



CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL PRESS RELEASE

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CHP Media Relations: (916) 843-3310

TOP FIVE CHP STORIES OF THE WEEK

#ICYMI: A roundup of notable incidents involving the California Highway Patrol (CHP) this past week, including a big narcotics seizure in Merced County, one officer answering the call to save lives during a flash flood emergency, promoting safe driving habits for teens, Distracted Driver Awareness Month, and an enhanced enforcement operation on US-50.

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. **[ROUTINE TRAFFIC STOP RESULTS IN BIG NARCOTICS SEIZURE IN MERCED COUNTY](#)**

On March 29, a Central Valley CHP K-9 officer performed a routine traffic stop on a 2019 Jeep SUV traveling northbound Interstate 5 in Merced County and discovered 20 pounds of crystal methamphetamine and 11 pounds of cocaine totaling approximately \$781,600. The suspect, Nestor Jovanni Muniz of Oakland, was arrested on charges of possession of methamphetamine for sale, possession of cocaine for sale, and the transportation of methamphetamine across noncontiguous counties, and was turned over to the Merced Area Gang Narcotics Enforcement Team (MAGNET).

2. **[RISING ABOVE THE CALL TO ACTION DURING FLOOD EMERGENCY](#)**

As reports were flooding in during an emergency call of rising water on US 101 in Santa Barbara County due to heavy rain, Officer Skaufel jumped into action when he encountered multiple vehicles becoming submerged. He was able to safely halt southbound traffic and cross over the center divider to rescue multiple drivers stranded in their vehicles. Officer Skaufel worked with CHP management and Caltrans to close US 101 in both directions to allow the 3 to 4 feet of water to safely drain and prevent further accidents.

3. **[EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION TO “BE THE CHANGE” FOR SAFE DRIVING HABITS](#)**

[Impact Teen Drivers](#) hosted the “Be the Change” summit and press conference to advocate education to teens about safe driving practices. In honor of Distracted Driving Awareness Month and California Teen Safe Driving Week, CHP Chief Kevin Davis and fellow traffic safety and childhood health experts highlighted some of the consequences of distracted driving, ranging from unintentional injuries and even deaths among young people.

4. **[APRIL IS DISTRACTED DRIVER AWARENESS MONTH](#)**

The CHP and the [Office of Traffic Safety \(OTS\)](#) want remind drivers that April is Distracted Driver Awareness Month. In 2022, 3,308 people were killed nationwide by distracted driving, which is the leading killer among teen drivers. Distracted driving can range from texting, answering phone calls, or anything that causes drivers to not pay attention to the road.

5. **[ENHANCED ENFORCEMENT ALONG US-50 DEMONSTRATES CHP EFFORTS TO KEEP DRIVERS SAFE](#)**

[East Sacramento CHP](#) and [CHP Valley Division](#) Commercial Enforcement officers performed enhanced enforcement on US-50 on April 4. Additional officers actively patrolled the area looking for High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane violations, speeders, reckless drivers, distracted drivers, and other moving violations, such as impaired drivers. During the operation, the CHP issued more than 100 citations and conducted 13 commercial vehicle inspections. The purpose for these enhanced enforcement operations is to help ensure the public is driving as safely possible.

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

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