

# Emergency contact registration starts Monday at Ohio's BMV

Staff and wire reports

Beginning Monday, Sept. 8, any Ohio resident with a driver's license or state identification card can register information on how to reach family members or close friends in case of an emergency.

By filling out a form at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles Web site or at a deputy registrar's location, state residents ensure that a family member can be contacted quickly if they've been injured in a traffic accident, fire or some other emergency.

Only a handful of states have such a program.

The Ohio legislature created the database earlier this year with help of a Franklin County woman who lost her 33-year-old son in a late-night car accident last year.

The Money-Burge Act is named after Columbus residents David Money, 23, and Steve Burge, 33. Both men died in separate car accidents but their next of kin — their mothers — were not immediately notified about the fatal accidents.

This effort was headed by Money's mother, Carmela Wiant of Mechanicsburg in Champaign County, and



The Money-Burge Act is named after David Money (above) and Steve Burge, who died in separate car accidents. Their mothers teamed to introduce the act, which would require the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to give motorists the opportunity to list next of kin information with their motor vehicle certificate of registration, license or identification card. Contributed photo

Burge's mother, Linda Wuestenberg of Columbus, to provide a quicker way for law enforcement to contact a victim's loved ones during an emergency.

In August 2006, Wiant got a call from her son's girlfriend who told her that her son had been in a car accident on Interstate 270.

Wiant said she then called the hospital where her son was taken and was put in contact with the hospital's chaplain. She said he kept telling her not to rush to the hospital.

When Wiant asked if her son was dead, she said the chaplain said, "Yes."

Wiant believes no one should have to be notified about their loved one like she was.

"If we have the next of kin on the driver's license and registration, then the law enforcement agencies and hospitals would have the information quickly and be able to inform families or friends in the most appropriate way possible," Wiant said in a 2007 interview with the Dayton Daily News.