



CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL NEWS 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 Governor Newsom highlighting CHP's continued service during the Southern California wildfires, CHP K-9 uncovers 20 pounds of cocaine worth \$720,000, Yreka officers discover 340 pounds of marijuana, CHP reunites with 'Second Chance Seven' after surviving fatal crash seven years ago and CHP fulfills the birthday wish of a lifelong admirer.



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. [**GOVERNOR NEWSOM RECOGNIZES CHP'S CONTINUED SERVICE DURING THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES**](#)

On March 3, Governor Newsom thanked CHP officers and personnel for their tireless work protecting Californians after the Los Angeles wildfires. The 2025 Los Angeles wildfires began on January 7, 2025, and lasted 24 days, ending on January 31. The fires burned through Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties.

2. CHP K-9 UNCOVERS 20 POUNDS OF COCAINE WORTH \$720,000

On February 28, a Central Division K-9 unit conducted a stop on a Ford F-150 on Interstate 5 in Merced County. The officer noticed several indicators that led him to believe the driver, James Churn, was engaged in criminal activity. The officer's K-9 partner, "Shei," was deployed on the truck's exterior, and an extensive search of the Ford revealed a sophisticated, aftermarket compartment in the truck's roof. Churn was arrested and subsequently booked into the Merced County Jail on the charges of possession of cocaine for sale and transportation of cocaine across noncontiguous counties.

3. YREKA OFFICERS DISCOVER 340 POUNDS OF MARIJUANA

On March 6, around 12:40 a.m., our Yreka officers made an enforcement stop on a pickup truck with a trailer due to a vehicle code violation on Interstate 5 at Louie Road. A subsequent investigation led to the discovery of 300 pounds of unprocessed and 40 pounds of processed marijuana within the trailer. The discovered marijuana was confiscated, and charges related to the drug violations have been recommended against the driver.

4. CHP REUNITES WITH 'SECOND CHANCE SEVEN' AFTER SURVIVING FATAL CRASH SEVEN YEARS AGO

Nearly seven years after surviving a severe fatal accident on Interstate 8 near Dunaway Road, the "Second Chance Seven" reconvened in the Imperial Valley, commemorating an emotional reunion with the CHP officers and first responders who were pivotal during the incident. Retired CHP El Centro Officer D. Davis, Retired Officer S. Salcido, K-9 Officer L. Thomas, Captain E. Ruedas, and Public Safety Dispatcher L. Sawyer participated in the emotional reunion—recording a moment characterized by resilience, gratitude, and second opportunities through powerful photos. Today, these seven incredible siblings are thriving, and their inspiring journey is being documented for a show set to air later this year: "Second Chance Seven." Their story is one of survival, strength, and family.

5. CHP FULFILLS THE BIRTHDAY WISH OF A LIFELONG ADMIRER

In December of 2024, the CHP received a heartfelt wish to celebrate the 60th birthday of Monica Lee, a lifelong admirer of both the CHP and the television series "CHiPs". Ms. Lee, from Cincinnati, Ohio, expressed her aspirations via email to Commissioner Duryee and Captain Castillo - a dream to have a photograph taken with a motorcycle officer on her upcoming visit to California in January 2025. Ms. Lee stated, "I realize this is a huge request and certainly isn't on your radar as an important task, but it would make a lifelong dream of mine come true on my 60th birthday! You would then have a ridiculous story to tell at your next officer briefing about a lady from Ohio who never got over Erik Estrada!"

The proposal was well-received, with Captain Castillo contacting Ms. Lee to make arrangements. However, with the unforeseen disaster in the Pacific Palisades and Altadena communities requiring significant CHP resources, it remained uncertain whether the arrangement would proceed as planned. Captain Castillo, nevertheless, assured Ms. Lee of his efforts to make her dream come true. Upon her arrival in Santa Monica in January, Ms. Lee was overcome with joy when Captain Castillo and the West Los Angeles motor squad made her wish come true by celebrating her 60th birthday and capturing the long-desired photo.

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

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California Highway Patrol
601 N 7th St, Sacramento, CA 95811

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