

## **DID YOU KNOW???**

### **DRIVERS DOING BETTER WITH COMPLIANCE TO HEADLIGHT LAWS**

If you are a regular reader of these weekly articles on traffic safety and traffic law you know that many of the articles criticize drivers for failing to use their headlights during daytime driving in inclement weather. I have written in numerous articles over the years about how important it is to be seen by other drivers, and that means using your headlights when driving in rain, snow, fog, or dusk, not for you to see but for others to see you.

I confess I have not done any study to see if compliance has actually increased, but my perception is that it has. As I drove around the Malone area Thursday, October 11th, the morning saw considerable rain along with relatively dark, somewhat foggy conditions. I am happy to report that most, not all but certainly over 90 percent, were driving with full headlights on. This is very gratifying to me. Perhaps my efforts in numerous articles trying to get drivers to think about their driving and when conditions warrant headlights to turn them on is having some success. I really don't care what the reason is, I am just glad to see compliance.

Just a brief refresher – full headlights, not just daytime running lights or parking lights, are required when:

- Windshield wipers are on, even if in the intermittent position.
- Visibility is less than 1,000 feet; this means in fog or snow regardless of whether wipers are being used. A good driver drives with lights in any type of bad weather, not just when visibility is less than 1,000 feet.
- One half hour after sunset to one half hour before sunrise. This is a very antiquated law dating back over 75 years to when there were very few vehicles on the road and most didn't exceed 25 mph. Now, with closing speeds well over 100 mph, waiting until a half hour after sunset to turn lights on is much too late.

While discussing headlights, far too many drivers fail to use high beams when driving on rural roads at night. When driving on Franklin County roads, deer are always a potential problem – how can you safely drive at 55 mph with just your low beams on? Should a deer run into the road, or just be standing there, you would not be able to see it in time to avoid a collision. With high beams you would have a much better chance of avoiding a deer hit.

Lastly, vehicle and traffic law requires you to dim your high beams when you are within 500 feet of an approaching vehicle or within 200 feet of the vehicle ahead of you.

So, drivers, keep up the improvement with your compliance to headlight laws. It will make you a safer driver.