

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) Proclaims Father's Day "No Texting and Driving Day"**

*"Promise Your Children They Won't Lose You to a Text Message"*

*MDX Asking Dads Across Country to Put Down Phones While Driving*

MIAMI (June 16, 2011) – The Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) has proclaimed Father's Day "No Texting and Driving Day," urging dads in Miami, across the country and throughout the world to put their kids before their phones and do all they can to get home safely. The Father's Day initiative is part of MDX's newest and largest safety campaign, *The Last Word*, a poignant and powerful short film showcasing the potentially deadly consequences that texting and driving can have on a family. MDX has launched the campaign in hopes of raising awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and of making roads across the U.S. and beyond safer for everyone.

MDX's goal is to generate one million pledges against texting and driving and plans to announce additional initiatives to support this goal throughout the course of the campaign. It is estimated that more than 440,000 people are killed or injured every year as a result of distracted driving, which includes texting.

"Texting and driving has become a pandemic and though MDX has proclaimed Father's Day 'No Texting and Driving Day,' we are asking dads across the country to commit to making every day a safer driving day by taking the pledge," said Cindy Polo-Serantes, MDX communications manager. "It is our objective to do all we can to promote safe driving and ultimately change drivers' behavior in hopes that this behavior influences the next generation of drivers."

Dads can make a commitment to their children this Father's Day by visiting the campaign website [www.TextTheLastWord.com](http://www.TextTheLastWord.com), watching *The Last Word*, and taking

the pledge to not text and drive. *The Last Word* was produced by Miami-based national ad agency Ronin Advertising Group.

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 but according to the National Safety Council, 28 percent of traffic accidents occur when people talk on cell phones or send text messages while driving – which is something that, unfortunately, we can't physically control,” said Felix Lasarte, MDX chairman. “So this Father's Day, and hopefully every day moving forward, we are asking dads to shift their behavior, take the pledge to not text and drive, and promise their children they won't lose them to a text message.”

Throughout the course of the campaign, which is an ongoing effort, MDX will be planning and participating in events around the country, encouraging local communities to watch the video, take the pledge 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.

# # #