

Watauga 4th Worst For Wrecks in State

Written by Steve Frank

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Here's a list we don't want to be on—for three years straight, Watauga is one of the most dangerous places to drive in North Carolina—that from a report released by AAA Carolinas. Watauga is joined by Pitt, New Hanover and Person counties in topping the AAA Carolinas annual list of North Carolina's

most dangerous counties for collisions, according to an analysis by AAA Carolinas based on 2012 crash data. Pitt County has ranked as the most dangerous county in the state for the past five years. With 4,633 traffic crashes in 2012, Pitt County averages 306.7 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled - 50% higher than the state average of 204.7.

Watauga County averages 259.3—4th in the state, with New Hanover County second, averages 286.8 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, Person County averages 266.6. AAA Carolinas bases its annual ranking of the most dangerous counties on the likelihood of a certain type of crash - fatal, injurious, motorcycle, tractor-trailer, total - based on vehicle miles traveled.

David E. Parsons, president and CEO of AAA Carolinas said, "Consistently high rankings for being one of the most dangerous counties in the state should be a wake-up call for better traffic enforcement or road design."

Nationally, rural roads account for two-thirds of fatal crashes.

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"In addition to more curves, insufficient road markings and limited police presence, rural roads are prone to more single-vehicle accidents, particularly those involving alcohol," said Parsons.

The most dangerous county for motorcycles is Graham County - topping the list for collisions, injury and fatal crashes for the past three years, followed by Alexander, Alleghany, Gates and Greene. Sparsely populated Graham county is home to the "Tail of the Dragon." a scenic mountain road popular with motorcyclists that includes 11 miles of 318 curves.