

## Target: Traffic 'hot spots'

Bob Lowry (Times Staff Writer)

Federal grant to help state curb aggressive driving

MONTGOMERY - Citing a fatal car-truck crash in Limestone County on Interstate 65 as an example, Alabama State Troopers announced a statewide plan to control aggressive drivers of cars and 18-wheelers.

Col. Chris Murphy, director of the state Department of Public Safety, said the yearlong program, with the help of the University of Alabama's Center for Advanced Public Safety and a federal grant, will target "hot spots" across the state.

The areas were not specifically identified, but Tony Harris, spokesman for the Alabama Department of Transportation, said those generally would be areas where there is "a lot of manufacturing related to shipping and receiving."

Harris said that the I-65 corridor is important because of the volume of truck traffic and that I-20 west from Birmingham is another area of concern because its traffic makeup is about 50 percent truck traffic.

DPS officials said, however, there are "hot spots" all over Alabama.

Murphy cited an accident several years ago in Limestone to make his point about the dangers of aggressive driving around large trucks.

In that accident, a car attempting to pass a tractor-trailer pulled around as a tow truck was pulling a car into the left lane from the median. Murphy said the small passenger vehicle could not see all the way around the truck, and the collision between the tow truck and car claimed one life.

The program announced Wednesday is being funded through a \$645,000 grant from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. At least 400 troopers and 27 cities and counties will be involved.

In some instances, state troopers will be riding shotgun in 18-wheelers with six trucking companies that will participate in the program through the Alabama Trucking Association.

Murphy said in Alabama about 75 percent of the deaths that occur when commercial vehicles are involved in accidents can be traced to aggressive driving by small passenger vehicles....

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