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Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office Fields Special DUI Prosecution Program

Those arrested for DUI in Stanislaus County, especially repeat offenders and those involved in fatal or injury crashes, can expect to face highly trained, specialized prosecutors, thanks to a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety. The \$346,967 grant to the Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office will fund a Vertical Prosecution team that will work cases from arrest through sentencing.

"Driving Under the Influence cases are taken very seriously in this county," states District Attorney Birgit Fladager. "While most DUI incidents do not result in actual injury to another person, there's no predicting which ones will. There has been a significant rise in the number of people who abuse prescription medication. Driving under the influence of drugs, prescribed or otherwise, can be just as deadly as driving under the influence of alcohol. This message must be heard loud and clear."

The prosecution team will handle cases throughout each step of the criminal process, prosecuting both alcohol and drug-impaired driving cases. In fatal and major injury DUI vehicle collisions, members of the team may even start by going to the crash scene to observe and assist the investigation.

Prosecution team members will work with the State's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Program to increase the capabilities of the team and the office by obtaining and delivering specialized training, including training in the emerging problem of drug-impaired driving. Team members will share information with peers and law enforcement personnel throughout the county and across the state.

The purpose of the program is to prevent impaired driving and reduce alcohol and drug-impaired traffic fatalities and injuries. In 2012, the Stanislaus County District Attorney's Office received 63 cases where DUI crashes resulted in injuries.

Funding for the program comes from a grant by the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.