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## TRAVELING MEMORIAL DAY FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

(GREAT FALLS, MT – 07/18/18) It's been described a "Traveling Memorial Day" by some and an "American cultural phenomenon" by others as the Spirit Ride continues the unique journey it began in June of 2017 to promote public awareness of the Move Over law. The ceremonial Spirit casket has been relayed throughout the nation from tow truck to tow truck, and before year's end will have passed hands in 300 cities with truck processions totaling over 10,000 trucks from towing, fire, police and EMS.

The Spirit casket will relay to Benski Towing & Recovery in Great Falls, MT on 07/18/18 when police, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians and tow operators will gather for a ceremony paying tribute to fallen first responders killed on the roadways.

The focal point of the Ceremony is the Spirit casket: custom built to eight feet in length and painted by wrecker artist, Cecil Burrows. The artwork features scenes of first responders working on the roadways, depicting the risks they face. One scene shows a towman carrying the world on his back as cars whiz by. Another scene portrays a police officer at an accident scene with a truck bearing down at his back.

The color scheme of the casket represents patriotism and tragedy. On one end are red and white stripes and faded stars. On the other end are red, white, and blue bars: red symbolizing the blood sacrificed, white - the spirit of the fallen, and blue - the loss to family.

The ceremony includes a blessing recited by all present and the singing of "Bless the Spirit Riders," an original song composed as an anthem for the Spirit Ride.

Spirit Ride ceremonies also feature, twirling rain sticks, color guards, Taps buglers, bagpipers and original folk songs performed live in tribute to first responders who have been struck down while working on the roadway. The man who built the casket, veteran singer, songwriter Mike Corbin, is on hand to sing the Spirit Ride's anthem, Bless the Spirit Riders.

Processions of up to 100 trucks follow the casket which carries the message, Slow Down, Move Over. There is a Move Over law in each state of the Union, designed to protect first responders and other roadside workers, but according to the National Safety Commission, 71% of Americans are not aware of this law.

The Spirit Ride has been generating TV, Radio, Print and Internet media coverage of its ceremonies and processions all across America, and most importantly its message of Slow Down, Move Over.

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### NATIONAL PRESS CONTACT

Name: Janna Ross  
Phone: (305) 525-1105  
Email: [jannamedia@yahoo.com](mailto:jannamedia@yahoo.com)



### LOCAL CONTACT

Name: JOE BENSKI  
Phone: 4065645621  
Email: [benskitowing@gmail.com](mailto:benskitowing@gmail.com)



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## Points of Interest

\*The man who built the Spirit casket is the same who wrote and sings the songs live at the ceremony: Booms in the Sky, Bless the Spirit Riders, I'll Return. His name is Mike Corbin.

\*Many of the first responders present at the ceremonies were close to those who were struck down

\*Casualty rate is increasing as the problems of motorists distracted by cell and smart phones, drugs, and alcohol, persist. The Federal Highway Administration has stated that casualties on the roadside have doubled among fire, rescue, and EMS sectors in 2017. Meanwhile a tow operator is killed every six days on the nation's highways.

\*A tow operator changing a flat tire or working the levers of a car carrier is positioned but inches from traffic zooming by.

\*The Spirit Ride began in 2017 and continues through 2018 routing from North Carolina, zig-zagging cross-country to California.

\*The Spirit Ride RV Motorcoach was featured during an official ceremony at Federal DOT Headquarters, where the U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary spoke promoting awareness of the risks first responders face on the highways.

\*Many participants in the Ride have called for it to run perpetually as a travelling memorial day for First Responders.

\*The Spirit Ride is a non-profit project of American Towman Spirit Inc., a 501c3 corporation. The Ride was co-founded by American Towman Magazine and B/A Products. The Ride's support system is funded by corporate and individual contributions. All towing services are volunteered.

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