

**OFFICE OF TRAFFIC SAFETY**

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **New Traffic Safety Grants Announced**

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) announced today the award of \$77 million in federal funding to support 252 traffic safety grants to state and local agencies. The funds will allow state, county and city agencies to combat impaired driving, encourage seat belt and child safety seat usage, discourage distracted driving, advance pedestrian, motorcycle and bicycle safety and assist in the enforcement of traffic laws aimed at saving lives.

“Programs like these helped us reach a 66 year low in traffic deaths in 2010 in California,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. “But with traffic deaths projected to be higher in 2011, these federal grant funds are being awarded to programs aimed squarely at the major problem areas.”

Two emerging problems – distracted driving and drugged driving – will receive special emphasis. In light of OTS survey results showing an increase in cell phone use, the distracted driving effort which began in 2011 will expand, with increased enforcement and public awareness campaigns. The incidence of drugs in fatal crashes, both alone and in combination with alcohol, has increased steadily for the last five years. New grants will fund increases in officers trained to detect drug-impaired drivers, special District Attorneys dedicated to drugged-driving cases and new laboratory drug-testing equipment.

The new grants will build upon programs aimed at combating the leading killer on California’s roadways – alcohol and drug-impaired driving. Grant funded operations will include sobriety checkpoints, special DUI prosecutors and probation department enforcement directed at the worst-of-the-worst DUI offenders.

“We all came a long way in California in recent years, with thousands of lives saved,” said Murphy. “But with thousands still dying and tens of thousands being injured, there is an on-going need for the multi-faceted approach provided by these grants. We need to do all we can to work toward on our vision of *Toward zero deaths, every 1 counts.*”

Summaries of the individual grants can be found at [www.ots.ca.gov](http://www.ots.ca.gov).