of injury crashes (from 84 to 51). Most importantly, there were no fatal crashes in work zones in 2017.

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In total, 12 men killed while performing their duties on the Ohio Turnpike will be memorialized with a sign. Below is a list of remaining workers the Commission is seeking help in finding surviving family members.

Surviving family members are encouraged to contact the Ohio Turnpike's Communications Department (440-971-2066) to help the Commission arrange for them to be properly recognized.

1. **Canfield Township**—1987, John Todd, Canfield Maintenance Section.
2. **Exact Location Unknown**—1977, Mike H. McConnell
3. **Townsend Township**—Sept. 17, 1970, Kenneth C. Bailey, Castalia Maintenance Section.
4. **Townsend Township**—Sept. 17, 1970, Berton C. Stewart, Castalia Maintenance Section.
5. **Rossford**—Feb. 22, 1967, Trooper Jon D. Birchem, OSHP Post 89.



For more information please contact:

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