

**REMARKS FOR KEN SIMONSON
HIGHWAY WORK ZONE SAFETY SURVEY
MEDIA EVENT
Thursday, May 27, 2020**

- **Good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. With me is Steve McGough, the President and CFO of HCSS, and Amy Hall, President of Ebony Construction.**

- **Each year AGC of America and our partners at HCSS survey contractors who work near highways to measure the safety of those work zones.**

- **This survey helps us better understand the frequency, severity and broader impacts of vehicles crashing into highway work zones.**

- **The nation's aging roads and bridges need a lot of maintenance to stay in good order. And each year federal, state and local officials invest billions of**

dollars in improving our highway transportation network.

- **These investments are – hopefully - likely to increase should the President’s called for new infrastructure investments get enacted.**
- **Essential as it is, all that road work means drivers are guaranteed to pass through multiple highway work zones in a given year.**
- **This means the men and women of the construction industry are frequently working feet, and sometimes inches, away from speeding vehicles.**
- **Too often, distracted, speeding and/or under the influence drivers crash into those work zones, putting workers at risk of serious harm and death.**

- **Yet as the new data we are releasing today makes clear, motorists are in even greater danger from those highway work zone crashes.**
- **Those crashes are happening far too frequently. According to the results of our highway work zone survey, sixty percent of respondents reported at least one crash in the past year involving a moving vehicle at highway work zones where they operate.**
- **More troubling, 30 percent of firms experiencing these kinds of crashes reported it happening five or more times during the past twelve months.**
- **Nineteen percent of the crashes resulted in injury to construction workers. But drivers and passengers were injured in those crashes at nearly double the rate – 35 percent.**

- **Drivers and passengers also are three times as likely to be killed in work zone crashes as construction workers. Contractors report that construction workers were killed in four percent of work zone crashes, while drivers and passengers were killed in 12 percent of those crashes.**
- **These motorists and construction workers are getting injured or killed in work zone crashes that took place during a time when far fewer people were heading to and from work because of the pandemic.**
- **But only one-third of respondents reported any apparent increase in safety because of the lower traffic levels. An equal number of contractors reported that the lower traffic levels made conditions less safe, by encouraging many motorists to drive at faster speeds.**

- **The long-term trend is even more troubling, with 78 percent of contractors reporting that highway work zones are less safe today than they were a decade ago.**
- **Construction firms are going to great lengths to protect workers and motorists alike. They are training workers to be more aware of their work zone surrounding. They are better marking highway work zones and laying them out in a way that provides more protections to workers.**
- **They are also investing in technology – like wearables that vibrate when cars encroach on a work zone and software from companies like HCSS that is designed to improve work zone safety.**
- **But elected and appointed officials need to do more to protect workers and motorists in highway work**

zones. Eighty-two percent of contractors said having a greater police presence at work zone sites would improve safety. And 70 percent said we need stricter laws against cell phone usage near work zones.

- Many of our chapters are working with state officials to get those changes put in place. Up in New York, for example, our AGC of New York state chapter is urging state legislators to pass a law that would allow the use of speed cameras on highway construction projects.**
- Better training and public policies will help. But the ultimate responsibility lies with motorists.**
- The best thing anyone can do to protect themselves and workers is to slow down, put the phone away and pay attention when they are in a highway work zone.**

- **We are all busy. But nobody is too busy to slow down, pay attention and save a life – particularly when that life is likely to be their own.**
- **So as folks get ready to hit the road this summer for a much-deserved and long-delayed vacation, remember one thing. If you can wait 15 months to take a trip, you can wait a few more minutes to save a life. Stay off the gas and put the phone down when you are in a work zone.**
- **That way everyone can have a summer that is as safe as it is fun.**
- **Now I would like to hand things over to Steve McGough from HCSS...**

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