

**\*PRESS RELEASE \***

**For Immediate Publication**

**Palouse RTPO will embark on a yearlong project to educate drivers along US 195 and SR 26 with a Public Meeting - Nov. 21, 2016 at 5:30 pm – Pullman High School Auditorium.**

Clarkston – November 8, 2016 – The Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) is kicking off a “Palouse Driver Safety Education campaign” for 2016-17 for the Palouse Region. The PRTPO serves Asotin, Columbia, Garfield and Whitman county. The past year the Palouse RTPO worked on a Target zero strategic program for Palouse Region after last year’s 2 fatal crashes on US 195 before the Thanksgiving Holiday. The program was a joint efforts made by PRTPO, WSDOT, Whitman County and City of Pullman. The Palouse RTPO has been awarded the funding from Washington Traffic Safety Commission (WTSC) earlier this year and the campaign aims to kick off this month, to instill a smart driver behavior in our region. If this program and its investment can save even a one life by changing driver habits, the project will be more than a success, said Shaun Darveshi, Palouse RTPO Transportation Planning Director. For more information visit [www.PalouseRTPO.org](http://www.PalouseRTPO.org)

The Palouse RTPO Policy board has been very excited about the project prospects and everyone in the region is looking forward to participating in this campaign. The committee of various law enforcement officials and Transportation professionals will be aiming to address and educate the three specific driver categories- Young, Drowsy, and Distracted drivers. All communities within the Palouse RTPO and nearby region are encouraged to participate in this education campaign, as we all have been affected by these crashes in one way or another.

As a part of this project the Palouse RTPO will be utilizing various strategic ways to educate and target community drivers. A few of them are: to conduct various radio campaigns to educate drivers; create a Whitman County Local Community Task Force for US195; establishing a Safe Teenage Driving Week for the region. We subsequently would like to create various joint action communication plans (in coordination with WSU, U of I, and local cities and towns) to ensure effective communication with drivers on various significant community events within the region. The Palouse RTPO supports WSDOT’s Target Zero goal by 2030 and we think this project is one of the important steps to get our region moving towards the Target Zero Initiative as well.