



News from the Ohio Turnpike

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For Immediate Release:

Ohio Turnpike dedicates Memorial Sign to honor towing operator from Ravenna

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 continued its Memorial Sign Program Dedication Ceremonies today in honor of Michael Kennedy of Ravenna. The program is part of the turnpike’s Work Zone Awareness Campaign and efforts to remind motorists to move over for vehicles with flashing lights.

Participants at the ceremony dedicated the sign in memory of Michael “Turnpike Mike” Kennedy. Representing the Ohio Turnpike were Jerry N. Hruby, Chairman, and Randy Cole, Executive Director. Lt. Richard Reeder represented the Ohio State Highway Patrol. In attendance were Vicki Kennedy, Kennedy’s widow, several family members and John and Jay Trgo of Interstate Towing and Transport Specialist, where Kennedy worked as a tow truck operator.

Kennedy lost his life in performance of his duties on the Ohio Turnpike on May 11 of 2015. He was hit by a semi tractor-trailer while assisting a motorist with a flat tire. The sign is located at MP 182 Eastbound (in Summit County) in memory of Kennedy. It will now also serve as a 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 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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