



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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**“JAMES PELTON FIREFIGHTERS
MEMORIAL HIGHWAY”**

**House Bill 4895 as passed by the House
First Analysis (8-12-03)**

**Sponsor: Rep. Dianne Byrum
Committee: Transportation**

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

On Friday, August 10, 2001, 58 year-old James Pelton—a 37-year firefighting veteran in Mason, Michigan (the county seat of Ingham County)—died in a four-car accident. His pick-up was struck by a Ford Explorer, which had collided with a compact car at an intersection of county roads in Alaiedon Township near Mason. The compact car, whose driver was from Spokane, Washington, had run a stop sign, collided with the Explorer sending it into the air, and causing it to strike Pelton’s truck, as well as another car that had been following Pelton’s vehicle. The force of the impact caused Pelton’s pick-up to careen onto a lawn and strike a nearby house, killing Pelton in the crash. The driver causing the accident was arrested and charged with negligent homicide.

Pelton had been Mason’s first full-time fire chief for nine years, a post he assumed in 1992 after serving many years in the community’s volunteer fire department. According to a resolution of tribute from the Ingham County Board of Commissioners, during his years of service, Pelton also served as a certified fire inspector, a member of the Michigan Fire Chief’s Association, the Alert Fire Association, the Tri-County Fire Chief’s Association, the Ingham County First Chief’s Association, the Local Emergency Planning Committee, and as the vice-chairperson of the Ingham County 911 Advisory Committee. He also owned and operated a barbershop for 39 years, was a lifetime member of the Optimist Club, and co-founder of the Mason Freestyle Wrestling Club.

Those who knew Pelton offer high praise for his years of community service. They note he was a particularly innovative leader and tireless modernizer of the local fire service—upgrading the department’s equipment, ensuring high training standards for his firefighters, and attracting young recruits. A man who also was known for his kind demeanor and positive attitude, Chief Pelton is survived by his wife and two children.

In order to pay tribute to Chief James M. Pelton, legislation has been introduced that would name a roadway in his honor.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4895 would amend the Michigan Memorial Highway Act to specify that the portion of Highway US-127 in Ingham County would be known as the “James Pelton Firefighters Memorial Highway.”

MCL 250.1001 et al

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

Fiscal information is not available.

ARGUMENTS:

For:

In order to memorialize the life of Jim Pelton and to pay tribute to his life of tireless service and commitment to his community, citizens of Ingham County would like to name a roadway in his memory. As a leader in the village of Mason, Chief Pelton was highly respected for his determination and diligence as the first full-time fire chief of the village. It is fitting that his contribution to his community be acknowledged publicly in this manner, following Chief Pelton’s tragic and untimely death.

POSITIONS:

There are no positions at present.

Analyst: J. Hunault

■This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

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