



NEWS RELEASE

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District: 8- INLAND EMPIRE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CALTRANS STRETCHING TAX DOLLARS TO CLEAN STATE HIGHWAYS

Inland Empire – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) hosted an annual Litter Awareness press conference on May 6th to remind the public of the rising costs of litter removal on state highways. With the help of special programs, Adopt-A-Highway program, and partnership with other agencies, Caltrans is able to cut their costs to keep up with litter removal. At the press conference California Highway Patrol (CHP) talked about the road hazards of litter.

Over \$57 million was spent last year statewide to clean California's state highways. Caltrans District 8, which serves Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, spent over \$2 million last year to pick up litter. This amount does not include dump fees and other related costs. District 8 cleaned up 26,960 cubic yards of waste last year on our state highways – the second largest amount in the state.

Caltrans saves millions of dollars every year by using "special crews", or community service workers (also known as court appointed workers) and state prisoners, to clean highways. This is a huge savings to the state and the taxpayers because there are not enough Caltrans workers to clean the highways on a regular basis. These special crews work seven days a week. Without them, Caltrans would have to hire contractors to clean state highways which would at least double the existing litter removal cost.

Litter can also be dangerous. The special crews and Caltrans workers remove trash along state highways with traffic close by. Litter in freeway travel lanes can cause accidents or worse, result in fatal accidents. It also puts the California Highway Patrol (CHP) officers at risk when they do freeway traffic breaks to sometimes physically remove litter such as mattresses, tire treads, and other large items. Caltrans workers have lost their lives while removing simple litter items.

-M O R E-





NEWS RELEASE

2-2-2-2

Arturo Arzaga and Eric Perkins, Caltrans Equipment Operator II's, from the Riverside Maintenance Region were awarded the Governor's Medal of Valor in 2008 for saving the lives of two special crew workers. In 2007, an errant motorist hit a Caltrans work crew van along SR-60 in Mira Loma overturning the van. These two Caltrans workers acted quickly and selflessly to rescue the injured parties and to comfort the other workers until emergency personnel arrived.

It's time to stop and think – every time you throw a piece of litter out of your vehicle, you are throwing away money. That is money that could be used to fix signs, guardrail or potholes. Save your cash and stash your trash! And keep our Caltrans workers, special crews, Adopt-A-Highway workers, and CHP officers safe.

For more information on litter and to see how you can help go to www.dontrashcalifornia.info.

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