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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DMV TESTING AT DUTCH FORK HIGH SCHOOL

Irmo, S.C., February 25, 2004 – The South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles administered the first offsite beginner permit testing in the midlands at Dutch Fork High School in Irmo today. The testing is part of a pilot project that gives students the opportunity to take the knowledge test at school rather than visiting a DMV office.

To be eligible, students must be 15 years old or within six months of their fifteenth birthday. Those that pass receive a waiver that allows them to obtain their beginner permit at a DMV office without having to take the test. If they are under the age of 15 when they pass the test, they must wait until they are 15 to use the waiver.

“The testing makes it more convenient for students and parents,” said Marcia Adams, Acting DMV Executive Director. “It can be difficult to take time off from work and some parents have to make more than one trip if their teenager fails the test. By offering it in the schools, we can save time for the parents and help reduce the wait time in our branch offices.”

Dutch Fork High School and South Aiken High School are the first schools to participate in the pilot project. The schools determine the testing schedule based on the number of students who apply. Approximately 60 students signed up to take the test at Dutch Fork High School today. All of the tests are monitored by school driver instructors and scored by DMV officials.

“It’s a nice opportunity for parents and students and it’s good to see government working in their favor,” said Dutch Fork High School Principal Dr. Ron Cowden. “We are all trying to be more efficient—that’s the key.”

The group testing is just one of a series of new initiatives DMV is pursuing. DMV is expanding its services by developing new online transactions, providing an electronic interface to insurance companies, allowing dealerships to issue license plates and registrations, and expanding commercial driver service centers. DMV is also investigating the possibility of county tax offices issuing vehicle registrations.

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“Building partnerships like the one we have with Department of Education and the schools gives us an opportunity to share resources and explore new ways of providing customer service,” said Marcia Adams. “That’s our number one goal.”

DMV is currently negotiating with other high schools that are considering program participation.

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