



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) Launches

Large Scale National Safety Campaign

MDX Asking 1 Million Drivers to Join Them in Taking the Pledge Against Texting While Driving

MIAMI (April 26, 2011) – The Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) has announced the launch of a large-scale safety campaign, *The Last Word*, which seeks to catalyze a major shift in driving behavior with a focus on the potentially deadly consequences of texting while driving. An emotionally charged online short film of the same name, *The Last Word*, will live on the campaign website (www.textthelastword.com), where visitors are encouraged to take the pledge to not text and drive and are urged to pass the message – and the call to action – on to loved ones. MDX’s goal for the program is to generate one million pledges against texting and driving. It is estimated that more than 440,000 people are killed or injured every year as a result of distracted driving, which includes texting.

The Last Word is four minutes in length and showcases the potentially deadly aftermath of texting while driving. To watch the video, people are encouraged to visit the [campaign website](#), where they will also be able to obtain information and learn the disturbing facts about distracted driving. *The Last Word* was produced by Miami-based national ad agency Ronin Advertising Group.

“Texting and driving has become a pandemic and it is MDX’s objective to do all we can to promote safe driving practices and ultimately change drivers’ behavior,” said Cindy Polo-Serantes, MDX communications manager. “What we’ve realized is that many of the campaigns

out there focus on the driver's perspective; what we're trying to show is the aftereffect on one's family – to really bring the message home so that we can help save lives."

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes serious enough to injure themselves. And the University of Utah reported that cell phone use while driving, whether it's hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 81 percent of the U.S. population admits to texting while driving.

"MDX does everything possible to make our roadways safe," says Felix Lasarte, MDX Chairman. "But now we are asking drivers to shift their mindset, change their behavior, and join us by taking the pledge to not text and drive."

Throughout the course of the campaign, which will be an ongoing effort, MDX is planning events throughout Miami-Dade County and beyond, encouraging the community to watch the video, sign the pledge and spread the word. Community outreach will begin with the Miami-Dade College commencement ceremonies on April 29th, where MDX will have an interactive booth set up and will pass out t-shirts printed with a Quick Response (QR) code that, when scanned with a Smartphone, will take people directly to the website where they can watch *The Last Word*. MDX will also give out a \$15 SunPass to graduates who take the pledge to not text and drive. For more information, please visit www.textthelastword.com. And spread the word.

ABOUT MDX

The Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) is a public entity and agency of the state of Florida. MDX is funded almost entirely by toll revenue and is dedicated to making Miami-Dade County residents' commutes safer and more efficient. MDX operates and maintains five expressways: SR 112/Airport Expressway, SR 836/Dolphin Expressway, SR 874/Don Shula Expressway, SR 878/Snapper Creek Expressway, and SR 924/Gratigny Parkway.

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