

**REMARKS FOR KEN SIMONSON
HIGHWAY WORK ZONE SAFETY SURVEY
MEDIA EVENT
Wednesday, May 25, 2022**

- **Good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. With me is Steve McGough, the President and CEO of HCSS, Marty McKee, vice president of King Asphalt in Liberty, South Carolina and the highway division chair of our Carolinas AGC chapter and....**

- **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.

- **And we are going to see a lot more of that kind of highway work thanks to the bipartisan infrastructure bill that was signed into law at the end of last year.**
- **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 just a few feet, and sometimes inches, away from speeding vehicles.**
- **Too often, drivers who are distracted, speeding and/or under the influence 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-four 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, 32 percent of firms experiencing these kinds of crashes reported it happening five or more times during the past twelve months.**

- **Eighteen percent of the contractors experienced a crash that resulted in injury to construction workers. But drivers and passengers were injured in those crashes at more than double the rate – 41 percent.**
- **Drivers and passengers also are twice times as likely to be killed in work zone crashes as construction workers. Seven percent of the contractors report that construction workers were killed in a crash in one or more of their work zones, while 15 percent of the firms experienced a crash in which drivers and passengers were killed.**
- **Even more troubling, 97 percent of contractors report that highway work zones are either as dangerous, or more dangerous, than they were on year 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-one percent of contractors said having a greater police presence at work zone sites would improve safety. And 61 percent said we need stricter laws against cell phone usage near work zones.**

- **Indeed, a new public service video we are releasing today tells the tragic story of young Marshall Walton. He lost his life to a distracted driver – who was most likely on his phone – while working on a road project. That terrible tragedy forever changed the lives of his parents, colleagues and friends.**
- **Fortunately, they have channeled their grief into efforts to make our highway work zones even safer and pushing for laws in Alabama to better protect workers and motorists alike in work zones.**
- **Many of our other chapters are working with state officials to get those changes put in place.**
- **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 vacation, remember one thing: getting to your destination a few seconds early isn't worth the lifetime of guilt that comes with taking the life of someone in your car or working on the road. 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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