

# Motorists reminded to “Drive Distraction Free in Work Zones”

**Herald Report**

As construction season’s orange cones and barrels spring up along Kentucky highways, state officials remind everyone to drive distraction free and slow down. Those safe driving practices will reduce the dangers highway crews face in work zones and could save lives.

In 2023, Kentucky recorded 1,251 crashes in highway work zones where 247 people were injured and 17 lost their lives – nearly triple the number of fatalities in the previous year.

“This week, we remind Kentuckians to be aware when driving through work zones on our roadways,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “Help protect yourselves, your families and your neighbors – the men and women who serve on the front lines improving our infrastructure – by driving distraction free every time you’re behind the wheel, and reducing your speed when traveling through work zones.”

National Work Zone Awareness Week begins on Monday, April 15, and the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is joining state transportation agencies nationwide to promote safe driver and worker practices to save lives and prevent injuries. Kentucky’s annual Vested in Work Zone Safety Campaign reinforces the message that safe drivers plus safe workers equal safe work zones.

The following activities to promote safety are planned

during the week.

- Monday, April 15 (10 a.m. EDT) - Kickoff media event in Lexington, Clarion Hotel Parking Lot.

- Tuesday, April 16 - KYTC Worker Safety Training Day.

- Wednesday, April 17- Vested in Work Zone Safety Day- Post a pic wearing high-visibility gear on social media using #VestedinWZSafety and #NWZAW.

- Thursday, April 18 – Work Zone Safety Social Media Stories and Tips – Tag and share content from @KYTC X account and Facebook.com/kytc120.

A work zone is anywhere a crew member is working, and can involve construction workers, maintenance workers, utility crews, mowing contractors, brush cutters and tree trimmers.

“Safe driving practices are a commitment to ensuring everyone returns home safely at the end of every day,” said Transportation Secretary Jim Gray. “Our choices behind the wheel are a matter of life and death, and the data proves it. Kentuckians are sure to encounter a work zone, with multiple active work zones across the state and more expected to appear during the warmer months. In the same way we ask and train our crews to be safe, we ask the public to watch out for each other and workers.”

Year after year, the majority of work zone crash victims are motorists. Of the 17 who died last year, 14 were either passengers or drivers.

In addition, law enforcement crash reports indicate that distracted driving was a factor for nearly 42% of work zone crashes last year, while speed and speed-related issues like overcorrecting and failure to stay in lane were a factor in 25% of crashes.

“Practicing the basics of safe driving, like buckling up and obeying posted speed limits, is more than a smart move, it’s the law,” said Kentucky State Police Captain Paul Blanton. “With motorists being the primary victims of serious injuries and deaths, we all have a vested interest in driving with caution through work zones.”

KYTC has an ongoing effort to increase safety in work zones through a combination of training and equipment innovations. They include the use of temporary rumble strips, made of heavy rubber, which are portable and can be moved as a work zone advances. Crews often use a queue protection vehicle, also called a crash cushion, which is a large, truck-mounted shock absorber equipped with warning lights and message board. It is positioned on the shoulder of the highway, a half-mile before stopped traffic, and moves with the traffic queue.

“Whether our transportation crews are stationed behind barrier walls, repairing traffic signals or on the move patching potholes, it’s crucial to recognize that

where they work is where we drive,” said Secretary Gray. “It’s the responsibility of Kentucky drivers to prioritize worker’s safety by remaining vigilant and cautious within these zones.”

Here are tips for driving safely in a work zone:

- Pay attention. Don’t text or talk on the phone. Keep both hands on the wheel.

- Drive alert. Watch for speed limit reductions, narrowing lanes, changing traffic patterns and – most importantly – workers.

- Respect posted speed limits.

- Be patient. Driving 45 mph instead of 55 mph

through a 5-mile work zone will only add 1.2 minutes to your trip. Speeding and aggressive driving are major causes of work zone crashes.

- Keep a safe distance. Allow space on all sides of your vehicle and maintain a safe following distance. The most common type of work zone crash is a rear-end collision.

- Respect flaggers and obey their guidance. A flagger has the same authority as a regulatory sign, so a driver can be cited for disobeying the flagger’s directions.

- Follow instructions on construction signage. Those

signs are carefully selected to give drivers accurate information and important warnings.

- Know before you go. Check out go.ky.gov or use the free WAZE app for traffic and travel information. Select alternate routes when possible. If a work zone cannot be avoided, expect delays and allow for extra time.

To learn more about KYTC’s Vested in Work Zone Safety Campaign and to see a list of scheduled events, visit KYTC. Work zone testimonials and tips will be shared all week on KYTC social media accounts.

# Commonwealth celebrates Deaf History Month in April

**Herald Report**

In recognition of April as Deaf History Month, Team Kentucky and the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing are honoring the contributions of people in the deaf and hard of hearing community and raising awareness about the issues they face.

Deaf History Month commemorates important milestones that represent major progress for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, including the establishment of the first public school for the deaf in the United States in Hartford, Connecticut, on April 15, 1817. It also celebrates the founding of Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., following the approval of its charter by President Abraham Lincoln on April 8, 1864.

“Throughout April, I encourage everyone to learn about important historical figures in the deaf community and their many contributions and accomplishments to enhance accessibility and improve communication for individuals with hearing loss,” said Gov. Andy Beshear. “I believe

my good friend and former commission director, the late Virginia Moore, would also encourage us to celebrate Deaf History Month by learning American Sign Language or by reaching out to one of the more than 700,000 Kentuckians who are deaf or hard of hearing.”

Numerous deaf and hard of hearing individuals who have left their mark on American society are also recognized and celebrated during Deaf History Month. Vinton Gray “Vint” Cerf, an American computer scientist who is considered the co-father of the internet; Juliette Gordon Low, founder of the Girl Scouts of the USA; and Marlee Matlin, an Academy Award winning actress, are just a few individuals whose contributions will be celebrated this month.

On the state level, Gerry Gordon-Brown was a student at Kentucky State College at the time of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1964 visit to Frankfort. Despite profound hearing loss, she was one of several thousand who marched in support of civil rights in the state, a day that led her into

a lifetime of advocacy. In addition, Sandra Mae Frank, a Louisville native, has performed on Broadway and in numerous television series, recently portraying Dr. Wilder for several seasons on NBC’s New Amsterdam.

“We are proud to recognize the history and contributions of all deaf and hard of hearing individuals, especially those of our native Kentuckians,” said Anita Dowd, executive director of the Kentucky Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. “Deaf History Month is an opportunity for all Kentuckians to learn more about hearing loss and its impact, and the importance of communication access for everyone.”

Dowd said Kentuckians can also take advantage of the Kentucky Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing’s free presentations, workshops and trainings for groups and offices that request them. Topics include employment, health care, the justice system, sensitivity training, advocacy and education, as well as workshops that can be tailored to the audience’s needs.

# Morehead State announces launch of MSW program to meet regional need for social workers

**Herald Report**

Morehead State University is launching a Master of Social Work (MSW) program next year with the support of a \$310,000 grant from the Kentucky Association of Health Plans (KAHP).

“Behavioral health and substance use disorder are major priorities for commercial and Medicaid managed care plans in the Commonwealth,” said Tom Stephens, president and CEO of KAHP. “We know this investment in a great institution will help Kentucky in its efforts to enlist more well-trained social workers. To play a role in kickstarting something new is really exciting for our membership.”

The grant was announced Thursday, April 11, at a press conference on campus. MSU will receive \$145,000 in the first and second years and \$20,000 in the third year of the grant

while the social work program navigates the accreditation process with the Council on Social Work Education. MSU collaborated with Mountain Comprehensive Care and Primary Plus to apply for the grant.

“The eastern region of Kentucky has a high demand for these services but does not have enough advanced degree social workers to meet the demand. In particular, healthcare providers, recovery centers, community health centers, and other agencies in our region have expressed a need for Licensed Clinical Social Workers,” said Dr. Becky Davison (Class of 2023), director of the social work program at MSU. “The intention of this partnership is to build a high-quality master’s in social work program here at Morehead State University that recruits and trains social workers to serve our region and enhance the health and well-

being of our local communities.”

The program will offer two specialized tracks: behavioral health (clinical) and substance use disorder. The MSW program will offer a generalist track for students who still need a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and an advanced standing track for students who have earned BSW degrees. In addition, MSU will offer a five-year pathway to allow students to earn both a BSW and an MSW.

The program plans to launch in the fall 2025 semester, pending final approval from the Council on Postsecondary Education.

Learn more about programs in the Department of Social Work, Sociology and Criminology by emailing Department Chair Dr. Connie Hardesty at c.hardesty@moreheadstate.edu or calling 606-783-2273.

## Poetry

from our readers

**Patience**

By *Patty S. Toller*

As I went to prayer on bended knee  
I heard my Father say  
The answer’s not in reach my child  
A wait ahead will lay.  
My heart leaped deep inside  
As I waited expectantly  
But all too soon I realized  
It wasn’t meant to be.  
As each day passed, the years slipped by  
I thought, “Did He forget?”  
And yet I put my trust in Him

He’d never failed me yet.  
And then one day, the answer came  
No more behind closed doors  
My Father knows what’s best for me  
I’ll trust Him evermore.

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**COMMUNITY EVENTS**

**BEGINNING AGAIN GROUP OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS** - Sunday at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church, 239 KY 59, Vanceburg.

**THE CITY OF VANCEBURG** announces the return of the 2nd annual River Town Fair, scheduled for Saturday, May 4. Festivities will kick off at 10:00 a.m. and continue until 6:00 p.m. Mayor Dane Blankenship will extend a warm welcome to all attendees at the Veteran’s Park at 10:00 a.m. The day’s festivities include a dessert auction, a performance by the Lewis County High School Drama Department, Disney characters featured at the festival, Chalk Art Contest, Magic Show, Hula Hoop Contest sponsored by Lewis County Little League, Bouncy Houses, Petting Zoo, Gem Mining, Kid’s Barrel Train Rides, and musicians. The Lewis County Health Department will be having health screenings and wellness activities at the George Morgan Thomas House starting at 10:00 a.m. Primary Plus will have their new mobile health unit set up on Second Street. Food vendors. Main Street will be bustling with creativity as artists, crafters, and various vendors showcase their talents!

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Kenneth and Kathy McCann  
100 W 2nd Street  
Vanceburg, KY 41179

Land owners of 190 Rowley Street, Vanceburg, KY 41179 do announce plans to set up a mobile at this location.

Any comments or objections should be directed to: Kentucky Division of Water, Flood Plain Management Section, 300 Sower Blvd., Frankfort, KY 40601. Phone # 502-564-3410.

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