

On Patrol

VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 2

DECEMBER 2010

NEWS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL

Annual Awards Announced At Ballgame Festivities

by MTC Staff

Over 200 Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) contractors, fleet managers and drivers from the nine-county Bay Area attended the program's 17th annual awards event at the Oakland Coliseum on September 11, 2010, when the Oakland A's played the Boston Red Sox. After feasting at a barbecue buffet, everyone was ready for the announcement by California Highway Patrol, Caltrans and MTC SAFE FSP program staff of the four prestigious annual awards: Driver of the Year, Contractor of the Year, Dispatcher of the Year and the Public Choice.

Driver of the Year

This year's Driver of the Year is Gerardo Menendez of San Francisco's B&A Body Works and Towing. Menendez has worked with the Freeway Service Patrol for over a decade – 11 years to be exact. Rich Bilafer, owner of B&A, said that Menendez is a model employee who is always focused. The statistics also reflect this praise. In the past year, he completed 482 daily shift records (DSRs) without a single error, assisted 876 people on the freeway and dealt with 635 additional incidents — bringing him to a total of 1,511 assists for the year (more than double the average of 640). Even with this workload, Menendez never dropped his service rating below 98 percent and



Gerardo Menendez, Driver, B&A Towing



Drivers, contractors and FSP program staff cheer from their seats as the Oakland A's crush the Boston Red Sox at this year's annual awards event.

doesn't have a single violation on the books. In recognition of his outstanding record, he received an FSP jacket embroidered with his name in addition to an award plaque. The FSP partner agencies are proud to have Menendez on their roster.

Contractor of the Year

Our Contractor of the Year is Campbell's Towing of San Jose, owned by Joe and Kim Scarff. Campbell's performed exceptionally well while covering almost 75 miles of highway, maintaining 12 vehicles and managing 21 drivers. Their managers are a pleasure to work with and we never doubt their ability to perform — they have proven themselves time and time again. Thanks for your great service, Campbell's!



Joe Scarff and Leon Esquenazi of Campbell's Towing



Terry Mason, Dispatcher, California Highway Patrol

Dispatcher of the Year

Terry Mason is this year's Dispatcher of the Year. Mason has worked with the California Highway Patrol for almost 25 years, and has been acting as a dispatcher since the FSP program began 17 years ago. "Her voice brings 'calm' to an emergency," said Sergeant Steve Barruel. "I've never heard frustration, anger or sarcasm go out over the radio waves from this person. I know that when she's working my frequency, I'm in good hands." This award is a token of our appreciation for your great work, Terry!

Public Choice

It is our tradition to give an award to the driver who receives the most public comments for their charm. This year's Public Choice award goes to Boone Bathe. Bathe has been



Boone Bathe (right) receiving the Public Choice award

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Hands-Free Cell Phone Use Applies to FSP Drivers

by Sergeant Steve Barruel, California Highway Patrol

“A person shall not drive a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone unless that telephone is specifically designed and configured to allow hands-free listening and talking, and is used in that manner while driving.”

California Vehicle Code policy 23123 (a) prohibits the use of wireless telephones while operating motor vehicles without the use of a hands-free device. Recent-

ly, officers in my unit and I observed several FSP personnel using their cell phones while driving during FSP hours. These were not Nextel digital walkie-talkie users; they were personal cell phone users. The most recent incident occurred in October when I passed an FSP truck on the highway and noticed the driver was talking on a cell phone. I slowed my patrol car down to allow the FSP truck to catch up. As it passed my location, the driver realized it was the FSP Sergeant he was passing. He then tried to look inconspicuous by dropping his phone while

keeping his left hand by his left ear and waved at me. Busted!

Soon enough, Nextel users will also have to switch to a hands-free device. There is currently a provision in place to specifically allow tow truck operators to use the Push-to-Talk (PTT) feature on a Nextel walkie-talkie type device. **This provision is scheduled to sunset sometime in the middle of 2011.** MTC SAFE is working with California Highway Patrol to make sure a workable solution is in place for continued clear communication between drivers and dispatch.

Paperless Survey Pilot Program Shows Impressive Returns

by Rachel Zack, MTC SAFE

For almost a decade, the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) has collected a wealth of quality data on program performance by handing out Scantron survey forms to motorists helped at an incident. This data has helped the FSP program prove its worth over the years, but the current survey program is antiquated and expensive. Under the current system, a driver hands a motorist a survey form which they are to fill out and return through the postal service. MTC SAFE's Motorist Aid Coordinator, Rachel Zack, has been working to update this program to an online inter-

net survey. Under the new program, the driver would hand the motorist a form similar to a business card which contains the FSP driver's ID number, beat number, name and date as well as the survey link information. The driver would inform the motorist that if they fill out the survey, their name will be entered in a monthly drawing.

This new program is currently being tested on beats 3 and 13. Although there has been a slight drop in survey returns, the return rate is still impressive — over 10 percent! As a result of the pilot project's success, MTC SAFE is considering implementing it systemwide, and is improving the data collection side of the new survey program.

Upcoming Events

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

8:30 a.m. Tuesdays at MTC, MetroCenter

January 11, 2011

February 8, 2011

March 8, 2011

April 12, 2011 (@ Golden Gate Communications Center)

Tow Contractors Meetings

11 a.m. Tuesdays at MTC, MetroCenter

February 8, 2011

April 11, 2011

Quarterly Driver Refresher Training

11 a.m. at CHP, Golden Gate Division (GGD)

February 17 & 18, 2011

11 a.m. , location in San Jose to be determined

February 23, 2011

11 a.m. , at MTC, Oakland

February 25, 2011

Proficiency Testing

7 a.m. at CHP, GGD

January 10, 2011

April 4, 2011

Certification Class

7 a.m. at CHP, GGD

Division Room 250

January 19 – 21, 2011

April 13 – 15, 2011



New pilot project survey card prototype

Quarterly Awards

Fourth Quarter, April – June 2010

Driver of the Quarter



Gordon Bowman from Campbell's Towing finished off the year with 1,025 assists, 429 of which were with motorists; he averaged 20 percent survey returns and had zero

Gordon Bowman errors on his daily shift record submissions. Great work, Gordon!

Contractor of the Quarter

Roadrunner Tow's owner, Jim Inglebright, and manager, Karl Offerman, have done a superb job this past quarter. Roadrunner's drivers finished the year with 2,219 people assists on beats



*Karl Offerman,
Manager,
Roadrunner Tow*

24 and 29—about 35 miles of highway along interstates 780, 680 and 80 in southern Solano County. Roadrunner always meets at least five of the seven program goals, and we want to recognize them for doing great work.

Beat of the Quarter

Beat 36, operated by Ken Betts' Towing, is an 11-mile beat along Highway 4 in Contra Costa County. In the 3rd quarter of 2009, Beat 36 reached four of our program goals. In the 4th quarter, this beat was able to achieve six of the seven goals. Beat 36 is awarded Beat of the Quarter because of their improvement towards excellence. Great work, Beat 36!



Uriel Macedo, driver (left) and Omar Rathod, employee (right), Ken Betts' Towing

Third Quarter Statistical Summary (January – March 2010)

Total number of assists = 30,378
 Percentage of assists involving people = 45.3 percent
 Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.83 (urban beats) & 0.7 (rural beats)
 Percentage of motorist survey returns = 12.7 percent
 Percentage of surveys rating service as excellent = 97 percent
 Average motorist wait time = 9.2 minutes

Fourth Quarter Statistical Summary (April – June 2010)

Total number of assists = 33,846
 Percentage of assists involving people = 45 percent
 Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.88 (urban beats) & 0.76 (rural beats)
 Percentage of motorist survey returns = 21.2 percent
 Percentage of surveys rating service as excellent = 97 percent
 Average motorist wait time = 8.4 minutes

Annual Statistical Summary

Total number of assists = 132,025
 Percentage of assists involving people = 46.3 percent
 Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.88 (urban beats) & 0.75 (rural beats)
 Percentage of motorist survey returns = 17.7 percent
 Percentage of surveys rating service as excellent = 97 percent
 Average motorist wait time = 9 minutes

Annual Awards

(continued from page 1)

described as an angel and a savior, and is often dubbed a "white knight." One man wrote to make sure we understood that the letter was "not just about the service but [about] the politeness and courtesy this young [man] showed me. He is definitely an asset to your business and to MANKIND. You and his parents should be very proud of this young man." We surely are!


MTC SAFE would like to recognize the performance of all of our Freeway Service Patrol drivers, contractors and dispatchers for their hard work in keeping our freeways running smoothly and safely.





Boone Bathe (standing)


The Public Speaks


Motorists continue to communicate praise and gratitude for their experiences with the FSP program. Here are some recent e-mail comments.


 (5/20/2010) This afternoon on my commute home on I-880, I was surprised when my motorbike died in the diamond lane. I was able to coast to the side of the road safely. It was quite nerve-racking though. As I was still coasting on the side of the road I looked in my mirror and, to my surprise, there was a tow truck with its flashers on. The driver carefully put some gas in my tank and gave me some literature on this program. He was at my rescue before my bike had even stopped. I want to thank Xavier Nabalta for helping me out in my time of need.


 (7/19/2010) I'd like to thank Mike Oliver for going out of his way in helping me while I was stranded on Interstate 580. Many times tow people just tow vehicles with total disregard for the feeling of the vehicle's owner. Mike Oliver double-checked my oil and didn't leave until he was sure I was okay.


 (7/22/2010) I was on my way to work dressed in slacks, a blouse and high-heeled shoes and I got a flat tire. Moises Reyes pulled up and immediately started to assist me with changing my tire. I had no clue that this type of service even existed. I was running late and he went over and beyond to change my tire as quickly as possible. He also put the flat tire and the tire changing accessories back in my trunk. I would really like to thank Moises for his professionalism and kindness. Moises truly saved my life because I didn't know how I was going to get those bolts off with heels on! Thank you FSP and two thumbs up for Moises.


 (9/26/2010) I have commuted on I-580 for almost 20 years. Fortunately, I have never needed assistance until now. What a wonderful service! I needed a flat tire change and Will Davidson was very helpful and professional, and made sure of my personal safety. Thank you so much!

 (9/30/2010) What a wonderful experience – flat tire in the middle of Marin County commuter time! The FSP Program was a life saver – Kelly Eckels was very professional, reassuring, and quick. What a doll...

 (10/15/2010) I got a flat tire on Highway 85 while driving to work. I literally sat in my car for 10 minutes trying to figure out who to call for help when the tow truck pulled up behind me. The man who helped me should get a free pass into heaven! He came out of nowhere, saved my day, and rode off into the sunset...well, sunrise. Never get rid of this service!

 (10/15/2010) My tire blew out on Interstate 580 at 5:30pm on October 14, 2010. I was really scared and was on hold with roadside assistance. At 5:40 these two very nice guys, Moises Reyes and Albert Nabalta, came to rescue me. They put my spare tire on and I was on my way. I just want to thank you for hiring people like these two because I felt like they really loved what they do, and that is helping people. Thank you.

 (10/20/10) On October 8 my belt drive broke. I was on the Interstate 580 Altamont pass heading west. Within a matter of moments a gentleman named Sly stopped to ask if I was all right and if I needed any help, and boy did I. Shortly his buddy Jeremy showed up with a tow truck and got me, my daughter and my car off that freeway. They were the best. I was able to make it to Fremont in time for my mom's birthday dinner. Those guys were GREAT!!! Thank You, thank you, thank you.

 (10/20/2010) Today at 3:15 on Highway 17 near Camden, my son had a seizure while I was driving. Within the first 30 seconds of my pulling to the side of the road, a tow truck pulled up. He parked to keep my car safe and helped me with my son while we waited for medical help. The man was calm, helpful and caring. I would like to thank him for staying with me. Your service is wonderful and I am very happy to know about it. Please let the kind man know I was grateful for his company and help.

On Patrol is published periodically by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (MTC SAFE).

Joseph P. Bort MetroCenter
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607-4700
510.817.5700
TDD/TTY 510.817.5769
FAX 510.817.5848
Web site <www.mtc.ca.gov>

MTC

Executive Director: Steve Heminger

Deputy Executive Directors:

Ann Flemer, Andrew Fremier

Director, Highway & Arterial Operations:

Albert Yee

MTC SAFE Senior Program Coordinator:

Jaime C. Maldonado

On Patrol Coordinator:

Rachel Zack 510.817.5753

Copy Editors: Georgia Lambert,
Karin Betts

Graphics

Design/Production: David Cooper

Photos (unless otherwise indicated):

Rachel Zack

California Highway Patrol, Golden Gate Division

Chief Bridget Lott; Lt. Julie Horstman;

Sergeant Steve Barruel; Officers Steve

Uemeki, Gary Lee, Joe Samuels and

Marcos Rodriguez; Staff Service Analyst

Dwyane Potts

Caltrans, District 4

District Director: Bijan Sartipi

Deputy Director of Operations:

Sean Nozzari

Office Chief: Cyrus Mashhoodi

Caltrans FSP Staff:

Norman Anderson, Scotty Hsiao,

Kane Wong 510.286.5917

Local Tow Contractors:

Matt Yebra

Atlas Towing Services, San Francisco

Richard Bilafer

B & A Body Works and Towing,

San Francisco

Steve Barnes

Bill's Towing, Novato

Joe Scarff and Kim Scarff

Campbell's Towing, San Jose

Robert Sandoval

Courtesy Tow Services, San Jose

Khurram Shah

K & S Towing, Bay Point

Ken Betts

Ken Betts' Towing, Oakland

Lupe Lima

LimaTowing, Santa Clara

Gary Bates

Matos Towing & Transport, San Jose

Hurshel Myers

Myers Towing Services, Hayward

Nelson V. Lopez

Nelson's Tow, San Francisco

Bill Hemenez

Palace Garage, San Leandro

Joe Paz Sr.

Redhill Towing, San Rafael

Jim Inglebright and Karl Offerman

Roadrunner Tow, Fairfield

Rick Hart

Sierra Hart, Napa

Glenn Neal

VacavilleTow, Vacaville

Michelle Inskeep

Yarbrough Bros. Towing, Santa Rosa