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*It's a Bird... It's a Plane ... It's the HERO Unit!...*

### **GDOT BRINGS HIGHWAY HEROs TO DOUGLASVILLE**

**Douglasville** –The Georgia Department of Transportation, Douglasville Mayor Harvey Persons and Douglas County Commission Chairman Tom Worthan announced the expansion of the Highway Emergency Response Operators (HEROs) into Douglas County. The new route will consist of the section of I-20 stretching from Thornton Road at Exit 44 to State Route 5 at Exit 34. Expansion in service will increase the 310 metro miles currently patrolled by HERO units. Motorists can request assistance from a HERO unit by dialing 511 from any phone and selecting Option One.

“Douglasville and Douglas County have numerous commuters that use the I-20 corridor on a daily basis and this joint partnership with the state-funded HERO units will provide an additional resource to our Public Safety measures here in our great community and provide additional service benefits for our local residents, constituents, and travelers,” said Douglasville Mayor Harvey Persons. (*Mayor’s full statement included below.*)

The HERO program is an integral part of a comprehensive effort to safely and efficiently keep traffic moving. One minute of lane blockage results in four to seven minutes of delay to motorists. HEROs are dispatched to traffic-related incidents with the primary duty to clear roads so that normal traffic flow is restored. Secondly, HEROs assist stranded motorists with minor mechanical problems at no cost.

Since 1996, the HERO Unit has grown from 12 operators to 104. In 2012, the HEROs managed more than 120,380 incidents and disabled motorist calls in Metro Atlanta.

“We are honored to expand the miles we cover and the communities we touch in order to ease congestion and make the Metro region a safer place to drive,” said Michael Roberson, Incident Management Unit Manager with GDOT. “Whether we are clearing a road from a minor incident or serving as a first responder at the scene of an accident, we want Metro motorists to know that our help is just a call away.”

For more information, including a map of the HERO routes, patrol times and FAQs, visit [www.511ga.org](http://www.511ga.org) and click the tab marked “Extras.”

*Georgia DOT urges travelers to call 511 for updated information about maintenance concerns or traffic incidents on I-95 or any other interstate or state route. Georgia 511 is a free phone service that provides real-time traffic and travel information statewide, such as traffic conditions, incidents, lane closures, and delays due to inclement*

weather. Callers also can transfer to operators to request assistance or report incidents 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More information is available at [www.511ga.org](http://www.511ga.org).

**Full Statement of Douglasville Mayor Harvey Persons:** *“Douglasville and Douglas County have numerous commuters that use the I-20 corridor on a daily basis, and this joint partnership with the state-funded HERO units will provide an additional resource to our Public Safety measures here in our great community and provide additional service benefits for our local residents, constituents, and travelers. Providing expeditious road clearance of accidents, assistance with minor car incidentals, including changing of flat tires, and mediating cooperation with several local agencies in the event of a major traffic problems, the TIME Task Force and the HERO units now servicing I-20 from the perimeter to HWY 5 will add a new comfort level of safety and quality of life to our residents, our commuters, and guest as they pass through on this major east – west corridor of Metro-Atlanta. Involving and assigning one of our Command Staff, Major Greg Graff, to the collaborative team of the TIME Task Force not only helped pave the way for these services to be expanded to our community, but it also demonstrates the collaborative partnership local governments must make with each other for the benefits to reach the people we were elected to serve.”*

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In FY 2012, Georgia DOT, the lead agency for the Georgia Unified Certification Program (GUCP), certified 531 new firms as disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs). GUCP certification provides firms with the chance to secure significant economic development opportunities with GDOT and other state and federal government agencies. Currently, there are 1,718 certified DBE firms in the GUCP directory.

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