



NEWS RELEASE

April 9, 2013

For Additional Information:

Meridian Police Officer Wins National Public Service Award

Meridian, ID – April 9, 2013) – The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has honored Meridian Sgt. John Gonzales with its Award for Public Service. Each year, NHTSA gives this award to a handful of individuals who go above and beyond to promote highway safety across America.

“Sgt. Gonzales is extremely committed to making the roads in Meridian and Idaho safe,” said Meridian Police Chief, Jeff Lavey. “John dedicates so much of his time to teaching drivers about dangers facing them on the road and helping prepare them for those situations. I know he has played a huge part in making our roads safer for everyone.”

Sgt. Gonzales has been with the Meridian Police Department for 12 years. In 2010, he was named the traffic supervisor. He is responsible for the Meridian Police Department’s drivers’ education programs, traffic accident prevention outreach and traffic enforcement.

Keeping young drivers safe is particularly important to Sgt. Gonzales. He helped bring the drivers’ course “Alive at 25” to Meridian and has made sure the program has continued to help young drivers be safer on the road. For the past two years, he has taken a group of teenagers to the National Organizations of Youth Safety in Washington, D.C. so they can help educate their peers on the dangers of driving under the influence and texting behind the wheel. This fall, Sgt. Gonzales, along with the help of AT&T and the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council, got more than 1,000 teenagers to pledge to stop texting while driving. He also helps organize the Treasure Valley Youth Summit, an event designed to put high school students in real-life situations so they can understand the impacts their choices can have.

“I am extremely proud of all Sgt. Gonzales has done for our community,” said Mayor Tammy de Weerd. “Traffic accidents are the leading cause of death of young people in Idaho and Sgt. Gonzales is doing meaningful work to try to change that statistic.”

Sgt. Gonzales will be recognized by the NHTSA on April 15 at the annual Lifesavers Conference in Denver, Colorado.

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The City of Meridian is located at the center of the Treasure Valley in southwest Idaho, minutes from the State Capitol. Founded in 1893 and incorporated as a city in 1903, Meridian is now one of Idaho’s largest and fastest growing communities. As the home to many young families,

Meridian is a vibrant community whose mission is to be a premier city to live, work and raise a family. Family Circle Magazine has selected Meridian as one of their Top 10 Best Cities for Families, Money Magazine's named it one of the 100 Best Places to Live, and America's Promise Alliance and ING have named Meridian one of the nation's 100 Best Communities for Young People five times. For more information about Meridian, visit www.meridianscity.org.