



DELAWARE: DeIDOT to launch work-zone safety campaign

By Summer Harlow
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WILMINGTON — Caesar Rodney's neon yellow safety vest was too small, but a seamstress' last-minute alterations should get Rodney Square's well-known statue outfitted in time for a work-zone safety campaign that starts Thursday.

Caesar Rodney won't be the only statue sporting a fluorescent reflective safety material in coming weeks.

Throughout Delaware, statues, buses, billboards and radio ads will be used as part of the Delaware Department of Transportation's new safety education campaign reminding motorists to slow down when driving in work zones.

Work-zone safety is the first of three DeIDOT education safety campaigns planned this year. During the summer and fall, the department will concentrate on neighborhood road safety and pedestrian safety.

RT&E Integrated Communications in Wilmington is working with the transportation department to develop the safety campaigns.

The work-zone safety campaign, timed to coincide with National Work Zone Awareness Week in April, kicks off Thursday.

"Essentially the campaign is, 'Hey, we're working here,'" said Chick Housam, chief executive officer for RT&E Integrated Communications. "These folks are on the roads every day, taking their lives in their hands."

It's not just the road workers who are at risk when drivers don't slow down, DeIDOT spokesman Darrel Cole said.

Four out of five work-zone injuries happen to motorists, he said.

"We know there are a lot more near-misses than actual fatalities, and that's what's frightening," Cole said. "Any DeIDOT employee has dozens of horror stories. It's a dangerous, dangerous job. The focus is to remind people that for these men and women, the work zone is their office."

The campaigns are being paid for with \$500,000 in federal funding that can be used only for educational purposes, Cole said. This is the first time DeIDOT has received this safety education-specific funding, Cole said.

Housam said he thinks the campaign will have a real effect on drivers. "We're in a situation where we realistically could save someone's life, and that's not something we take lightly," he said.

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