



NEWS RELEASE

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District: 8- INLAND EMPIRE
Contact: Terri Kasinga
Phone: (909) 383-1910 (work)
(951) 232-4268 (cell)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS IS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM

Inland Empire – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) hosted the Annual Litter Awareness press conference on Earth Day, April 22nd, to promote the Adopt-A-Highway Program. The Caltrans Adopt-A-Highway Program was established in 1989 and California was the 20th state in the nation to put it to task. Over 7,700 shoulder miles of California state highways are currently adopted.

The Adopt-A-Highway Program provides an avenue for individuals, organizations, and businesses to make a difference in their community by maintaining up to 2-mile sections of roadside within California's State Highway System. In return, they get a freeway sign recognizing their contribution. This builds community pride in addition to the aesthetic benefits of cleaner and more beautiful roadsides. By doing so, all participants help to prevent potential pollutants from entering our waterways and save taxpayers millions of dollars every year.

Adoption opportunities include litter removal, graffiti removal, vegetation control, tree planting, and wildflower planting. Once the adoptee joins the program, a courtesy sign is erected to recognize participants for their contributions within the area they adopt. There are over 2,500 active groups representing over 11,000 participants statewide. 70% of the groups perform the work themselves and the other 30% hire a contractor to perform the work on their behalf. Statewide in July through December 2009, program participants collected nearly 8,893 cubic yards of litter from California's roadsides representing almost \$1 million in savings to taxpayers.

Caltrans District Director Dr. Raymond Wolfe stated, "The Adopt-a-Highway Program is critical support to our maintenance program. It allows us to redirect our maintenance crews to more important tasks like installing guard rail and fixing potholes." Caltrans District 8, the largest district in the state, has an endless challenge to keep our freeways in the Inland Empire clean and beautiful. District 8 has 7,200 lane miles and 504 shoulder miles are adopted by 252 sponsors. There are currently 684 shoulder miles of state highway available for adoption in the Inland Empire.

Not only does the program provide a great avenue to keep the gateways to your communities aesthetically pleasing, it gives both volunteers and sponsors a chance to promote civic duty and community pride.

Littering is a crime and the cost to keep the freeways' clean could be spent on more important things. Caltrans reminds parents to set a good example for your children and stash their trash. Let's make a difference and show you care. Don't trash California!

Last year all litter removal efforts on state highways throughout Riverside and San Bernardino counties, including the Adopt-A-Highway program, spent over \$6 million. For more information and to see how you can join, go to <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/maint/adopt/>.

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