

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Virginia DMV**

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### **Driven to Protect**

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## **Virginia Marks One Year Anniversary of Real-World Testing for Life-Saving, Vehicle-Integrated Alcohol Detection Technology**

*Driven to Protect partnership between the Virginia DMV, James River Transportation, and automakers shares success during first year of operations.*

**RICHMOND** — This week marks the first anniversary of Virginia’s **Driven to Protect Initiative**, which the Commonwealth launched in 2018 to test innovative technology to eliminate drunk driving and save lives on Virginia roads. Virginia was the first state to establish a partnership with the **Driver Alcohol Detection System for Safety Program (DADSS)** and deploy the first-of-its-kind, vehicle-integrated alcohol detection system (ADS) that can determine when a driver is impaired with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above the legal limit of 0.08 percent.

“Virginia is honored to help develop a solution to a critical issue that plagues the Commonwealth: the crashes and fatalities on our roads due to impaired driving,” said **DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb**. “In 2018, 278 people were killed and 4,475 injured on Virginia’s roadways in alcohol-impaired crashes. Through on-road tests and attendance at regional events, Driven to Protect has helped collect vital data and educated Virginians about responsible driving behavior.”

An integral part of the initiative has been Driven to Protect’s partnership with **James River Transportation**, who have been a leader in traffic safety in the Richmond area for nearly a century. They have helped conduct in-vehicle, on-road test trials with prototype sensors in their Ford Flex vehicles and in the past year, the sensors in the ADS-equipped commercial fleet have accumulated over 46,000 miles and 29,000 breath samples. The ADS sensors have been in operation for nearly 5,000 hours as drivers took clients from Richmond International Airport and Norfolk International Airport to their destinations.

“Our drivers have been invaluable in showing how the sensors respond to real people in real driving conditions,” said **James River Transportation President Stephen Story**. “We are excited to work with the DADSS Program as they use this data and feedback to refine and improve their technology in preparation for widespread commercialization.”

The ADS works by measuring the alcohol level present in a driver's naturally exhaled breath. A small sensor analyzes only the breath molecules of the driver using infrared light. The sensor will be programmable to a zero-tolerance policy for parents of teen drivers, or to a BAC of 0.08 percent — the legal limit in all 50 states except Utah. For commercial fleets, the BAC will be programmable to the standard BAC limit for fleet operators of 0.04 percent.

“In just one year, Driven to Protect and James River Transportation have been instrumental in helping us develop an unobtrusive system that doesn't hassle sober drivers to help prevent drunk driving and save lives,” said **Rob Strassburger, President and CEO of the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety**. “We are making exciting progress toward the finalization of the Alcohol Detection System that, once deployed as a consumer option in the 2025 timeframe, will become the safety belt of our time.”

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*The DADSS Program brings together the Automotive Coalition for Traffic Safety (ACTS), a nonprofit organization wholly funded by the world's leading automakers, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles, in one of the most important government and private sector partnerships in recent years. Public-private partnerships like DADSS have led to innovations that enhance our everyday lives, such as the internet, GPS and the microchip. The Program is developing a first-of-its-kind technology called the alcohol detection system that will detect when a driver is impaired with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above 0.08 percent, and prevent a vehicle from moving.*

For more information about the Driven to Protect Initiative, visit <http://www.driventoprotect.org>.