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National Road Rage Survey Ranks New York as Least Courteous City in the U.S.

Norwalk, Conn. – June 16, 2009 – The commute to work can be an unpleasant one for people across the country, but the road seems to be even bumpier for New York drivers.

The fourth annual **In the Driver’s Seat Road Rage Survey**, commissioned by AutoVantage, a leading national auto club, found that **New York is the least courteous city in terms of road rage**, compared to 24 other major U.S. cities. Last year, New York was in the No. 3 position on the same list. **Big Apple drivers unseated their counterparts in Miami** – who held the No. 1 least courteous position for three years in a row – to lay claim to this dubious title. Portland, Ore., ranked as the most courteous city.

Contributing to its move “up” in the ranking, New York drivers were the clear leaders in terms of reacting to rude or aggressive behavior by others. Specifically, they were **most likely to wave their fists or arms at another driver in the past month**, at 21 percent. New York also ranked No. 1 (tied with Detroit and Sacramento) as the city with drivers **most likely to make an obscene gesture at a fellow driver**, and ranked No. 2 (tied with D.C.) for horn honking.

The **In the Driver’s Seat 2009 AutoVantage Road Rage Survey**, released today, was conducted to determine the driving habits and attitudes of commuters across the country and to learn more about consumer views on the topic of road rage.

“At AutoVantage, we’ve made the drive easier every day by completing more than 1 million service calls for our customers, with everything from 24-hour roadside assistance to towing to lockout service and more. This survey is another way we assist drivers by revealing the latest driving trends and attitudes to educate and influence safer—and perhaps more courteous—driving habits,” said Brad Eggleston, vice president of AutoVantage.

The survey’s best and worst cities are:

Least Courteous Cities (Worst Road Rage):

2009

1. New York
2. Dallas/Fort Worth
3. Detroit
4. Atlanta
5. Minneapolis/St. Paul

2008

1. Miami
2. Boston
3. New York
4. Baltimore
5. Washington, D.C.

Most Courteous Cities (Least Road Rage):

2009

1. Portland, Ore.
2. Cleveland
3. Baltimore
4. Sacramento
5. Pittsburgh

2008

1. Pittsburgh
2. Portland, Ore.
3. Seattle
4. Minneapolis/St. Paul
5. Cleveland

(MORE)

Other cities surveyed include Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Denver, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, Tampa, and Washington, D.C.

To boost safety awareness, this year's survey sought to **define road rage in America**. Responses overwhelmingly pointed to two important attributes:

- **Angry drivers**, including drivers who overreact and lose their tempers.
- **Aggressive driving**, including cutting into lanes, tailgating, speeding and honking.

When asked the major causes of road rage, the most frequent responses were:

- Bad/careless driving, such as cutting others off, speeding, tailgating, talking on cell phones, making obscene gestures and not using proper signals
- People who are angry, stressed, frustrated, tired or had a bad day
- People being in a hurry, impatient or running late
- Traffic problems, accidents, poor road conditions or construction
- Inconsiderate, disrespectful, selfish drivers who think they own the road

Behaviors by other drivers that cause stress for commuters and can lead to road rage include:

- Drivers who talk on their cell phones (84 percent see this every day)
- Driving too fast (58 percent)
- Tailgating (53 percent)
- Drivers eating or drinking while driving (48 percent)
- Texting or e-mailing while driving (37 percent)

Commuters also reported other drivers frequently:

- Cutting over without notice (43 percent see this every day)
- Doing other things – putting on makeup, shaving or reading behind the wheel (27 percent)
- Slamming on the brakes (25 percent)
- Running red lights (22 percent)

As a reaction to rude or bad driving by others, people surveyed admitted that they:

- Honk their horn at the offending driver (43 percent admit doing this every month)
- Curse at the other driver (36 percent)
- Wave their fist or arms (13 percent)
- Make an obscene gesture (10 percent)
- Call the police to report the driver (7 percent)
- Slam into the car in front of them (1 percent)

Other key findings of the study:

- **Younger drivers** and those who have the **longest commutes** say they are most likely to talk on their cell phones and drive too fast on a daily basis.
- **Talking on cell phone.** Eighty-four percent see this every day. St. Louis drivers led this category (92 percent), and Portland motorists see it the least (76 percent).
- **Driving too fast.** Across the country, 58 percent see this aggressive behavior daily. San Diego and Houston drivers were most likely to observe speeding motorists (64 percent), while Cleveland, Denver and Portland drivers were least likely to see this every day (51 percent).

- **Tailgating.** Fifty-three percent of motorists see this every day. Minneapolis drivers (65 percent) see this most often, and Pittsburgh drivers (43 percent) see this the least.
- **Eating and/or drinking.** This common road rage trigger is observed by 48 percent of drivers daily. Motorists in St. Louis (61 percent) see this most every day, while only 34 percent of drivers in Pittsburgh observe it.
- **Cutting over without notice.** Nationally, 43 percent of drivers see this every day, and motorists in Miami (54 percent) were the most likely to observe this behavior. Cleveland, Philadelphia and Portland drivers (29 percent) are least likely to see this daily.
- **Texting and/or e-mailing.** These road rage inducers scored high with 37 percent of commuters observing this behavior every day. Drivers in Detroit and San Francisco see the most text-happy drivers (47 percent), while Baltimore and Sacramento see the least (28 percent).
- **Slamming on the brakes.** Some 25 percent of drivers witness this daily, and those in Atlanta and San Diego (31 percent) are most likely to see this behavior every day. That's compared to only 19 percent in Boston.
- **Running red lights.** Twenty-two percent said they see drivers every day who run red lights. Drivers in Minneapolis are the most likely to witness this behavior daily (34 percent), while Portland motorists (11 percent) were least likely to see this offense.
- **Multi-tasking.** Overall, 27 percent said they see other drivers multi-tasking, like putting on makeup, shaving or reading, while driving. Miami (38 percent) emerged as the city where this is most likely to be seen, while Phoenix and Sacramento (19 percent) drivers were least likely to see it.

Survey Methodology

Prince Market Research, an independent marketing research company, was commissioned to conduct a nationally representative telephone study with consumers in 25 major metropolitan areas in the U.S. to learn more about consumer views on road rage. All telephone calls were conducted between Jan. 8 and March 24, 2009, during which period, a total of 2,518 interviews, lasting an average of six to eight minutes each, were completed. No incentive was offered and the sponsor of the research was not revealed. The margin of error is +/- 2 percent.

About AutoVantage

Members of AutoVantage (<http://www.autovantage.com> or 1-800-876-7787) can save from 5 to 20 percent on car care at some 19,000 service locations, including participating AAMCO, Jiffy Lube, Meineke and American Car Care Center locations. AutoVantage also offers 24-hour nationwide emergency towing, roadside assistance, and lockout protection from its network of more than 10,000 emergency roadside assistance providers. Trip routing for maps and door-to-door driving directions across the U.S. are also included. AutoVantage is offered by Affinion Group, a leader in the membership, insurance and loyalty marketing businesses, providing products and services that touch the lives of millions of Americans.

About Affinion Group

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