

On Patrol



VOLUME 16 • NUMBER 2

OCTOBER 2007

NEWS FROM THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA FREEWAY SERVICE PATROL

Four New Beats & Two New Tow Contractors Added to the Freeway Service Patrol Family

by Danielle Stanislaus & Adrian Fine, MTC SAFE

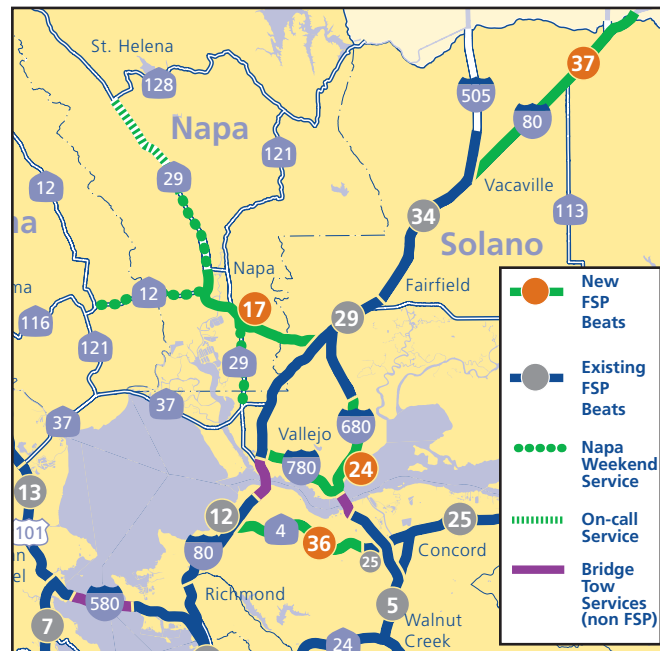
The Bay Area's beloved "guardian angels of the freeway" are now covering even more territory, as the popular white tow trucks of the Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) watch over four new areas, extending the program's existing reach and adding new highways to the safety network.

NEW BEATS

Starting in late July of 2007, the roving tow truck service increased the number of patrolled roadway segments — or beats — from 33 to 37, adding more than 85 miles to its coverage for a total of over 530 miles regionwide.

Six more tow trucks were added to the existing fleet, bringing the total to 83 trucks that patrol the most congested freeways of the Bay Area, primarily during peak commute hours. With FSP on the scene, the amount of congestion and level of polluting emissions is substantially reduced when disabled vehicles, debris and other safety hazards are moved out of highway lanes.

Two of the four new beats are in Solano County. Beat 24, operated by Roadrunner Tow, covers Interstate 680 from Marshview Road to the junction with Interstate 780, and then extends along I-780 to the Interstate 80 junction. This one-truck beat operates weekdays from 6-9 a.m. and 4-7 p.m., with extended hours of operation on Friday afternoons. The second Solano beat, Beat 37, is operated by Vacaville



Four new beats now serve Napa, Solano and Contra Costa counties

Tow and closes a gap on I-80 by extending FSP service from the Interstate 505 junction to Richards Boulevard, at the Yolo County line. Beat 37 is patrolled by two tow trucks and operates weekdays from 6-9 a.m. and 3:30-6:30 p.m. Additional Friday afternoon service also is being provid-

Inside:	Page
Upcoming Events	2
FSP Statistical Summary	2
Quarterly Awards	3
The Public Speaks	4

ed on this beat, as well as Sunday service from 1-7 p.m.

In Contra Costa County, newly established Beat 36 closes the gap in coverage on State Route 4 by extending from I-80 to Pacheco Boulevard, and is operated by Ken Betts Towing. This beat runs weekdays from 6-9:30 a.m. and 3:30-7 p.m. with one truck.

FSP also made its debut in the wine country by starting coverage on Beat 17 in Napa County.

Sierra Hart, a contractor new to the Bay Area FSP program, operates this new beat (and is profiled below). To address recreational traffic in this area, two trucks patrol on both Saturdays and Sundays, while one truck patrols a smaller area during the

continued on page 2

Expansion

(continued from page 1)

week. The weekend service operates from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and covers State Route 12 from the I-80 junction all the way to State Route 116, and State Route 29 from the junction with State Route 37 up to Oakville Cross Road (on-call service is provided as needed up to the junction with State Route 128). During the week, the one truck focuses on the Jameson Canyon stretch of State Route 12 into Napa at First Street. The weekday hours of operation are 6-10 a.m. and 3-7 p.m.

NEW CONTRACTORS

We also warmly welcome two new contractors to the Bay Area FSP family: Sierra Hart and K&S Towing. Sierra Hart, though new to the Bay Area FSP program, is no stranger to either FSP or the towing community. Working in the towing industry since 1988, and with the Sacramento FSP program since 1996, owner Rick Hart says that he truly enjoys the program because of its cooperative structure. "I like working with the three partner agencies to serve the community and provide a valuable public service," says Hart. "One of the most important lessons I've learned over the years is to stop and think about the customers, because the customer is waiting for help and FSP is there to turn a negative situation around." To this end, Hart teaches all of his drivers to treat each assist as if they were helping their own mother. He also places a big emphasis on safety, and says: "People often get complacent with safety, but you can't do that



Sierra Hart driver Scott Randell (left) and owner Rick Hart



K&S Towing owner, Khurram Shah

because the second you stop following the rules is the second when something bad happens. Our drivers have to be aware. They have to check every two seconds for their own safety and the safety of the customer." It seems that with this positive and attentive attitude, Sierra Hart will fit right in with the Bay Area FSP family. Sierra Hart currently operates Beat 17 in Napa.

The second new addition is K&S Towing in Bay Point. Owner Khurram Shah was eager to become a part of the FSP program because he believes it gives his company a positive statewide and local public image. K&S Towing has been in business since 1988; Shah took over from his father in 1997. He says that even after all these years, he is still learning, because he constantly strives to strengthen and improve his business. He also believes in "doing things right every time" and looks forward to raising the performance bar. We certainly look forward to seeing what K&S Towing can do! They currently operate Beat 5 in Contra Costa County.

Upcoming Events

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings

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

October 9, 2007
November 13, 2007
December 11, 2007
January 8, 2008
February 12, 2008
March 11, 2008

Tow Contractors Meetings

11 a.m. Tuesdays at MTC, MetroCenter

November 13, 2007
January 8, 2008
March 11, 2008

Quarterly Driver Refresher Training

CHP, Oakland:

11 a.m., December 13, 2007

CHP, Dublin:

11 a.m., December 6, 2007

CHP, Vallejo:

11 a.m., December 7, 2007

11 a.m., December 21, 2007

San Jose Armory, San Jose:

11 a.m., December 14, 2007

Proficiency Testing

7 a.m. at CHP, Vallejo

November 5, 2007

Certification Class

7 a.m. at CHP, Vallejo

November 14-16, 2007

First Quarter 2007 Statistical Summary (January – March 2007)

Total number of assists = 29,742

Percentage of assists involving people = 56.9 percent

Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.80

Percentage of motorist survey returns = 9.5 percent

Percentage of surveys rating service as excellent = 96.9 percent

Average motorist wait time = 9.8 minutes

Second Quarter 2007 Statistical Summary (April – June 2007)

Total number of assists = 33,569

Percentage of assists involving people = 56.6 percent

Average number of assists per hour per truck = 0.88

Percentage of motorist survey returns = 11.1 percent

Percentage of surveys rating service as excellent = 95.4 percent

Average motorist wait time = 9.4 minutes

Quarterly Awards First Quarter, January – March 2007

by Karin Betts, MTC Public Information

Driver of the Quarter

This award goes to **Steven Parker** of Yarbrough Bros. Towing, who drives the tow truck on Beat 15 through Santa Rosa. Parker has been an FSP driver for seven of his



Steven Parker

nine years with Yarbrough Bros. “Steve is Mister Reliable,” says Michelle Inskeep, FSP manager and one of the shop’s owners. “He is particular, and doesn’t cut corners or take shortcuts. When other drivers have a question about how to do something right, they always ask Steve.” His expertise shows — Parker had no errors at all on his daily shift record paperwork.

Beat of the Quarter

Beat 9 is a 24-mile-long network of busy roads in Santa Clara County including Interstate 280 from Foothill Expressway in Sunnyvale to Highway 101/Interstate 680 in San Jose, and segments of State Routes 87 and 85. The beat, operated by Campbell’s Towing, recently became more precarious because of construction work along State Route 87 and the resulting limited shoulders. Manager Leon Esquenazi describes the five-man Beat 9 team: “Steven Pauley has more towing experience than most guys out there. Rich Anderson used to be a VTA bus driver before he came to us; Blair Douglas used to be a teacher. Lee Holmes (see Driver of the Quarter below) has lots of public service experience, and Paul Moniz Jr. came to us with prior towing experience. They are a solid team.”



Campbell’s Beat 9 drivers (left to right): Steve Pauley, Lee Holmes, Blair Douglas, Richard Dean Anderson and Paul Moniz Jr.

ed with tow patrols on the Oakland city streets that bore the bulk of diverted traffic. Normally, the contractor keeps its FSP trucks on Beats 12 and 36 in Contra Costa County along Interstate 80 and State Route 4. In addition to its ability to respond quickly to partner service requests, Ken Betts Towing also can boast a whopping 24 percent motorist survey return rate.



Ayub Azam (left) and Roger Craig, Ken Betts Towing management

Contractor of the Quarter

After the collapse of the MacArthur Maze connector ramp, **Ken Betts Towing** came to the rescue and assist-

Quarterly Awards Second Quarter, April – June 2007

by Karin Betts, MTC Public Information

Driver of the Quarter



Lee Holmes

Congratulations to **Lee Holmes** of Campbell’s Towing in San Jose for 100 percent accuracy on his daily shift record paperwork, a motorist survey return rate of ten percent, 69 shifts worked during the quarter, and 210 assists (87 of which involved people). And all this while working only a single shift on Beat 9 in Santa Clara County! Holmes has a lifetime of public service under his belt, starting with a tour of duty in Vietnam, and then a career with the San Mateo Police Department. Clearly, working with the public agrees with him!



B&D’s Beat 25 drivers (left to right): Larry Miller, Dean Ming, James Allison

Beat of the Quarter

Beat 25 in Contra Costa County runs for almost 24 miles along State Routes 4 and 242, and is patrolled by three FSP drivers from B&D Towing: Larry Miller, James Allison and Dean Ming. According to B&D co-owner Karen Valles, there is a clear reason why the beat scored so highly on their FSP report cards. “It’s called communication! Working together as a team makes the program work.” The three drivers are all from the area, they know the trouble spots on the beat, and they stay in contact with each other all day long.

Contractor of the Quarter

Owner/driver Steve Barnes of **Bill’s Towing** in Novato loves his job; his attitude is contagious, and the entire shop supports the FSP program. The contractor handles two beats — Beat 13 along U.S. 101 from the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to State Route 37, and Beat 28 from SR-37 farther north to East Washington Boulevard in Petaluma — with three tow trucks. In operation since 1968, the contractor is being recognized for the best overall performance at the contractor level during the second quarter.




Bill’s Towing owner Steve Barnes (left) and Jackie Parashis, office manager


The Public Speaks


Motorists continue to mail, e-mail and phone in praise and gratitude for their experiences with the FSP program. Here are a few recent comments.


Voicemail

 (6/11/07) "Driver Damon Angle assisted me on Beat 4 in Alameda County. He did a wonderful and outstanding job. I just wanted to say that this service is amazing. I did not even know about it until this morning. Thank you."


E-mail

 (5/9/07) "I received great service from FSP driver James Bizzell on Beat 10 in the evening on March 12. Before that, I had no idea that your organization existed. It was wonderful to see this helpful person show up when I was exhausted, over-heated, and on my hands and knees in the dirt, changing my flat tire! The lugs were on too tight, and I looked up in my frustration and there he was, and in a calm voice he said, 'I can help you, Ma'am.' I was floored! My cell phone had been stolen the day before, and I had no way to reach help, and was ill on top of everything. Not to mention, I nearly got into a wreck when the tire blew! Anyway, Bizzell was professional and over the top in customer service skills. What he said and how he said it made me feel okay, instead of stupid, or like I was taking up his time. He simply helped me up, went and got his tools, and had the spare on in moments. If not for FSP's invaluable service, I would have been in for a miserable evening to be sure. And I wanted to make sure everyone knew what a great job he did. He deserves an award. And he has my humble thanks!"


 (6/12/07) "I didn't know about freeway service help until today when I had a flat tire and a very friendly tow truck driver (Dean Ming) offered to help me. Dean was helpful and efficient. He even made sure my spare tire had enough air in it before I took off."

 (7/18/07) "I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to

Bennett Crawford of the Freeway Service Patrol and Palace Garage. This morning my right rear tire exploded when I apparently hit some debris on Interstate 238 in the construction zone. Within minutes, Bennett was there to change the tire and get me back on the road. Bennett's attitude and friendliness were outstanding. This is the second time that representatives of Palace Garage have helped me on in the same area. I must say that conduct of both individuals was exemplary and Palace Garage is to be commended for hiring such great staff."

 (7/30/07) "Recently we were on our way to Santa Cruz for a week-end of camping when our trailer had a blow-out on the Sunol grade. There was not much room to pull over and we couldn't get to an off-ramp. My husband was inside the trailer when I noticed a man wearing a jumpsuit with reflector tape around the ankles walk up to our trailer and asked if he could help. His name was Mark Furtado, and he changed the tire for us and we were on our way in less than 20 minutes. It was truly a Godsend that he came along when he did. We can't thank you enough for having such a great service. I would love to see something like this expanded greatly. I hope that we don't have to use it again but we feel better knowing that FSP is out there."

Letters

 (4/27/07) "This morning I was driving to work like any other day, except this time something winged my tire and it shredded. The best thing I could think of at the time was, at least it's Friday! However, the truly best thing was that although I'd put a call in to AAA and was told they would be there within 45 minutes, I only had to wait a few minutes before your driver Douglas Grafmiller was behind my car offering assistance. He was very nice, despite the fact that it was so early in the morning! He put air in my mini spare and got my tire changed within a few minutes. He also spent time explaining the program and giving me a flyer with more information. When I got to work, I was still in that TGIF mood. Thank you for this service — I am always disappointed to see tax dollars come out of my check, but I am glad that this is one of the services that is provided. Keep this service around!"

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 &
Therese W. McMillan
Director, Highway & Arterial Operations:
Albert Yee
MTC SAFE Senior Program Coordinator:
Jaime C. Maldonado

On Patrol Editor:

Danielle Stanislaus 510.817.5737

Copy Editor: Karin Betts

Graphics

Design/Production: David L. Cooper
Photos (unless otherwise indicated):
Sze Lei Leong & Adrian Fine
Printing: Autumn Press

California Highway Patrol,

Golden Gate Division

Chief Cathy Sulinski; Lt. Avery Browne;
Sergeant Chris Childs; Officers Eric
Butawan, Gary Lee, Chris Nave and Mar-
cos Rodriguez; Staff Service Analyst
Dwayne Potts

Caltrans, District 4

District Director: Bijan Sartipi
District Director of Operations:
Sean Nozzari
Office Chief: Cyrus Mashhoodi

Caltrans FSP Staff:

Norman Anderson, Scotty Hsiao,
Kane Wong 510.286.5917

Local Tow Contractors:

Tony Singh
A-One Towing, Richmond
Vincent Haavisto and Kim Skinner
All Ways Towing and Transport, Fremont
Richard Bilafer
B & A Body Works and Towing,
San Francisco
Richard Valles
B & D Towing, Concord
Steve Barnes
Bill's Towing, Novato
Joe Scarff and Leon Esquenazi
Campbell's Towing, San Jose
Steve Sgarlato
Dick's Automotive Transport, Campbell
Khurram Shah
K & S Towing, Bay Point
Ken Betts and Roger Craig
Ken Betts' Towing, Oakland
Lupe Lima
LimaTow, Santa Clara
David Schely
Matos Towing and Transport, San Jose
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
Horace C. Robinson
Sunrise Enterprise 87, East Palo Alto
Glenn Neal
VacavilleTow, Vacaville
Michelle Inskip
Yarbrough Bros. Towing, Santa Rosa