



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **University of Delaware and Roadway Safety Foundation Launch *Safe and Mobile Delaware Campaign***

(Wilmington, DE) -- To educate older drivers in Delaware about safer road programs and policies designed specifically for them, The University of Delaware and the Roadway Safety Foundation today launched the *Safe and Mobile Delaware* campaign.

The campaign includes a nearly ½ hour documentary on older driver safety in Delaware that will “premiere” in February on WHY TV 12. Other campaign features include both radio and television public service announcements as well as a campaign web site – [www.safeandmobiledelaware.org](http://www.safeandmobiledelaware.org).

“As Delaware’s elderly population grows over the next decade, roadway and intersection designs will become increasingly important to keeping the state’s overall population safe and independent,” said Gregory M. Cohen, Executive Director of the Roadway Safety Foundation (RSF). “This calls for state and local policy makers, transportation planners and engineers, social service providers, and community leaders to work together to provide appropriate design strategies and awareness programs.”

The goal of the campaign is to educate older drivers about the findings of a May 2007 University of Delaware report titled, *Assessing the Needs of Delaware’s Older Drivers*. “The report takes an in-depth look at the issues and implications related to driving and long-term mobility including a detailed look at current road designs to determine whether modifications are necessary to better accommodate Delaware’s older drivers,” said Bernard Dworsky, Senior Policy Advisor with the University of Delaware’s Institute for Public Administration. “Possible modifications that are discussed include making intersections more driver- and pedestrian-friendly and improving traffic signs and signal design.” The report can be downloaded at [www.ipa.udel.edu/publications/ElderlyDrivers.pdf](http://www.ipa.udel.edu/publications/ElderlyDrivers.pdf).

Delaware mirrors the U.S. in terms of its population aged 60 and older which is growing at a substantial rate. In 2003, approximately 15 percent of the state’s licensed drivers fell into the 65 plus age group – this percentage is expected to increase over the next decade with seniors living longer and active lives.

Factors that pose specific risks to senior drivers are many including: impaired vision; diminished cognition; decreased motor-function and reaction time; increased difficulty maintaining vehicle; increased injury from crashes; and increased vehicle congestion and travel speeds.

“The University of Delaware, working in collaboration with the Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT), has developed recommendations specifically related to older drivers

and pedestrians,” said Mark Luszcz, Assistant Chief Traffic Engineer with DelDOT. “These include, among many other topics, better signing, improved pedestrian signalization, and the implementation of roundabouts where appropriate. Most, if not all, of these recommendations will benefit all road users. Many of these recommendations were being considered or implemented already; however, the University of Delaware team helped focus our attention on issues most critical to the needs of Delaware's older population.”

According to the Census – there will be a 133 percent increase in the 65 and older population in Delaware between 2000 and 2030. In Delaware in 2008 there were 21 individuals 65 or older who were killed in crashes. There were 15 fatal crashes involving a driver age 65 or older. There were 7 drivers 65 or older killed in these crashes. Eleven of those killed were passengers and three were pedestrians. A total of 567 individuals 65 and older were injured in crashes in Delaware in 2008.

“As our population ages, we need to do everything possible to make Delaware a safe place for seniors,” said Rita M. Landgraf, Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services. “Making it easy for older Delawareans to safely drive throughout the state can only serve to increase their self confidence, mobility, and independence.”

“Livable Communities are places where people of all ages and abilities have a range of travel choices, such as driving, walking, or public transportation, to get safely where they need and want to go,” says Dennis Christie, AARP Executive Council member. “A key component in achieving that end are roads, signage, and transportation systems in general, that are designed so that everyone, especially older drivers, can safely arrive at their destination.”

In addition to engineering and design solutions, other tools are also available to help drivers safely stay on the road longer.

“We want to give older people unique resources for their minds and bodies,” said Catherine L. Rossi, Manager of Public and Government Affairs for AAA Mid-Atlantic. “AAA provides tools that can help keep Delaware’s older and wiser drivers on the road as long as safely possible.”

Such tools include driver improvement courses and CarFIT, offered by both AAA and AARP. CarFIT involves safety managers visiting senior centers and other places to help older drivers assess their vehicle to see if their car fits their body properly.

RSF is the only national organization solely dedicated to reducing deaths by improving the physical characteristics of America's roadways - design and engineering, operating conditions, removal of roadside hazards, and the effective use of safety features. RSF works to attain its goals by building awareness through media campaigns and outreach activities, developing educational materials and forming roadway safety partnerships between the private and public sectors. For additional information on RSF please visit [www.roadwaysafety.org](http://www.roadwaysafety.org). For additional information on the *Safe and Mobile Delaware* campaign visit [www.safeandmobiledelaware.org](http://www.safeandmobiledelaware.org).