



GREGORY D. TOTTEN
District Attorney

NEWS RELEASE

www.vcdistrictattorney.com

Twitter: @VenturaDAOoffice

Contact: Kevin Drescher
Supervising Deputy District Attorney
Telephone: (805) 654-2340
E-mail: kevin.drescher@ventura.org
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**District Attorney's Office is Awarded Grant Money from the California Office of
Traffic Safety to Prosecute Alcohol and Drugged DUI Offenders**

VENTURA, California - District Attorney Gregory D. Totten announced today that, for the eighth consecutive year, the Ventura County District Attorney's Office was awarded a special DUI Prosecution Grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety. The \$361,117 grant will once again fund a vertical prosecution team that will work driving under the influence (DUI) cases from arrest through sentencing.

Funding from this grant will aid in prosecuting both alcohol and drug-impaired driving cases. Prosecution team members will work with the California's Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor Program to expand knowledge and resources in the emerging problem of drug-impaired driving.

The purpose of the program is to prevent impaired driving and reduce alcohol and drug-impaired traffic deaths and injuries through aggressive prosecution. Based on the latest data from the CHP, in 2015, there were 11 deaths and 287 serious injuries as a result of DUI-related collisions in Ventura County.

In the past year, the prosecution team filed 299 felony and misdemeanor cases of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Of those cases, 251 were drugged DUIs or a combination of drugs and alcohol DUIs. Our office, as a whole, filed 3,033 DUI cases in the same time period.

In recent years, California has seen an increase in drug-impaired driving accidents. The Ventura County District Attorney's Office supports efforts from the Office of Traffic Safety reminding the public that "DUI Doesn't Just Mean Booze." If you take prescription drugs, particularly those with a label warning against driving or operating machinery, you might be impaired enough to be DUI. Marijuana use can be impairing, either alone or in combination with alcohol or other drugs, and can result in a DUI arrest and conviction.

"Vertical prosecution teams help keep streets across Ventura County safe by taking people off the road who ignore the law and drive impaired," said Office of Traffic Safety Director Rhonda Craft. "Driving under the influence is a crime that will not be tolerated. Funding the prosecution of individuals who put lives at risk is one of many ways we are working to educate the public on the dangers and consequences of driving under the influence."

Funding for this vertical prosecution program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 280 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and other professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.

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