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## **More Than 70 Percent of Twin Cities Drivers Ages 18-34 Use Cell Phones and/or Eat While Driving; One in Three Text Message While Behind Wheel**

***60 Percent of Twin Cities Drivers Say Distracted Drivers Are Their  
Biggest Stressor On The Road, According to New AAA Minneapolis Survey***

**Minneapolis, MN – July 31, 2008** – How many Twin Cities drivers are driving with one hand on the wheel and the other preoccupied with a cell phone, iPod, BlackBerry or hamburger? According to a new “Twin Cities Driving Behavior” Survey commissioned by AAA Minneapolis, 77 percent of drivers ages 18-34 in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area snack while they drive, 70 percent talk on cell phones and one in three young adults actually text message while behind the wheel.

The habits of these Twin Cities drivers – their attention torn between driving and eating fast food or communicating on their iPhones or PDAs – causes 60 percent of Twin Cities drivers ages 18-54 to feel stressed while on the road with these distracted drivers. In fact, AAA Minneapolis survey respondents say distracted drivers in general cause them more behind-the-wheel anxiety and stress than poor road conditions and construction delays, or from drivers who merge or change lanes improperly, tailgate, or drive slowly or over-aggressively.

AAA Minneapolis’ “Twin Cities Driving Behavior” Survey results echo national driving trends. In 2007, more than 1 million drivers at any given daylight moment across the nation were using hand-held phones, according to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. A recent insurance survey found that nationally 80 percent of drivers drank non-alcoholic beverages, 73 percent talked on cell phones, 68 percent ate snacks, 41 percent ate meals, 19 percent fixed their hair, 12 percent put on or adjusted their make-up, 5 percent read a magazine or newspaper, and 31 percent admitted to daydreaming while driving.

“Our organization was startled to learn more than 70 percent of young adults in the Twin Cities are multitasking, even text messaging and dialing cell phone numbers, while they’re driving,” said Steve Frank, president and CEO of AAA Minneapolis. “AAA Minneapolis supports Minnesota’s new state law prohibiting text messaging while driving, which goes into effect on August 1. But clearly the crisis of distracted driving – which leads to hundreds of traffic crashes and driving deaths each year – is a big issue in the Twin Cities, which includes text messaging while on the road.”

“Our driving survey results are especially eye-opening,” added Frank, “given that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Virginia Tech Transportation Institute have determined that 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involve some form of driver distraction – from using a cell phone to applying make-up and reading.”

The AAA Minneapolis’ study also found that more (10 percentage points) Twin Cities men than women admit to text message while driving.

One piece of good news revealed from the AAA Minneapolis survey is that an encouraging 91 percent of Twin Cities drivers claim they “always” wear their seat belts when driving or riding in a vehicle. This figure is 10 percentage points higher than the 2007 national seat belt use average of 81 percent cited by the National Center for Statistics and Analysis of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

#### **About AAA Minneapolis**

AAA Minneapolis is a full-service automotive, travel, insurance, financial and community services organization, serving nearly 185,000 members in the Hennepin County area. To learn more about AAA, log on to [www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com).

#### **About AAA’s 2008 “Twin Cities Driving Behavior” Survey**

AAA Minneapolis conducted its first “Twin Cities Driving Behavior” Survey online in June 2008 through Ipsos, an international market research company with offices across North America and all over the world. Ipsos polled a cross section of 1,000 men and women in the seven-county (Hennepin, Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Ramsey, Scott and Washington) Twin Cities metro area, ages 18 to 54 years old, who are licensed drivers. Results have a 3.1 percent margin of error.

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*For a fact sheet that summarizes the key findings from AAA Minneapolis’ 2008 “Twin Cities Driving Behavior” Survey or to set up an interview with AAA Minneapolis spokespeople Steve Frank or Dawn Duffy, please contact Katie Fitzpatrick at 612-337-0087 or [katie@maccabee.com](mailto:katie@maccabee.com).*