

**BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION & HOUSING AGENCY****NEWS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** BTH Press Office: (916) 445-3545**STATE ANNOUNCES GRANTS  
TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY ACROSS CALIFORNIA**

SACRAMENTO — In an effort to improve traffic safety across California, the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency (BTH)—which becomes the new Transportation Agency on July 1, 2013—today announced it has approved 274 state and local applicants to receive approximately \$87 million in federally-funded traffic safety grants administered by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). The grant-funded programs will help combat alcohol and drug impaired driving, encourage seat belt and child safety seat usage, fight distracted driving and enhance law enforcement activities.

“These traffic safety grants will help save lives and improve public safety across California,” said Acting Secretary Brian Kelly. “These programs crack down on dangerous activities like texting and driving while also seeking to change behavior through public education and new research.”

“Traffic safety is at a crossroads,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of OTS. “Roadway deaths dropped 37 percent from 2006 to 2010, but we have seen a slight upturn since. The programs funded by these grants are aimed squarely at holding the line, and even reversing it once again.”

Alcohol-impaired driving still makes up nearly 30 percent of roadway fatalities, prompting OTS to fund multiple and varied programs to tackle its many causes and consequences. These grants will help reduce fatalities and injuries by supporting high visibility enforcement such as more than 2000 DUI checkpoints and programs cracking down on drivers with outstanding warrants.

“With the support of the Office of Traffic Safety and the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency and through these federal grants, the California Highway Patrol will be able to continue our ongoing mission of saving lives,” said Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Working in concert with our local law enforcement partners statewide, we will use this support to provide valuable traffic safety education programs to our communities and enforcement where it is needed most.”

New grants will also expand the number of local special prosecutors dedicated to alcohol and drug impaired driving cases and fund new lab testing equipment and drug detection training to increase successful prosecution of alcohol and drug impaired driving cases. A recent OTS survey showed that 14 percent of drivers on a Friday or Saturday night have at least one potentially driving-impairing drug in their system, not including alcohol.

Several key grants will also seek to improve active transportation in California by combatting recent increases in serious pedestrian and bicycle crashes. The Pedestrian Safety Guide and Countermeasure Selection System will be expanded to include older adults, distracted walkers and victims of speeding. Free expert technical assistance and staff training in pedestrian and bicycle safety will be offered by the University of California to local communities. Grants will also support the California Active

Transportation Safety Information Pages, a website that encourages and promotes safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized road users in California.

Some of the other key statewide programs funded through these grants include:

- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) research studies regarding substance abuse, fatal crashes and distracted driving
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) webinars to increase the use of booster seats and provide National Child Passenger Safety Technician certification courses
- Expansion of “It’s Up to All of Us,” a CDPH pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign
- California Highway Patrol (CHP) distracted driving enforcement and public education campaigns
- Specialized CHP driver drug detection training for law enforcement
- CHP’s “Every 15 Minutes” high-school assembly program and sober graduation events
- University of California research grants regarding motorcycle safety, seat belt usage, and pedestrian and bicycle safety

“Along with the California Highway Patrol and Office of Traffic Safety, the California Department of Motor Vehicles plays a big role in the quest to keep the roads safe for all Californians, and this funding will go a long way towards that goal,” said DMV Chief Deputy Director Jean Shiomoto. “These programs will be an investment in safety that will help keep dangerous and risky drivers off the roads.”

On July 1, 2013, the Business Transportation and Housing Agency will no longer exist and will become the new Transportation Agency in accordance with the Governor’s government reorganization plan signed into law in 2012. The new Transportation Agency will be responsible for transportation-related departments within the state: Caltrans, the Department of Motor Vehicles, New Motor Vehicle Board, California Highway Patrol, Board of Pilot Commissioners, California Transportation Commission, California High-Speed Rail and the Office of Traffic Safety.

The grant program begins on October 1, 2013. For more information on the grant program, visit <http://www.ots.ca.gov/>

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