



NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Approved By: ~~JDE~~
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VENTURA, California - District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that the Ventura County District Attorney's Office was awarded a new grant for "The Vertical Prosecution of Drug and Alcohol DUI Offenders and Repeat Offenders." This California Office of Traffic Safety grant totaling \$359,736 funded the newly created Drug and Alcohol DUI Vertical Prosecution Team, comprised of two full-time Deputy District Attorneys devoted solely to drug and alcohol DUI prevention and prosecution.

The DUI Vertical Prosecution Team is designed to aggressively prosecute impaired drivers within Ventura County, while simultaneously raising public awareness of the fatal consequences caused by drivers under the influence of alcohol and drugs, both illegal and prescription. Driving under the influence laws prohibit driving while impaired by alcohol, or a drug, or the combined influence of both, by any person, when their mental or physical abilities are so impaired they can no longer drive with the caution of a sober person. Legal entitlement to use a prescription drug is not a defense, nor is there any requirement of proving a .08 percent blood alcohol concentration (BAC). In California, 23 percent of drivers in fatal crashes have tested positive for drug involvement.

The DUI Vertical Prosecution Team will review, file and prosecute DUI cases from beginning to end. These cases range from misdemeanor DUI through felony DUI vehicular homicide. The DUI Prosecution Team targets repeat offenders, those in violation of probation, and is structuring an approach to assist law enforcement with the identification and apprehension of defendants with bench warrants for failing to appear in court on open DUI cases.

The DUI Vertical Prosecution Team is committed to seeking restitution for the victims of DUI, including agencies that provide law enforcement and emergency personnel in response to traffic collisions. Funding for the grant is provided by the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Traffic Safety Administration.

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