



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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VISALIA POLICE CONTINUE TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAM TO COMBAT DUI DEATHS AND INJURIES

The Visalia Police Department has been awarded a new traffic safety grant for a year-long anti-DUI program aimed at preventing deaths and injuries on our roadways. The \$123,000 grant awarded by the Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to Visalia will aid in the city's ongoing effort to improve traffic safety and the quality of life.

"The DUI enforcement grant has been very effective in combating impaired driving in the past, the Visalia Police Department plans to continue that enforcement within the city. The grant also allows for opportunities to increase awareness and educate the public to this problem," said Sergeant Chris McLain of the Visalia Police Department.

DUI/Driver's License Checkpoints are a key component of the grant. These highly visible, widely publicized events are meant to deter impaired driving, not to increase arrests. Research shows that crashes involving alcohol drop by an average of 20 percent when well-publicized checkpoints are conducted often enough. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), checkpoints have provided the most effective documented results of any of the DUI enforcement strategies, while yielding considerable cost savings of \$6 for every \$1 spent.

Grant funding also allows for roving DUI saturation patrols, warrant arrest details and stakeouts for repeat DUI offenders, along with court stings targeting DUI offenders with suspended or revoked driver licenses who drive after leaving court hearings or court mandated DUI School.

This DUI Enforcement and Awareness grant also provides drug impairment training to help combat the increasing problem of drivers under the influence of legal and illegal substances. Grant funding will allow 5 officers to receive specialized training to detect impaired drivers under the influence of legal and illegal drugs. This training will provide on-the-spot assessment of drivers suspected of drug impairment.

Drunk driving is one of America's deadliest crimes. In 2009, 950 people throughout California died in roadway crashes that involved a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 percent or higher.

"Thanks to the dedicated hard work of agencies like the Visalia Police Department, California has seen a drop of nearly 27 percent in DUI fatalities," said OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy. "While this is good news, we know that only by keeping the pressure on through enforcement and public awareness can we hope to sustain these declines and save lives."

For a second year in a row, two (2) special motorcycle safety enforcement operations will be conducted. Motorcycle fatalities have finally dropped in California, following a decade long rise in deaths. In 2010, 353 motorcyclists were killed, a 37 percent drop from the all-time high for California in 2008.



Visalia Police Officers will be conducting specialized enforcement efforts the next twelve months. Extra officers will be on duty patrolling areas and events where motorcycle crashes and incidents have occurred. Officers will be cracking down on traffic violations made by regular vehicle drivers and motorcyclists that result in far too many motorcycle collisions, injuries and deaths.

“We are on the right path with declining fatalities,” said Murphy. “We have to stick to that path so that some day we can reach the vision we all share – *Toward Zero Deaths, Every 1 Counts.*”

Funding for this program is from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Submitted by Ofc J. Paddock, 11-23-2011, 1200hrs.

