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AAA AND FDOT URGE DRIVERS TO 'PUT IT DOWN' TO PROMOTE NEW TEXTING BAN LAW

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TAMPA, Fla. (September 30, 2013) – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and AAA are partnering to reduce distracted driving on Florida's roadways by educating the public about the new Florida law banning texting while driving.

Beginning October 1, 2013, the "Florida ban on Texting While Driving Law" goes into effect, which will help promote safe driving and address critical issues related to distracted driving in the state of Florida. The provisions of the law state that a person may not operate a motor vehicle in motion while manually typing into a wireless communications device known as texting, emailing and instant messaging (non-voice).

"AAA applauds Florida for taking steps to save lives," said Amy Stracke, managing director, AAA Traffic Safety Advocacy, The Auto Club Group. "Too many needless deaths are occurring because of vehicle crashes caused by distracted driving."

To help educate motorists, events are planned and information is being shared across the state during the month of October. This includes participation at high school assemblies, radio public service announcements, collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, and a variety of print messaging and electronic notices along Florida highways and turnpikes. Organizations interested in helping promote the new law can visit their local AAA office for information.

Sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent of driving, at 55 mph, the length of an entire football field, blind. With more than 6 billion text messages sent each day in the United States, it is important to remind drivers to "Put It Down".

FDOT Secretary Ananth Prasad said, "Distracted driving is a serious danger on our roadways. We're reminding drivers to be responsible and not text while driving."

Safety Tips:

- Put the cell phone away or silence it while driving so you are not tempted to respond while in motion.
- Download an app that disables the device while in motion.
- Designate a non-driving texter to respond for you.

The *Put It Down* campaign is part of a comprehensive approach that includes law enforcement and education.

The Auto Club Group (ACG) is the second largest AAA club in North America. ACG and its affiliates provide membership, travel, insurance and financial services offerings to approximately 8.8 million members across 11 states and two U.S. territories including Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands; most of Illinois, Minnesota; and a portion of Indiana. ACG belongs to the national AAA federation with nearly 54 million members in the United States and Canada and whose mission includes protecting and advancing freedom of mobility and improving traffic safety.

<http://www.aaa.com/>