

PRESS RELEASE

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Spencer Pass Memorial Bridge Named

Honoring the life and legacy of a Georgia hero

ATLANTA – The last day of January 2011 began as an ordinary day for Highway Emergency Response Operator (HERO) Spencer Pass. As usual, he was assisting a stranded motorist. It was on I-85 near the Metropolitan Parkway exit that his day ended tragically. A utility truck driver towing a flatbed trailer struck Pass, who died of his injuries.

Today the I-85 Bridge over Cleveland Avenue was named the Spencer Pass Memorial Bridge in honor of the respected and exemplary public servant who was described by co-workers as a man who “never had anything bad to say about anyone.” The kind of employee you want serving the citizens of Georgia; a dedicated husband, loving father, and devoted son; a man of integrity, intelligence, and kindness; the type of man who always had a good day – until that day five years ago.

“I stand before you with mixed emotions,” Georgia DOT Commissioner Russell R. McMurtry, P.E. expressed to the gathering that included the Pass family, and Pass’ second family – members of the HERO Unit. “I am delighted to honor the life and legacy of a true hero and an outstanding GDOT employee, but I feel heavyhearted because his life did not have to end so soon.”

Pass joined the HERO Unit in 2008 and was Georgia DOT’s first HERO fatality. This past March a second Highway Emergency Response Operator - Moses King - died from injuries he sustained in August 2015 as he was setting out road flares on Atlanta’s Downtown Connector. Pass and King lost their lives while working to protect the lives of others. Their deaths were preventable.

With the start of the busy summer construction season, Georgia DOT reminds drivers about safe driving in work zones, which include maintenance and road construction work zones, as well as work zones where HEROs assist drivers or clear incidents, and those that include emergency medical personnel, law enforcement, firefighters, and tow truck drivers.

“We are committed to keeping our employees safe, and we need that same commitment from the public,” McMurry said. “We cannot overemphasize the need for motorists to pay strict pay attention when driving. Always buckle up, stay off the phone – no texting – and drive alert. And in work zones - slow down, watch for workers, and expect the unexpected.”

Drivers should be mindful of Georgia’s Move Over Law, also known as The Spencer Pass Law, which requires motorists to move-over one lane or slow down and be prepared to stop when approaching a stationary HERO truck, law enforcement, construction or maintenance crew, emergency vehicle or utility service vehicle that is flashing yellow, amber, white, red or blue emergency lights.

“Georgia DOT HEROs, employees and contractors literally put their lives on the line every day to serve the citizens of Georgia,” McMurry said. “Please watch out for them in your travels. Do your part to keep them safe and allow them to go home to their families.”

The Georgia DOT Employee Association petitioned the Georgia General Assembly and State Senator Nan Orrock sponsored the bill to dedicate the bridge to Pass, ensuring that his life and sacrifice will always be honored..

IMAGE 4062: Mrs. Barbara Pass (Mother) and Mr. Edward Pass (Father) – Spencer Pass’ Parents

IMAGE 4069: (L-R) State Senator Nan Orrock, District 36, Mrs. Barbara Pass (Mother), GDOT Commissioner Russell McMurry, Mr. Edward Pass (Father)

Every day Georgia DOT employees work on roadways in close proximity to travel lanes. Whether they’re maintenance, construction or HEROs, it’s dangerous. Fifty-eight Georgia DOT personnel and many more motorists, passengers and contractors’ workers have been killed in work zone crashes since 1973. When you drive in a work zone, obey the rules: Pay Attention - Slow Down - Watch for Workers. It can make the difference between life and death. Visit www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation/Workzone.

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H.E.R.O.

**Spencer Pass
Memorial Bridge**



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