



OTS TRACKS: APRIL 2026

April was a busy month with the launch of our “Distracted Driving Kills” public education campaign, honoring fallen Caltrans workers, highlights from the annual Lifesavers Conference in Baltimore, and the moving impact from the Every 15 Minutes Program at high schools statewide.

Honoring Caltrans' Fallen Workers



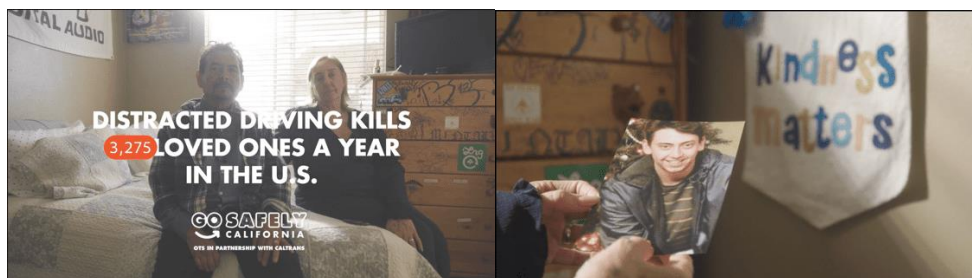
The OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty joined Caltrans District 4 in San Leandro on April 7 for the annual Fallen Workers Memorial, a solemn event dedicated to honoring the 195 Caltrans workers, 40 from District 4, who have been killed on the job since 1921. The ceremony serves as a powerful reminder of the risks faced by highway workers every day, especially from inattentive and distracted drivers.

Each April, Workers Memorials are held at each of the 12 Caltrans Districts across California, including the Statewide Workers Memorial at River Walk Park in West Sacramento, which was held April 23.

[Watch a recap of the Caltrans District 4 Workers Memorial](#)

[Watch the 36th Annual Caltrans Statewide Workers Memorial](#)

AAA and OTS Team Up for Powerful Safety Campaign Highlighting the Impact of Distracted Driving



April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month, and the OTS and Caltrans launched the [“Distracted Driving Kills”](#) public awareness and education campaign to underscore the dangerous consequences. At the heart of this campaign is a deeply moving video message from the parents of 21-year-old Benjamin Montalvo, who was tragically killed while riding his bike by a distracted and impaired driver in June 2020. Their story serves as a powerful call to action, reminding the public that one moment of inattention can lead to tragic outcomes. The launch aligns with ongoing efforts by traffic safety partners, including AAA, to [reduce distracted driving incidents](#) and reinforce safe driving habits. By sharing Benjamin’s story and amplifying the voices of those impacted, the campaign aims to shift driver behavior through education, empathy, and awareness. Together, OTS, Caltrans, and partner organizations hope this renewed focus on distraction prevention will help save lives and foster safer roadways for all Californians.

[Watch the campaign](#)

OTS Shares Expertise at Lifesavers Conference



The OTS team attended the Lifesavers Conference on Roadway Safety in Baltimore, Md., joining traffic safety professionals from across the nation to exchange ideas and highlight the important work happening in California. Over the course of several days, more than 80 workshops highlighted the latest research and emerging trends essential to strengthening the OTS programs. Deputy Director of Communications Tim Weisberg represented California on the national stage, speaking on and moderating panels focused on effective public education campaigns. His sessions emphasized the value of storytelling, community engagement, and elevating the voices of families personally affected by traffic crashes, an approach that continues to shape the OTS' storytelling strategies.

Kicking Off the 100 Safest Days of Summer



As the busy summer travel season approaches, the OTS, Caltrans, Impact Teen Drivers, CHP, and Fulton El Camino Recreation & Park District are teaming up to launch the [100 Safest Days of Summer](#) initiative with a special community event on Saturday, May 16 for the grand opening of Safe Play Park in Sacramento. Located in Arden Arcade's Howe Park, Safe Play Park is a hands-on educational space designed to help children and families learn essential road safety behaviors. The project was created in honor of retired CHP Commissioner Dwight "Spike" Helmick.

The event will bring together several partners offering hands-on safety activities and demonstrations throughout the park. From bicycle and pedestrian safety to the importance of seat belt use and teen driver education, the event is aimed at empowering families with practical tools that reduce crash risks during the months when more people are on the road.

It will mark the official start of the 100 Safest Days of Summer, a national effort encouraging teenagers to adopt safer habits between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The 100 days between Memorial Day and Labor Day is a time when teen driving fatalities spike. With community participation and partner support, the initiative aims to keep California families safe all season long. For more information about the initiative and how you can be part of the movement, visit 100safestdaysofsummer.org.

[Take the Summer Safety Pledge](#)

Safety Snapshot of the Month: Every 15 Minutes Drives Home a Life-Saving Message



Throughout the school year, the California Highway Patrol has delivered a powerful reminder of what's at stake every time someone chooses to drive impaired. At multiple high schools around the state last month, students took part in the *Every 15 Minutes* program, a two-day, reality-based experience that walks teens through the aftermath of a deadly crash. From the simulated crash to the hospital and courtroom scenes, students witnessed how one choice can ripple through an entire community. The program name originates from a sobering statistic in the 1990s – at the time, someone in the U.S. was killed in an alcohol-related crash every 15 minutes. In 2024, an average of 32 people were killed every day in drunk-driving crashes in the U.S., or one person every 44 minutes. While the *Every 15 Minutes* scenarios are scripted, the emotions they invoke are very real.

[Learn more about the Every 15 Minutes Program](#)

The OTS Staff: People on the Move

Cayla McDonell – Cayla McDonell is the new Deputy Director of Program Planning and Grant Operations. Cayla brings transportation safety experience from her work at the California Transportation Commission, where she led major safety and policy efforts, including the AB 251 Vehicle Weight Safety Study. Her background spans international, state, regional, and local transportation initiatives, with deep expertise in program management, grant development, and community-focused planning. Passionate about advancing roadway safety, Cayla also enjoys exploring the world with her son, cycling, and creative design hobbies outside of work.



THE ROAD REPORT

Publications, resources, training opportunities, and other relevant updates from our state and national traffic safety partners.

NHTSA: New Early Estimates Show Continued Decline in Traffic Deaths in 2025

NHTSA released updated early estimates showing a continued nationwide decline in traffic fatalities for 2025, reflecting progress in reducing deaths on U.S. roads. In California, an estimated 3,630 people were killed in crashes in 2025, an estimated 6.3% decline from the 3,876 people killed on California roads in 2024. While the data shows encouraging momentum, road fatalities remain far too high, underscoring the need for strong safety programs and continued collaboration. [Read the press release](#)

New Research: Data Highlights Benefits of Driver Assistance Features

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) released new research showing how advanced driver assistance technologies can significantly reduce crash risk when widely adopted and properly used. [Read the research](#)

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: Street Racing: Prevalence, Participation, and Public Concern

Street racing on public roads endangers drivers, people walking and communities. Using a national survey, this study examines prevalence, participation, and public concern across urban, suburban, and rural areas. [Read the research](#)

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety: Trends in U.S. Drivers' Perceptions and Attitudes Toward Vehicle Automation

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety looked at national trends in adoption preferences, perceived safety, trust, and concerns related to different levels of vehicle automation, as well as perceived comfort with various modes of transportation equipped with full automation. [Read the research](#)

Pathways to Safer Streets Initiative Launched

NHTSA has introduced its *Pathways to Safer Streets* initiative, a comprehensive national

effort focused on eight strategies to target the leading causes of traffic fatalities: impairment, speeding, distraction, and lack of seat belt use. [Read the press release](#)



The OTS participates in community outreach and engagement events to connect with residents, local partners, and stakeholders to share information, gather feedback, and encourage Californians to Go Safely. These events provide valuable opportunities to build relationships, support local initiatives, and ensure our traffic safety efforts are informed by the voices and needs of the communities we serve.

Sacramento Mexican Consulate Resource Fair

– The OTS joined the Mexican Consulate in Sacramento on April 15, 2026, for a Resource Fair. The Fair provides access to resources for the community, fosters open dialogue, and promotes safety and awareness. The OTS hosted an outreach table, and spoke to attendees about DUI prevention and pedestrian and bicycle safety.



Health Education Council's Health and Wellness Fair

– The OTS joined the Health Education Council on April 18, 2026, for the Spring into Wellness Health and Wellness Fair. The OTS hosted an outreach table, alongside other safety partners, to encourage safe driving and bicycle safety.



Oakland Arena Safe Kids Day – On April 25, the OTS had a booth at the 12th Annual Safe Kids Day in Alameda County. More than 1,000 adults and children attended the free event at the Oakland Arena. Safe Kids Alameda County and its partners distributed various resources, including 500 bicycle helmets and 350 booster car seats. At the OTS booth, attendees had an opportunity to meet Safety Sam, learn about the Go Safety California campaign, the Traffic Safety Champion program, and traffic safety tips, specifically, bicycle and pedestrian safety tips.



NHTSA Region 9 Partners and Leadership Training - The OTS staff joined Arizona, Hawaii, Guam and American Samoa for the NHTSA Region 9 Partners and Leadership Training on April 22-23, 2026. The training allowed for sharing ideas, successes and learnings from the past year, along with updates from NHTSA leadership on program activities.



- 📌 May - [National Bicycle Safety Month](#)
- 📌 May - [Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month](#)
- 📌 May 6 - [Bike to School Day](#)
- 📌 May 18-31 - [Click It or Ticket](#)
- 📌 May 31 - [100 Safest Days of Summer](#)

Media Toolkits

- [Crash Not Accident](#)
- [Traffic Safety Champion](#)
- [Empty Chair Club Initiative](#)
- [Vehicle Safety Recalls \(General\)](#)
- [Child Passenger Safety Law Brochure](#) (Occupant Protection)

Keep an eye on your inboxes for campaign templates and social media assets. Additional outreach materials are always available at GoSafelyCA.org/MediaToolkits.

[View the OTS Communications Calendar](#)

Additional Resources

[Release Templates](#)

[Law Enforcement Liaison \(LEL\) Program](#)

[OTS Funding At a Glance](#)

[OTS Logos](#)

[Grant Program Resources](#)

[Traffic Safety Data](#)

The OTS administers traffic safety grants that deliver traffic safety programs to prevent people from being killed and seriously injured in California. The OTS is a department under the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA).

Contact the OTS Communications & Public Affairs Team
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