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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Drivers Advised to Respect Flagging Personnel *Motorists Urged to Drive Carefully in Work Zones*

ANCHORAGE, AK -- Public Employees Local 71 is coordinating closely with the State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) to remind motorists to drive responsibly.

Motorists are reminded to slow down and drive carefully in work zones throughout the year and recognize the importance of respecting flagging personnel. Flagging is a uniquely vulnerable position. Dennis Moen, Business Manager, says in response to yesterday's incident where a distracted driver struck a flagger, "We want to remind motorists that flagging personnel are not attempting to disrupt traffic – they are doing their jobs and want to get home safely at the end of each workday. Flaggers are there to keep others safe. Most workers are surrounded by metal, while our flaggers have no such protection. Flaggers have families too."

The factors which contribute to work zone crashes include speeding, cellphone use and inattentive, distracted or aggressive driving. These behaviors are always discouraged, but they can be especially dangerous in work zones. Our crews work to keep our roads and bridges safe. We need to drive carefully in our work zones and show respect to our workers.

The new "Move Over" law, requires drivers to use due care, slow down and safely move over when approaching vehicles stopped along the roadway. This is for good reason. When you see a vehicle on the side of the road, there's a high likelihood that there's a person along the roadway outside that vehicle, vulnerable. We want our members to be safe while they're ensuring the safety of others.

Alaska averages approximately 135 highway work zone crashes each year. DOT&PF reminds drivers to stay alert and be cautious when driving through work zones by minimizing distractions, following signs and flaggers, and reducing speeds. For more information about work zone safety visit: http://dot.alaska.gov/comm/pressbox/arch_2018/PR18-1019.shtml

Public Employees Local 71 continues to work closely with DOT&PF on this important issue for the safety of our members and the public.

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Local 71 is a statewide Local Union representing roughly 2,500 members in public sector employment. We have offices in Fairbanks, and Juneau, and a Main Office in Anchorage. Our members are hard workers and good neighbors who contribute greatly to their communities. We proudly offer members-only benefits including training, job referrals, scholarships, health trust, discounts, and other support. **More information** may be found at www.Local71.com or our Facebook page.