

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2012

Contact:

Claire O'Brien, Marketing Coordinator, AAMVA

703-908-2955

cobrien@aamva.org

Washington State Patrol Chief to Receive Prestigious Achievement Award

Arlington, VA - The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) will present Washington State Patrol (WSP) Chief John R. Batiste with the Martha Irwin Lifetime Achievement Award for Highway Safety at its 79th Annual International Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, August 20-22, 2012. This award is presented to a distinguished individual in recognition of his commitment to and accomplishments in highway safety over the course of his career. Previous recipients include Major David Salmon of the New York State Police; Colonel Mark Trostel, Chief of the Colorado State Patrol; The Honorable John Hill, former Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and Major in the Indiana State Police; and Commissioner Joe Farrow of the California Highway Patrol.

Chief Batiste's dedication to advancing public safety and highway safety initiatives in Washington has been the cornerstone of a distinguished career. Batiste embraced Washington State's Strategic Highway Safety Plan – Target Zero – which focused on gradually decreasing deaths and serious injuries until they are eliminated by 2030. He implemented plans to support this strategy, focusing on data-driven decisions and solutions to decrease highway fatalities and injuries. Through partnerships with Washington State Safety Traffic Commission as well as with state, local, federal, and community agencies, Washington State Patrol focused on combating collision-causing violations and behaviors to prevent further violations that can lead to serious injuries and fatalities. Batiste also expanded highway patrol efforts in Washington by forming three full-time DUI teams. Since the formation of these teams, patrol has increased in three county areas, which has resulted in an even greater decline in fatalities than projected in their two-year goal.

“The Chief began his career as a front-line trooper determined to reduce the number of highway deaths and collisions,” said Washington Governor Chris Gregoire. “He has grown to lead and mentor so many others in that role that he has become perhaps the single greatest influence on traffic safety in our state.”

Batiste was also a key figure in passing a number of legislative initiatives related to highway safety, including promoting pedestrian and bicycle safety, enhancing the use of ignition locks, and requiring the collection of distracted driver collision data. Under Batiste's tenure as chief,

the number of deaths related to highway accidents has decreased to the lowest rate Washington has seen in 60 years.

“Chief Batiste’s many contributions to the cause of traffic safety have had a profound and very real impact on Washington’s roads,” said AAMVA President & CEO Neil Schuster. “In presenting Chief Batiste with the Martha Irwin Lifetime Achievement Award, the AAMVA community recognizes the impressive sum of his long and decorated career—decades of hard work and commitment that has helped save lives.”

Over the span of his 36 years of service, Chief Batiste also served as the assistant chief to the Tacoma Police Department and as deputy chief at Port of Seattle before being appointed as chief in 2005 by Governor Gregoire. Batiste sits on the executive board of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs. He also serves on the board of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and is the General Chair of IACP’s State and Provincial Police Division.

Under Batiste’s impressive leadership, WSP received numerous honors and recognition. The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance ranked WSP as one of the top three states to have the best record for commercial vehicle safety in 2011. Additional honors include: International Association of Chiefs of Police Best Law Enforcement Agency in the Nation (2008), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program Leadership Award (2008), and receiving Flagship Status, the highest level of accreditation, from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

Founded in 1933, AAMVA actively promotes traffic safety and uniformity among North American jurisdictions. Representing chief motor vehicle administrators and law enforcement officials, the association develops uniform programs in driver licensing, vehicle titling/registration and motor carrier services, among others.

For more information visit www.aamva.org.

****AAMVA****