



# NEWS RELEASE

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**District:** San Bernardino

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## CALTRANS DISTRICT 8 IS PROUD OF ITS MEDAL OF VALOR RECIPIENTS

**San Bernardino** - The California Medal of Valor is the highest honor that the State bestows on its public servants. It is awarded to California State employees who have performed an extraordinary act of heroism above and beyond the normal call of duty, at great risk to their own personal safety or life, to save the life of another.

Caltrans District 8 is proud that five of these recipients performed heroic acts on state highways to save lives in the Inland Empire. These brave men were honored today at a ceremony at the State Capitol and were presented the Medal of Valor award by the Governor's Executive Secretary, Nancy McFadden. The following are the names of the Caltrans employees and their stories of bravery:

On December 22, 2010, Joe J. Martinez, Alberto P. Miramontes, Jose Linares, and Brian Borella (Caltrans Equipment Operator IIs) responded to a call for rock fall on State Route 330 (SR-330) in the San Bernardino Mountains. After arriving at the scene, these men realized that the call was not for routine rock fall, but a rock and mud slide that resulted in complete loss of the roadway. Some motorists, who were traveling along the highway, became stranded while rocks and mud struck their vehicles. The Caltrans workers used their equipment to plow a pathway to safety several miles uphill. After all the motorists were escorted to safety, it became evident that three sections of SR-330 roadway had completely washed away and flowed hundreds of feet over the side of the mountain. Had it not been for the bravery and dedication of Joe, Albert, Jose, and Brian who stayed on scene to rescue the motorists as the roadway was caving in, there would have been multiple lives lost that night.

Another District 8 Medal of Valor recipient is Barry Morrison, who has since retired from the Department. On April 20, 2011, a sunny day after an unusually cold night, Caltrans Equipment Operator II Barry Morrison went to work to restore a closed section of State Route 2 (SR-2) in the Angeles National Forest for reopening in late April. This section of SR-2, located between Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, closes every winter because of heavy snow and avalanches. As Barry drove along SR-2 he thought he saw a bear sitting on a rock down below the roadway. Once he was closer, he realized it was a woman who appeared to be injured. Barry pulled over and hiked down the steep slope and found the woman was badly injured after falling down the slope during the night. She had bruises, cuts and frostbite from not wearing appropriate clothing during the freezing overnight temperatures. The woman told Barry she had spent the night near the roadway after falling down the cliff. She had run out of gas the day before at the closure gate on the Los Angeles County side, and attempted to hike almost 20 miles to Wrightwood for help. Barry provided her with warm clothing, water and snacks he had stored in his vehicle and stayed with her providing comfort until emergency personnel arrived on scene. If Barry had not been alert and aware of his surroundings while working to clear SR-2, the outcome could have been catastrophic.

Please join Caltrans District 8 in congratulating our Medal of Valor recipients who went above and beyond the call of duty, risking their own safety, to rescue others in life and death situations.

For the sake of all highway workers, please be "Work Zone Alert" and read about our new safety campaign at <http://www.beworkzonealert.com/>. People's lives depend on it – including yours!



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Brian Borella, Equipment Operator II



Jose J. Linares, Equipment Operator II



Alberto Miramontes, Equipment Operator II

\*Photos of Joe Martinez and Barry Morrison were unavailable.

**MEDAL OF VALOR AWARDS**



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