Louisiana now No. 10 in fatalities

By JAY GRELEN
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For two years running, Louisiana ranked among the top three states in a rating of highway traffic deaths. But with a drop in deaths from 1,013 in 1982 to 943 in 1983, Louisiana now shares the No. 10 spot with Alabama and New Hampshire, according to statistics compiled by the National Safety Council and supplied by the Louisiana State Police.

The rankings are for the rate of traffic-related deaths in the United States per 100 million miles driven.

In 1981, Louisiana shared the No. 2 spot with Arizona with 4.9 deaths per 100 million miles driven. Wyoming ranked the highest with a 5.1 rate.

The next year, Louisiana shared the No. 2 spot with West Virginia with a 4.3 rate. New Mexico led in 1982 with a 4.9 rate.

Louisiana's 1983 rate was 3.6, according to the statistics. The national death rate in 1983 was 2.7 per 100 million miles driven.

The report also compares traffic fatalities with state populations. In that rating, Louisiana ranked 22nd with 21.3 traffic deaths per 100,000 people.

The national rate for 1983 was 3.6 deaths per 100,000 people, the report shows.

In 1981, 1,162 people died on Louisiana roads. Although the number of deaths declined to 1,025 in 1982, Louisiana remained No. 2.

Last year, 943 people died in traffic accidents in Louisiana, a 9 percent decline from 1982, according to the report.

The decline from 1981 to 1983 was 21 percent, according to the report.

Louisiana State Police is projecting a 15 percent to 20 percent decrease in fatalities for 1984, according to Trooper Mike Edmonson.

Nationwide, 51,400 people died in wrecks in 1981, 46,000 died in 1982 and 44,300 died in 1983, the report shows.

The decline was 4 percent from 1982 to 1983 and was 14 percent from 1981 to 1983.

In 1983, Mississippi and New Mexico led the nation with 4.5 deaths per 100 million miles traveled, according to the report.

The other top 10 states and their rates of death per 100 million miles driven are:

- Montana, 4.4; Idaho, Illinois and Hawaii, 4.3; Nevada, 4.2; Arizona, 4.1; Maine, 3.9; Texas and West Virginia, 3.8; Oregon and South Carolina, 3.7; and Louisiana, Alabama and New Hampshire, 3.6.

The states with the lowest 10 rates per miles driven are:

- Rhode Island, 1.7; New Jersey, 1.8; Massachusetts and Minnesota, 2.1; Nebraska, 2.2; North Dakota, 2.3; Connecticut, Maryland, Ohio and Virginia, 2.4; Indiana, 2.5; Georgia, Washington and Wisconsin, 2.6; California, Illinois, Kansas, Pennsylvania and Tennessee, 2.7; and Hawaii, Iowa and Utah, 2.8.

The states with the most fatalities per 100,000 people and the death rates are:

- New Mexico, 40; Montana, 36.1; Alaska, 35.9; Wyoming, 35; Nevada, 29.6; Mississippi, 28.3; Idaho, 27.3; Oklahoma, 27; South Carolina, 26.6; Texas, 25.7.

The states with the least fatalities per 100,000 people and the rates of death are:

- Rhode Island, 10.4; Massachusetts, 11; New York, 11.8; New Jersey, 12.4; Illinois and Minnesota, 13.5; Connecticut, 14.1; Hawaii, 14.2; Michigan and Pennsylvania, 14.3; Ohio, 14.4; and Maryland and Wisconsin, 15.5.