

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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*****For Immediate Release*****

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As Tulips Bloom in Skagit County, So Does Traffic

Skagit County, Washington - As the Skagit County Tulip Festival kicks off April 1st, 2010, the Washington State Patrol would like to prepare drivers for a safe commute to and from the Tulip Fields. The WSP, along with local law enforcement agencies want to ensure drivers know the ins and outs of getting around the heavily congested tulip fields in the vicinity of Mount Vernon and La Conner. Our goal is to prevent collisions from occurring due to increased visual distractions outside the vehicle.

Drivers should watch for heavier than normal traffic, both north and southbound Interstate 5 from Exit 221 in Conway, through Exit 230 (SR-20) in Burlington. Drivers should pay particular attention when approaching on and off-ramps and intersections. Drivers should also pay particular attention if driving on SR-20 between the City of Burlington and Anacortes due to higher than normal traffic volumes. Traffic is also expected to be congested along SR-536 (Memorial Highway) between Mount Vernon and SR-20. We also want drivers to watch for a high volume of bicycle and pedestrian traffic along SR-536 between Beaver Marsh Road and Bradshaw road, which are popular festival areas.

We're asking drivers to slow down and take their time. They should make a plan and expect heavier than normal traffic volumes in these areas. This will hopefully ease frustrations, remembering they will not be the only ones waiting to tip toe through the tulips.

"The last thing we want is to have a serious injury or fatality collision," said WSP District 7 Captain Ken Ginnard. "We want drivers to have a save trip to and from the festival," He said.

Drivers can check the WSDOT Web site for construction work and collisions that may affect travel plans - www.wsdot.wa.gov/Traffic/trafficalerts/default.aspx. Specifically, drivers should be prepared for around-the-clock lane closures on southbound I-5 near the Skagit/Snohomish county line. More information about the project and lanes closures can be found on the WSDOT Web site - www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/I5/sr532toStarbird/.

Information about the Tulip Festival can be found at www.tulipfestival.org.

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