



OTS TRACKS: July 2026

This month's newsletter highlights major safety efforts across California, from encouraging progress in pedestrian safety to a behind-the-scenes look at CHP's Sacramento Communications Center. You'll also get a look at a tour of local grant programs with the NHTSA Administrator, updates on the California Teen Driver Safety Coalition annual in-person meeting, July's statewide speed enforcement push, and a profile on a high school intern the OTS hosted through the Elk Grove Civic Summer program.

Encouraging Progress in Pedestrian Safety: OTS Shares Its Approach



Encouraging preliminary data from the Governors Highway Safety Association ([GHSA](#)) shows pedestrian fatalities on U.S. roads dropped by 7% in 2025 compared to the previous year, which included preliminary estimates of a 22.4% decrease in California. This positive trend reflects the impact of targeted pedestrian safety initiatives in California and nationally.

However, the projected 6,732 pedestrians killed in the U.S. in 2025 was still 5% above the 2019 level.

"The OTS is encouraged by the continued declines in the number of people struck and killed by vehicles while walking," OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty said. "While the recent progress is welcome news, any deaths on our roads are too many. The OTS is committed to building a culture of safety through public education, enforcement targeted at high-risk driving behaviors and other proven strategies that sets an expectation that everyone gets to and from places safely, regardless of how they travel."

The GHSA report, [Pedestrian Traffic Fatalities by State: 2025 Preliminary Data](#), provides a first look at pedestrian safety trends and changes in fatalities at the state level. During a [July 16 webinar](#) highlighting an overview of the crash data and approaches states are taking to enhance the safety of people walking, Deputy Director Cayla McDonell shared California's strategies to engage communities and expand safe walking options. OTS's programs include community-led assessments to observe biking and walking conditions that provide actionable recommendations, temporary demonstrations to test road design changes, enforcement targeted at dangerous driving behaviors, and community outreach and engagement that ensures safety messages reach people most at risk.

[Read the report](#)

OTS Shows NHTSA Administrator Local Grant Programs in Action in Southern California





The OTS Director and other OTS staff joined National Highway Traffic Safety Administrator (NHTSA) Jonathan Morrison and NHTSA Regional Administrator Chris Murphy in late July to check out local grant programs in action throughout Southern California.

The site visits included:

[UCLA Department of Emergency Medicine](#) – Advancing the LA-DROP prehospital blood transfusion pilot program in Los Angeles County through crash care data analysis, research, and a trauma training mobile application for use by first responders on scene. 🩸

[Orange County Sheriff's Department Crime Lab](#) – Enhancing blood testing capabilities for alcohol- and/or drug-impaired driving cases, regardless of the blood alcohol concentration (BAC). 🧪

[Orange County District Attorney's Office](#) – Supporting the Alcohol and Drug Impaired Driver Vertical Prosecution Program within Orange County and expanding the California Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor training network, which trains California law enforcement and prosecutors throughout the state on how to effectively investigate and prosecute impaired driving cases. ⚖️

[Los Angeles Police Department](#) – Supporting for enhanced impaired driving

enforcement, community education, and enforcement targeted at other risky behaviors for the third-largest municipal police department in the U.S. 🚔

Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department – Modernizing traffic records to improve crash data and citation reporting. 📊

San Diego County Probation – Driving targeted interventions to help high-risk DUI offenders make safer daily choices through accountability and treatment. 🛑

The OTS remains committed to aligning our actions with NHTSA's Pathways to Safer Streets, a national traffic safety action plan that supports new innovations and strategies.

[Learn more about NHTSA's Pathways to Safer Streets](#)

State Releases 2025-2029 California Strategic Highway Safety Plan



California's new statewide road safety plan has been formally adopted. The [2025-2029 Strategic Highway Safety Plan \(SHSP\)](#) is a collaborative framework for how local, regional and state traffic safety partners, including the OTS, will improve road safety in California.

The SHSP outlines goals and strategies to address the key factors contributing to fatal and serious injury crashes. The SHSP is also the state's commitment to the Safe System Approach, which acknowledges that fatal and serious injury crashes are the result of complex interactions among multiple system elements. Through the SHSP, there are targeted actions that strengthen all elements of the system – including safe vehicles, safe people, safe roads, safe speeds, and post-crash care. For the first time, the SHSP includes a sixth systemic element of safer land use, which recognizes that development

patterns have an impact on our ability to create a safe, accessible transportation system for all.

The 2025–2029 SHSP was developed with more than 25 organizations that participate on the SHSP governing committees. Marking the fourth update of California's SHSP initially created in 2005, the SHSP helps track continued progress to meet changing safety needs. It involves the OTS, Caltrans, DMV, CHP and more than 530 other public and private safety partners.

[Learn more about the California SHSP](#)

Dispatchers, The “First” First Responders



The OTS staff joined the California Highway Patrol at the Sacramento [Communications Center](#) to gain firsthand insight into the essential work of dispatchers - the “first” first responders in traffic safety. Dispatchers are the critical link between the public and emergency services, orchestrating swift responses after a 911 call is made.

Post-crash care is a critical component of the Safe System Approach and encompasses the entire emergency response continuum – from timely 911 activation to coordinated first responder and EMS deployment, field triage and treatment, transport to appropriate trauma centers, and traffic incident management. In 2023, 43% of people killed in car crashes in the U.S. were still alive when first responders arrived, which is why quick access to emergency care is vital.

As part of their visit with the CHP Communications Center team, the OTS learned how dispatchers quickly and efficiently capture essential details from callers and collaborate with officers, public safety personnel, and other services during the crucial first moments after an incident, ensuring help reaches people quickly and efficiently. Additionally, the OTS learned how dispatchers offer a compassionate, supportive voice that reassures a caller in need. Seeing this work in action deepened our understanding of the

interconnected roles of the EMS system, and it starts with the “first” first responder who receives a 911 call.

CATSDC Annual Meeting: Driving Collaboration to Keep Teens Safe



The California Teen Safe Driving Coalition (CATSDC) convened on July 22, 2026, for its annual in-person meeting in Sacramento. The meeting brought together more than 80 public health partners, educators, advocates, and other traffic safety leaders committed to reducing teen crashes.

The coalition continues to focus on improving teen driving habits through evidence based programs, such as [Graduated Driver Licensing](#) education, reducing distracted driving, increasing seat belt use, and addressing speed. The OTS Director Stephanie Dougherty and Deputy Director Tim Weisberg shared updates on the OTS highway safety programs and development of interactive education tools, reinforcing the importance of reaching youth and building a safety culture.

The meeting sparked thoughtful conversations about connection, shared responsibility, the importance of working together, fresh ideas and diverse perspectives, while also encouraging momentum in advancing road safety in California.

[Photos from the CATSDC Meeting](#)

No More Victims: Honoring Sacramento-Area Law Enforcement, Prosecutors and Safety Champions



The OTS joined Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) in the Bay Area July 9 and in Roseville on July 23, 2026, to celebrate the lifesaving efforts of officers and prosecutors committed to reducing impaired driving. The OTS Law Enforcement Liaisons (LELs) and other staff supported a total of nine recognition ceremonies held statewide from May through July, each highlighting the vital work happening in communities across California.

More than 300 law enforcement personnel across the Sacramento region were recognized for their tireless dedication to keeping our roads safe.

The OTS is proud to stand with MADD, law enforcement, first responders, prosecutors, victim advocates, and partner organizations in our shared mission of creating a future with no more victims.

[See the full list of awardees](#)

Safety Snapshot of the Month: Slow the Fast Down



Throughout July, law enforcement partners across California focused on slowing drivers down. The California Highway Patrol conducted a [Holiday Enforcement Period](#) from July 2 to July 5, 2026, with an emphasis on combating speeding. Over the 78-hour enforcement period, CHP personnel issued nearly 23,000 speeding citations, including 693 citations for speeding over 100 mph, and made 1,139 DUI arrests.

In December 2025, the DMV and CHP launched the Forwarded Actions for Speeding Tickets (FAST) [pilot program](#), which automatically refers drivers caught speeding more than 100 mph to the DMV for potential license suspension or revocation. From January to May 2026, the CHP submitted more than 3,200 FAST referrals, resulting in thousands of suspension and re-examination actions by the DMV.

Speed remains one of the leading causes of serious crashes statewide, contributing to more than 1,100 deaths in California in 2024. July's statewide enforcement underscored the message that even small reductions in speed can significantly reduce the severity of crashes. The takeaway is simple: follow the speed limit and slow the fast down.

[Read about the CHP Holiday Enforcement Period](#)

The OTS Hosts Summer Intern through Elk Grove Civic Summer Program



In July, the OTS welcomed Caleb Chin as a student intern with the Communications and Public Affairs Division. Caleb is an incoming high school senior at Elk Grove's Franklin High School. Caleb was part of a cohort of sixty students in the Elk Grove Unified School District's Civic Summer Program. The five-week program matches high school juniors and seniors with public agencies to learn about careers in public service.

"I enjoyed exploring and researching the intricacies of traffic safety and using what I've learned to help promote safety on California roads," he said. "I developed additional skills in data analysis that has helped me with my traffic safety research, which I have been able to incorporate into educational messages that encourage safe traveling behaviors."

[Learn more about the Elk Grove Civic Summer Program](#)



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

 **New GHSA "The Intersection" Podcast Episode**

In episode 7 of "The Intersection," Waymo Chief Marketing Officer Suzanne Phillion speaks about the company's approach to safety, customer experience, market expansion and the practical challenges of bringing driverless transportation to more communities. [Listen to the podcast](#)

Study: Piloting a Reporting System for Roadside Safety Incidents 🚗

A new AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety study developed a pilot test with a towing organization to look at near misses reported by service technicians working on the roadside. [Read the Study](#)

Watch: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Speed Safety Cameras in San Francisco 📺

University of California, Berkeley Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC) researchers Matthew Raifman and Sujin Lee [present](#) a data analysis on San Francisco's speed camera implementation. The quasi-experimental design looked at citation data from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) and telematics data on vehicle speed and volume. [Watch the Center for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety Webinar](#)

NHTSA Moves to Fast-Track Safer Automated Vehicles 🚗

A new NHTSA plan streamlines automated vehicle testing and approvals, opening the door for faster, safer deployment of next-generation driverless technology nationwide. [Read the release](#)



NHTSA Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): Innovative Traffic Safety Enforcement Grant Program

A new NHTSA NOFO is seeking applications for innovative traffic safety enforcement programs.

[Read more about the Innovative Traffic Safety Enforcement Grant Program](#)

462,000 Kia Tellurides Recalled 🚗

A NHTSA investigation was launched after a series of fires occurred while driving or parked. Now, Kia America has issued a new recall for the vehicle. [Read the 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.

La Familia Counseling Center Focus Group

– The OTS facilitated Spanish-language focus groups at La Familia Counseling Center in Sacramento on July 1 and July 29, 2026. The sessions were held during the center's new parent classes. Each session included a short presentation, open dialogue, a survey, and opportunities for participants to provide feedback on traffic safety concerns and possible OTS countermeasure strategies.



Comerciantes Unidos – The OTS spoke about the dangers of impaired driving at the Comerciantes Unidos monthly meeting in Stockton on July 2, 2026. The non-profit business association services Spanish-speaking business owners. The OTS plans to partner with association members to display posters in storefronts focused on impaired driving prevention.



Mexican Consulate Resource Fair – The OTS participated in the Mexican Consulate Resource Fair in Sacramento on July 15, 2026. The event provides community members with access to resources, encourages open dialogue, and promotes safety and awareness. The OTS hosted an outreach table and spoke with attendees about DUI prevention, pedestrian safety, and bicycle safety.



California State Fair – The OTS and Caltrans had an information booth at the California State Fair from July 17 to August 2, 2026. The booth shared traffic safety resources and encouraged attendees to sign up as traffic safety champions. The OTS and Caltrans also displayed signs, and ran video and audio messages focused on speeding, impaired driving and highway work zone safety.





📌 August – [Back to School Safety Month](#)

📌 Aug. 19-Sept. 7 – [National Summer DUI Enforcement Mobilization](#)

Media Toolkits

- [E-bikes, E-motorcycles, and E-scooters](#)
- [Bicycle and Pedestrian Curriculum](#)
- [Bike Helmet Guide](#)
- [Anti-Speeding Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [Impaired Driving](#)
- [100 Safest Days of Summer](#) (Teen Driver Safety)
- [Child Safety Seat Flier](#) (Occupant Protection)
- [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
pio@ots.ca.gov

Follow Us

[Facebook](#) | [X](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Youtube](#) | [TikTok](#)

Copyright © 2026
OTS Communications and Public Affairs
All Rights Reserved

California Office of Traffic Safety | 2208 Kausen Drive Suite 300 | Elk Grove, CA 95758 US