



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHP Media Relations: (916) 843-3310

TOP FIVE CHP STORIES OF THE WEEK

#ICYMI: This week, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) made headlines with several notable incidents, including a Pacific Palisades looter arrested, a CHP K-9 officer arrests three and confiscates multiple firearms and drugs in Coastal Division, a high-speed pursuit leads to arrest and the recovery of a firearm in Santa Cruz, 'Opossum'-ly the best rescue: CHP saves the day on the Bay Bridge and California Highway 'Paw' Patrol rescues four puppies in Fresno.



The list below includes the headline (with a link to the full text) and an excerpt from each announcement. Click on the headlines to access accompanying assets that are available for download.

1. [PACIFIC PALISADES LOOTER ARRESTED](#)

On the 21st of February, our CHP West Valley area officers were alerted to a looting incident at a private residence in Pacific Palisades. Despite arriving promptly at the scene, the suspect had already fled. However, with a comprehensive description of the suspect and the vehicle the victim provided, our officers were able to trace down the vehicle's registration to an address in Valencia. Newhall personnel responded to the residence, and officers were able to apprehend the suspect. The suspect, identified as Karen Mastey, was found in possession of antique items reportedly stolen from the fire-ravaged residence. Mastey was subsequently charged with Grand Theft under Penal Code 487(a) and is currently detained at the Santa Clarita Valley Sheriff's Station.

2. CHP K-9 OFFICER ARRESTS THREE AND CONFISCATES MULTIPLE FIREARMS AND DRUGS

On the 26th of February, an Officer from the Coastal Division K-9 unit observed a white Buick sedan disobeying various traffic laws on Northbound SR-1 near Larkin Valley Road. When the driver failed to stop, a pursuit ensued, leading us to Watsonville. The Watsonville Police Department was quick to action - successfully deploying a spike strip to halt the vehicle. Two passengers were detained, with one found to have a stolen handgun. The driver ran into a neighboring residence, yet due to exceptional efforts from CHP Coastal Air Operations, ISU officers, Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Deputies and Watsonville police officers, a secure perimeter was established. Consequently, the individual was apprehended without further incident. Subsequent inspections led to the uncovering of multiple shotguns and an assault rifle linked to the Buick's occupants. Three individuals - a 24-year-old Watsonville man, a 17-year-old from Salinas, and a 23-year-old Watsonville male driver- are currently facing several felony charges, including felony evading and possession of stolen firearms.

3. PURSUIT LEADS TO ARREST AND THE RECOVERY OF A FIREARM

On the 23rd of February, a CHP officer in Santa Cruz observed a black BMW sedan exceeding the speed limit on Northbound Highway 1. Upon attempting to pull the vehicle over, the driver initiated a high-speed chase, which concluded within the boundaries of Santa Cruz city. For public safety concerns, the chase was terminated. Nonetheless, the vehicle later collided at the off-ramp of Southbound Highway 1 at Soquel Avenue. The two 17-year-old occupants from Watsonville were subsequently detained. During a thorough examination of the vehicle, the CHP officers recovered more than 20 pounds of cannabis merchandise intended for unauthorized sale, as well as a loaded handgun equipped with an extended magazine. Both individuals now face serious charges, including felony evading and possessing a loaded firearm with an extended magazine.

4. [‘OPOSSUM’-LY THE BEST RESCUE: CHP SAVES THE DAY ON THE BAY BRIDGE](#)

On the morning of February 24, an observant motorist noticed an opossum marsupial attempting to traverse the upper deck of the Bay Bridge along the right shoulder and promptly notified CHP dispatch. Personnel from the CHP San Francisco Area responded to this occurrence promptly and discovered the opossum nearing Treasure Island after a substantial journey up the eastern part of the bridge. The opossum persisted in its attempts to veer westbound, at one point attempting to reverse direction and escape by moving against oncoming traffic. ‘

A concerned citizen who runs the East Bay non-profit animal rescue shelter, Jelly's Place, recognized the low-velocity pursuit and offered assistance. The opossum was detained and safely extricated from the hazardous location without incident. Recognition and appreciation go out to the caller who notified 911 and Julie B. for identifying and participating in rescuing this misplaced animal. We typically advise against halting on a freeway or bridge for animal rescue due to the risks presented by high-speed traffic and potentially distracted drivers. However, this situation warranted assistance from a capable, prepared individual who helped safely remove the animal from the location and now ensures it receives the necessary healthcare before being set free.

Following her rescue, the opossum was promptly transferred to the exceptional team at WildCare. Upon their immediate assessment of the marsupial, the professionals identified it as a female and found a pouch brimming with babies who appeared to have remained unaffected by the incident.

5. [CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY ‘PAW’ PATROL RESCUES 4 PUPPIES IN FRESNO](#)

On February 27th, two officers from Fresno, recognized for their profound love of dogs, were immediately on the scene to rescue these four forsaken puppies found on the road. Following significant bonding and affectionate interaction, we are delighted to announce that Fresno Humane Services will arrange a much-needed spa day for the puppies and find them a permanent and loving home.

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security.

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