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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: December 27, 2012
Re: Office of Traffic Safety Grant

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that the District Attorney's Office has been awarded a one-year grant from the Office of Traffic Safety, aimed at preventing deaths and injuries on our roadways and holding those at fault accountable. This is the second year the District Attorney's Office has been awarded this grant. The \$310,000 grant will fund two Deputy District Attorneys to prosecute felony and misdemeanor vehicular manslaughter cases involving drugs or alcohol, felony driving under the influence and causing great bodily injury cases, as well as felony and misdemeanor driving under the influence cases. Specific attention will be given to those cases in which the driver is under the influence of drugs—illegal or prescription. The two Deputy District Attorneys will provide training, attend training, and work with the various law enforcement agencies and their Drug Recognition Experts. In addition, the grant will fund a criminal investigator at 50%. The criminal investigator will assist the prosecutors with follow-up investigation on their cases with emphasis on vehicular homicides.

Drunk driving is one of America's deadliest crimes. In 2010, 791 people throughout California died in roadway crashes that involved a driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 percent or higher. In that same year in Stanislaus County, 394 people were injured or killed in alcohol-related crashes. Stanislaus County ranked 12th highest in the state for alcohol-involved collisions based on daily vehicle miles traveled. In Stanislaus County in 2011, the District Attorney's Office prosecuted almost 100 cases with alcohol involved collisions in which victims were injured. In addition, the District Attorney's Office prosecuted four alcohol-related collisions in which the victims were killed.

“There's no such thing as ‘just a DUI,’” states District Attorney Birgit Fladager. “While the majority of DUI incidents may not result in actual injury to another person, there's no predicting which one will. There has been a significant rise in the number of people abusing 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 needs to be heard loud and clear.”

“DUI can be a violent, tragic crime,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “This special team will help insure that no one falls through the cracks, and that the worst-of-the-worst offenders face a highly skilled, dedicated prosecutor.”

This program is funded by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Traffic Safety Administration.