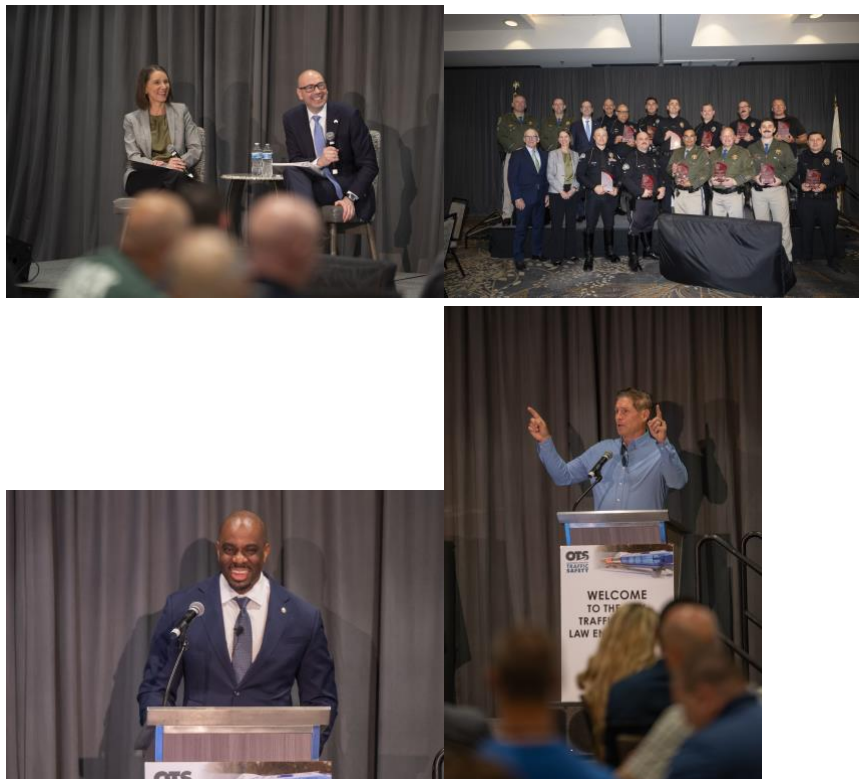




OTS TRACKS: June 2026

It's officially summer and June's newsletter brings updates on several traffic safety initiatives, including the OTS Law Enforcement Forum, Safe System Approach training, MADD Law Enforcement & Prosecutor Recognition Awards and World Cup fan outreach. Read on to learn more about these initiatives, including a visit from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Administrator Jonathan Morrison.

NHTSA Administrator attends the OTS Law Enforcement Forum



From June 11-12, 2026, the OTS brought together hundreds of law enforcement professionals, prosecutors, toxicologists, and traffic safety partners from across California

for a two-day Law Enforcement Forum in Sacramento. Participants had the opportunity to hear from state and federal leaders, including CalSTA Secretary Toks Omishakin and the NHTSA Administrator Jonathan Morrison. Morrison praised California as a national leader in traffic safety and highlighted the newly released Pathways to Safer Streets initiative, a national action plan that emphasizes partnership, collaboration, and re-engaging law enforcement to address the leading causes of traffic fatalities. The Forum also featured a special appearance from former 49ers quarterback Steve Young, who reminded law enforcement professionals of the strength and resilience they bring to the work they do every day.

Throughout the forum, participants engaged in sessions highlighting the evolving challenges of traffic safety education and enforcement. Sessions covered the rise in e-device related injuries, combating street racing and sideshow activity, updates on the Forwarded Actions for Speeding Tickets (FAST) pilot targeting extreme speeding, and new provisions in autonomous vehicle regulations. Experts shared best practices for running defensible and effective DUI checkpoints and demonstrated how DREs and forensic toxicologists work together to strengthen drug-impairment cases. The OTS and NHTSA also recognized 10 officers and four sergeants for their work taking suspected impaired drivers off California roads.

A big congratulations to the winners!

Exceptional performance in 2025: Officer Tristan Perusse - CHP Bishop Area, Officer Alexander Smith - CHP Oceanside Area, Officer Matthew Bevins - Huntington Beach Police Department, Officer Nicholas Clark - Santa Maria Police Department, Officer Jean-Pierre Charles - Los Angeles Police Department, Officer Christopher Delaney - Los Angeles Police Department, Officer Nicholas Escamilla - Los Angeles Police Department, Officer Daniel Battles - Los Angeles Police Department, Officer Adeas Dilanian - Los Angeles Police Department, and Officer Constantine Zachos - San Francisco Police Department

Outstanding contribution in 2025: Sergeant David Spenser - Newport Beach Police Department, Sergeant John Rosendale CHP Impaired Driving Section, Sergeant Bill Hume - Newport Beach Police Department, and Sergeant Jaime Rios – CHP.

OTS Director Speaks at Launch of Inaugural Safe System Approach Cohort



OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty spoke at the inaugural cohort of the California Safe System Institute for Road Safety in Berkeley, a statewide training and technical assistance program funded by the OTS and administered by UC Berkeley's Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC). The California Safe System Institute for Road Safety is designed to help agencies adopt the Safe System Approach. Operated by UC Berkeley SafeTREC, in partnership with the [Vision Zero Network](#) and [Fehr & Peers](#), the Institute provides hands-on learning, expert-led sessions, and collaborative problem-solving for professionals in planning, engineering, public works, law enforcement, and public health. Close to 30 participants attended the cohort, diving deep into topics like “forgiving” infrastructure, kinetic energy management, and strategies that prioritize human life by anticipating mistakes and reducing crash forces. The goal is to equip practitioners with actionable tools to institutionalize Safe System principles within their own organizations. By supporting this program, the OTS is helping communities statewide implement data-driven, systemic solutions that prevent severe injuries and fatalities—and move California closer to achieving Vision Zero.

[Learn more about the Institute](#)

Ford Driving Skills for Life Program Gives Teens Hands-on Training



OTS Deputy Director Cayla McDonnell joined Ford Philanthropy and the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) for the Ford Driving Skills for Life Program in Oceanside on June 20, 2026. The free, hands-on training for young drivers is done in a controlled environment. This event had a specific focus on educating military personnel and their families near Camp Pendleton.

The program pairs newly licensed teens or teens with a learner's permit with professional instructors for behind-the-wheel training. The training is designed to improve hazard recognition, enhance vehicle control, and strengthen decision-making skills. A parent/guardian education component helps give families the opportunity to learn more about driver-assisted technologies and the importance of safety.

[Read the press release](#)

Safety Snapshot of the Month: MADD Law Enforcement Awards



Mothers Against Drunk Driving ([MADD](#)) continues its annual tradition of honoring the outstanding work of California's law enforcement community with the Law Enforcement & Prosecutor Recognition Awards. The series of recognition events held throughout the state in June and July bring together community partners to uplift the lifesaving work of law enforcement and prosecutors. Ceremonies have taken place in Orange County, the Inland Empire, Tri-Counties, the Central Valley, Kern County, and Los Angeles County, recognizing those whose efforts have removed impaired drivers from the road and saved countless lives.

On July 9, 2026, both the [San Diego](#) chapter, along with the [Bay Area](#) chapter, will hold their awards ceremony. The Sacramento-area celebration is taking place July 23, 2026, where MADD will recognize local officers and agencies for their dedication to DUI enforcement and victim support.

[Attend the Sacramento event](#)

The OTS Staff: People on the Move



Daniel Bederian-Gardner – Join us in welcoming Daniel Bederian-Gardner as a Research Data Specialist III. Daniel brings nearly a decade of experience from the California Department of Motor Vehicles' (DMV) Research and Development branch and prior work on OTS-funded research. Daniel's strong technical background in data analysis and visualization will support OTS's continued expansion of data-driven traffic safety strategies.

Mary Khang – Join us in welcoming Mary Khang as an Accounting Administrator II in the Administrative Services Division. Mary brings several years of dedicated state service, along with strong expertise in departmental accounting, fiscal operations, financial oversight, and state fiscal processes from her work at CAL FIRE. Mary's extensive experience and hands-on leadership are a valuable addition to the OTS team.



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

New GHSA “The Intersection” Podcast: New Episode 🎧

In episode 6 of “The Intersection,” the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chair Jennifer Homendy shares how aviation, rail and marine investigations teach us about preventing deadly crashes on our roads. Hear her perspective on what it will take to make every trip safer. [Check out the episode](#)

2025 Traffic Safety Culture Index 📄

The 2025 Traffic Safety Culture Index by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety explores how drivers think about and engage with risk behind the wheel, including perceptions and attitudes toward dangerous behaviors, safe and risky driving in their neighborhoods, and how drivers assess their own behavior and abilities. [Read the Report](#)

NHTSA Releases Guide for Implementing an Impaired Driving Tracking System 🚨

NHTSA released a report and readiness guide for implementing an impaired driving tracking system. This resource offers states, law enforcement agencies and other traffic safety partners a roadmap for implementing an impaired driving tracking system. [Read the Report](#)

1 million Jeep Gladiator and Wranglers Recalled 🚗

A NHTSA investigation was launched after a series of fires, even when the vehicle was off. Now, FCA US has issued a new recall for the vehicles. [Read the release](#)

IIHS Saves Nearly 50,000 Lives with Crashworthiness Tests 🏠

For the 30th anniversary of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) crashworthiness testing program, researchers calculated an estimate of the lives saved due to improved performance in the front, side, and roof-strength tests. To show the progress, IIHS tested the 30-year difference of a 1996 and 2026 Bronco, using the results to determine how many fatalities have been prevented through advancements in crashworthiness. [Read the research](#)

Road Safety Toolkit Helps Implement the Safe System Approach ⚡

Reshaping the future of road safety begins with actionable strategies organizations can start today. This toolkit provides case studies and a road map for implementing the Safe System Approach into practice. [Get the toolkit](#)

Study Shows Reducing Energy on Our Roads Matter 🏠

A new study explains why lowering the overall kinetic energy on our roads, not just slowing cars down, can make a difference in preventing injuries. [Read the study](#)

Heavier Vehicle, Higher Risks for Everyone 🚗

A new UC Institute of Transportation Studies report digs into how growing weight and size of vehicles, especially SUVs and pickups, are contributing to rising injuries and fatalities on California roads. These findings look at why these trends matter for safety and what can be done. [Read the report](#)



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.

Cosumnes Fire Department's Regional Safety Day – The OTS had an outreach table at Cosumnes Fire Department's Regional Safety Day in Elk Grove on June 6, 2026. More than 2,000 attendees received traffic safety materials and resources, and met Safety Sam, the Caltrans mascot.



Elk Grove Police Department's BBQ in the Beat – The OTS attended the City of Elk Grove Police Department's BBQ in the Beat on June 13, 2026 at Backer Park. The OTS hosted an outreach table and provided hundreds of Elk Grove residents with traffic safety resources and information about the Traffic Safety Champion program.



Safe Kids San Benito's Kids at the Park – On June 17, 2026, the OTS had a booth at Safe Kids San Benito's Kids at the Park in the city of Hollister (San Benito County) and partnered with CHP to provide fitted helmets to children in need. Safety Sam took photos with attendees, and the OTS provided educational and outreach materials, as well as conducted community engagement activities to understand traffic safety concerns and possible OTS countermeasure strategies.



Casa Mexico World Cup Watch Party - On June 18, 2026, thousands attended a Casa Mexico World Cup Watch Party at LA Plaza de Cultura y Artes in Los Angeles where the OTS had an information booth. We interacted with hundreds of fans about the importance of getting home safely and not drinking and driving. Fans were also asked about their perceived traffic safety concerns and the best ways to address them. Through social media campaigns and other digital messaging running throughout the World Cup, fans are encouraged to “think before you drink” and have a go safely game plan before traveling to fan celebrations, events, watch parties, or matches.



Law Enforcement/Carnival Days Kids

Sports Camp – On June 19, 2026, the OTS joined Caltrans at the Law Enforcement/Carnival Day Kids Sports Camp hosted by the City of Sacramento Police Department & Sacramento County Sheriff's Office. Safety Sam took photos with attendees, while the OTS quizzed the kids about traffic safety rules and provided educational and outreach materials.



Juneteenth & Dadteenth Celebration - The OTS attended South Sacramento's Juneteenth & Dadteenth celebration on June 20, 2026. Color The Block, United and Guided, Inc., the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), and Sacramento County co-hosted the free event. OTS staff had an outreach booth with traffic safety information and promoted the Traffic Safety Champion program.





- 📌 July – [Vehicle Theft Prevention Month](#)
- 📌 July 6-31 – [National Speed Campaign](#)

Media Toolkits

- *NEW* [World Cup Social Media Toolkit](#) (Impaired Driving)
- [Impaired Driving](#)
- [Slow the Fast Down](#) (Speeding)
- [100 Safest Days of Summer](#) (Teen Driver Safety)
- [Child Safety Seat Flier](#) (Occupant Protection)
- [E-bikes, E-motorcycles, and E-scooters](#)
- [Crash Not Accident](#)
- [Traffic Safety Champion](#)
- [Empty Chair Club Initiative](#)
- [Vehicle Safety Recalls](#) (General)
- [Vehicular Heatstroke Prevention Social Media Toolkit](#) (Occupant Protection)
- [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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