



# On Patrol

## State Budget Action Supports Freeway Service Patrol Expansion

by Jaime Maldonado, MTC SAFE

Three new metropolitan regions will soon join the statewide Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) roster, supported by a \$2 million increase in the program's state budget — enough to allow the new participants to join as full-scale partners without cuts to existing FSP programs.

The FSP program now operates in 10 metropolitan regions around California, funded with a mix of local, state and federal dollars. The state's annual contribution last increased in 2001, from \$16.8 million to \$18 million, which was allocated to local programs (shown below from largest to smallest) by formula based on traffic congestion, population and urban lane miles.

- Los Angeles County
- San Francisco Bay Area (nine counties)
- Orange County
- San Diego County
- Riverside County
- Sacramento/Yolo counties
- Santa Cruz County
- San Joaquin County
- Monterey County
- Fresno County

Because congestion grows along with population, state law allows new entrants into the FSP program. Unfortunately there has been no mechanism to add dollars to the program as it expands. San Bernardino, Santa Barbara and Placer counties all recently applied and were accepted into the statewide program. Caltrans called for phasing in these new

programs over three years to cushion the impact of cuts to existing FSP programs as the limited pool of dollars was shared. For the Bay Area program it would have ultimately resulted in a yearly decrease of approximately \$500,000, or four trucks.

Fortunately, program staff worked together with legislators to add \$2 million to the FY 2005-06 state budget for the FSP program (bringing it to \$20 million), enough for the three new participants to enter the

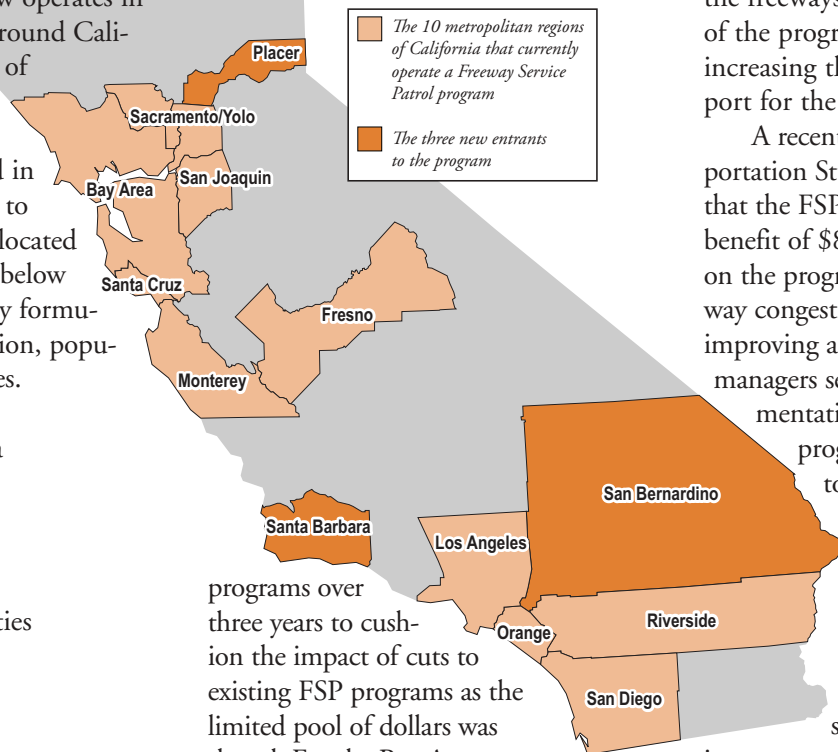
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program as full-scale partners while holding the 10 existing programs harmless. Expanding the program with new dollars has other benefits as well — helping more motorists on the freeways, expanding the visibility of the program around the state and increasing the legislative base of support for the program.

A recent U.C. Institute of Transportation Studies evaluation found that the FSP provides the Bay Area a benefit of \$8 for each dollar expended on the program — by reducing freeway congestion, saving fuel and improving air quality. FSP program managers see the state budget augmentation as a validation of the program and its clear benefit to the motoring public — even in tight budget times, enough dollars were found to allow the program to expand by three regions and keep funding stable. As the state's fiscal climate improves, our next challenge is to better document increased operating costs in order to augment the base funding to keep pace with inflation.

Thanks to all those who worked hard to secure the additional funding, including Lisa Davies from Caltrans, Michelle Kirkoff from San Bernardino, John Asuncion from Santa Barbara and Ellen Griffin from MTC.



# New Tow Contractor Profiles

by Danielle Stanislaus, MTC SAFE

The Bay Area family of FSP contractors is expanding rapidly to keep up with a growing local program. July 2005 marked the start of a new round of tow contracts, and the initiation of four new tow contractors. Bill's Towing, Lima Tow, Matos Towing & Transport and Vacaville Tow all joined the FSP program in July, and now are settling into their new beat operations.

**Bill's Towing** in Novato began operating Beat 28 in Marin and Sonoma counties on July 18. The 13-mile beat follows U.S. 101 from State Route 37 to E. Washington Boulevard. Steve Barnes, owner of Bill's Towing since its founding in 1968, is enjoying his start with the FSP program. "I like to help people," Barnes says, "so I came to FSP. Plus, I've done just about everything else in towing — this is a welcome change."

Lupe Lima, owner of **Lima Tow** in Campbell, is also excited to be a part of the FSP family. In business since 1991 but new to FSP, Lima is looking forward to the customer service aspect of the program. "This program is known for its service to the public," she reports, "and we're looking forward to being a part of that." Lima Tow operates Beat 19 in Santa Clara County, which runs along Interstate 880 and Highways 17 and 237.

**Vacaville Tow** is challenged with operating one of two new 24-month FSP pilot beats, Beat 34 in Solano County. The beat extends along Interstate 80 from Abernathy Road to Interstate 505. This new beat is 13 miles in length, and with Sunday service and extended Friday evening service, it is a busy beat. Glenn Neal, owner of Vacaville Tow, has been in business for 20 years and is the current California Tow Truck Association president. "I've watched the FSP program grow from infancy to the fully-developed program it is today," says Neal,

"and I've always been amazed at how well-orchestrated and proficient the service is. I'm glad to now be a part of the program."

With a new name and management, **Matos Towing & Transport** in San Jose is technically a newcomer to FSP. However, Matos as a company has been involved with FSP in the past as Courtesy Road Patrol and Matos Auto Body. The company has been in business for over 35 years. David Schely, the new manager for Matos Towing & Transport, says that he enjoyed being involved with FSP in the past. "I am a strong believer in the program," says Schely. "FSP serves the greater good by assisting the motoring public." Matos covers Beat 21 in Alameda County — Interstate 680 from Scott Creek Road to Alcosta Boulevard.

FSP welcomes all of these new contractors to the family, and wishes them much success as they continue to become familiar with this essential Bay Area motorist aid program.

## Mark your calendars!

Please join us on **Saturday, October 15, 2005** at the Officer's Club at the Alameda Naval Base for the 12th Annual Awards Event, as we recognize the individual and collective accomplishments achieved by FSP program participants over the past year! Activities include a tow rodeo, BBQ, awards ceremony, children's activities and the ever-popular raffle. *Stay tuned for more details!*



Have seen our new and improved Web site? If not, log on to [www.fsp-bayarea.org](http://www.fsp-bayarea.org) to:

- download tow operations forms, including hot fax forms, back-up request forms, merchandise order forms and more
- download monthly calendars with tow schedules, meetings, events, classes and training opportunities
- navigate a Bay Area map showing all FSP beats, schedules and drop site maps
- print past editions of *On Patrol*
- view monthly, quarterly and yearly statistics and contractor ratings
- view past award winners for exemplary service to the Freeway Service Patrol

Log on now!  
[www.fsp-bayarea.org](http://www.fsp-bayarea.org)

## Bay Area FSP Statistical Summary — Fiscal Year 2004/2005\*

Total number of assists = 138,882
Percent of assists involving people = 56.1%
Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.9
Percent of motorist survey returns = 16.2%
Percent of surveys rating service as excellent = 94.8%
Average motorist wait time = 9.6 minutes

\* July 2004 through June 2005

# Quarterly Awards

January through June 2005

by Danielle Stanislaus

## BEATS OF THE QUARTER

Congratulations are once again in order for **Pito's Towing** in Oakland and the married FSP driver-team Lidia Gonzalez and Raul Sosa of **Beat 3** for being chosen as Beat of the Quarter for January through March of 2005. This marks the second time in a year this beat has been honored — they were selected as Beat of the Quarter for July through September 2004 and were profiled in the January 2005 issue of *On Patrol*.

Pito's Towing has been with the FSP program since its inception in 1992, and has patrolled busy Beat 3 along Interstate 880 since June 2002. Victor Linares is the owner and FSP supervisor of Pito's Towing, and Maria Mena handles all FSP paperwork.

Winner of the Beat of the Quarter award for the second quarter of 2005 goes to **Beat 22** and the drivers of the **Palace Garage** for their high assist rate, high service rating and low motorist wait time. Palace Garage, also with FSP since its inception in 1992, has operated Beat 22 along Interstate 580 from Santa Rita Road to Grantline Road since July 2004. This beat is 16 miles in length and operates during the week from 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The beat has extended Friday evening service as well as Sunday service, making it one of the busier FSP beats. Palace Garage also operates Beat 4 in Alameda County.

Beat 22 has three trucks on patrol, and three drivers — Louis Gonzales, Henry Davidson and Moises Reyes (Driver of the Quarter at right) — working together daily to keep beat operations running smoothly. Louis Gonzales, Palace Garage's FSP division lead, says it is the excellent communication among the three drivers in the field that is largely responsible for the beat's success. "We communicate well with each other, making sure we know



*The drivers of Palace Garage (left to right): Moises Reyes, Henry Davidson and Louis Gonzales*

when assistance is needed, when help is en route and when we are taking our breaks. This way there's no gap in coverage and help is always there when you need it." Gonzales admits that life on the beat can sometimes be difficult — Beat 22 is one of the main corridors to California's Central Valley, and with the Altamont Pass as part of the beat, the drivers are always busy. But together with Butch Fann, the general manager of Palace Garage, and Bill Hemenez, the owner, this team continues to provide the kind of high quality service that makes the FSP program successful.

## DRIVERS OF THE QUARTER

**Moises Reyes**, FSP Driver of the Quarter for the first quarter of 2005, is a

man who truly enjoys his job. Moises has 12 years of experience with Palace Garage and has assisted with FSP for the past three. He has numerous awards from Palace



*Moises Reyes*

Garage, but this marks his first official FSP recognition. "The best part of the FSP program is that you get to make things happen for people," says Reyes. "Oftentimes, people are panicking, and as a FSP driver I get to help them."

Reyes is fluent in Spanish, and is often called upon to help communicate with the Spanish-speaking public about the objectives of FSP. "There are many times when I am out in the field

and a motorist doesn't speak English, and they are so happy to discover that I can communicate with them in Spanish," states Reyes. "There is a lot going on out there with fatalities, roll-overs and accidents on the freeways, and people are often scared. It is nice to be able to comfort them, and do so in their native language."

Reyes works two Alameda County beats — Beat 4 along Interstate 880 and Highway 238, and Beat 22 on Interstate 580. Beat 4 operates from 6 to 10 a.m. and 3 to 7 p.m., and Beat 22 operates from 5:30 to 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 to 7 p.m. Now that he's been selected as Driver of the Quarter, Reyes says his next challenge will be to win the FSP Driver of the Year Award. Good luck to you, Moises!

Congratulations are also in order for **James Allison** of B&D Towing in Concord, who is the FSP Driver of the Quarter for the second quarter of 2005. Allison has been with the FSP program since January of 2004, and currently patrols Beat 35 in Contra Costa County. Beat 35 is one of the pilot beats, on Interstate 680 from Alcosta Boulevard to Stone Valley Road. This new beat operates during the week between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 a.m., and 3p.m. to 6 p.m.




*James Allison*


Allison previously worked Beats 1 and 5 as well — both with B&D Towing. His outstanding performance was formally recognized by B&D when Allison was chosen to receive the "Contractor's Choice" Award at the 2004 FSP awards event. "I really enjoy helping people," says Allison. "I used to drive commercial towing, and you get a totally different feeling working FSP. Being a part of such an important public service and knowing that you're helping keep people safe is a great feeling."

# The Public Speaks


**M**otorists continue to mail, e-mail and phone in praise and descriptions of their experiences with the FSP program. Here are a few recent comments.


## Voicemail

 (3/14/05) "My car just stalled on the freeway, and I am calling because FSP helped me. I did not even know this service existed. The FSP driver was wonderful, and I wanted to call to say thanks a lot. This was a very friendly and pleasant experience — I will no longer be scared on freeways. I had a CHP officer and the FSP driver there talking to me and making me feel comfortable. It makes me feel good to know that my tax dollars are at work for a wonderful program like this. Thank you so much."


 (4/15/05) "I just wanted to call and tell you how fabulous [FSP driver] Ambika Maharaj is. I had a blowout on the freeway in Oakland where there was nowhere to pull over. I was stuck on the side of the road terrified somebody was going to hit me. I had a cell phone, but no one could get to me because of the traffic. I've never been that scared in my whole life. Then your FSP driver showed up out of nowhere and rescued me. He was awesome! He changed my tire and put me at ease. I had a spare, but I did not have my jack or anything else. This is such a valuable service!"

## E-mail

 (3/21/05) "I want to share how much I appreciated the service I received this morning from the Freeway Service Patrol. Not only was the timing impeccable, but the driver actually helped me with another car issue I was having. He was extremely personable and overall a fantastic help. This service was a LIFE SAVER, and I don't know what I would've done otherwise! This being the first time something of this nature has ever happened to me, and being alone in my car, I was quite nervous until FSP came to my aid. Thank you so much!"

 (5/15/05) "I just wanted to drop you a line and make you aware of the excellent, professional and courteous assistance I received from one of your employees. Mr. Bill Jauregui came upon my disabled vehicle and me on Interstate 580. It was my good luck to have encountered Mr. Jauregui, as I am an FBI agent, and was on my way to a critical meeting. Mr. Jauregui promptly and professionally got me back on the road, and on to my meeting. I'm happy to see my tax dollars put to such good use, and Mr. Jauregui is a shining example of a competent and professional employee."

## Letters

 (6/3/05) "I would like to thank the Freeway Service Patrol for providing excellent service when my car stalled on Interstate 880 yesterday. The driver was courteous and really cared that I was safe. Along with his partner, he towed my car to a safe place so that AAA could come get me to a service station. The Freeway Service Patrol is one program that is a great benefit to the citizens of California, and is definitely a good use of funds."

## Upcoming Events

### Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

8:30 a.m. Tuesdays at MTC, MetroCenter  
Sept. 13, Oct. 11, Nov. 8, Dec. 13

### Tow Contractors Meetings

11 a.m. Tuesdays at MTC, MetroCenter  
Sept. 13  
Nov. 8

### Quarterly Driver Refresher Training

11 a.m. at CHP, Oakland  
\* Dec. 1 & 2  
11 a.m. at CHP, Dublin  
\* Dec. 8 & 9

### Proficiency Testing

7 a.m. at CHP, Vallejo  
Sept. 12

### Certification Class

7 a.m. at CHP, Vallejo  
Sept. 21-23

### 12th Annual FSP Awards Event

Oct. 15  
\* Tentative Date

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*All Ways Towing and Transport*, Fremont  
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*B & A Body Works and Towing*,  
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Bryan Davis and Richard Valles  
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*Matos Towing and Transport*, San Jose  
Nelson V. Lopez  
*Nelson's Tow*, San Francisco  
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*Palace Garage*, San Leandro  
Victor Linares  
*Pito's Towing*, Oakland  
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*Redhill Towing*, San Rafael  
Jim Inglebright and Karl Offerman  
*Roadrunner Tow*, Fairfield  
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Glenn Neal  
*VacavilleTow*, Vacaville  
Michelle Inskip  
*Yarbrough Bros. Towing*, Santa Rosa