



Riverside County District Attorney

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **DA'S OFFICE RECEIVES GRANT FOR DUI PROSECUTIONS IN SOUTHWEST RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

RIVERSIDE – Today, Tuesday, Jan. 10, 2012, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors approved a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety which provides funding for a specialized team to investigate and prosecute all felony DUI with injury and DUI-related vehicular homicide cases in Southwest Riverside County.

The southwest portion of Riverside County was chosen for the target area of this grant due, in part, to it being the fastest-growing region of the county, Temecula's Wine Country being there, and several recent high-profile DUI-related homicides happening in the area.

In the DA's Southwest office, there were six DUI-related homicide cases filed in 2011, through Dec. 6, 2011. Through that date there were 64 felony and 2,505 misdemeanor DUI-related cases filed in the Southwest office. In 2010, there was one DUI-related homicide case filed, with a total of 65 felony and 2,591 misdemeanor DUI cases filed in the Southwest office.

The \$360,000 grant provides for a specially trained deputy district attorney and a senior district attorney investigator. The deputy DA will handle all DUI cases which fall under the grant's criteria from the original filing of the case through any trial. The grant also provides training to help combat the growing problem of driving under the influence of drugs. In 2009, 23 percent of drivers tested following fatal crashes in California showed positive for drug use.

Another component of this specialized team will be to coordinate and participate in DUI prevention and awareness programs with local schools and law enforcement agencies as well as participating in such programs as MADD and Every 15 Minutes.

Goals of this grant include reducing the number of persons killed and injured in traffic accidents, primarily those in which alcohol or drugs are involved.

Deputy District Attorney David Tahan and Sr. DA Investigator Joseph Cristinziani have been assigned to form the specialized team. Both are working from the DA's Southwest office.

The funding period for this grant runs from Oct. 1, 2011, through Sept. 30, 2012. Funding for the program is provided by a grant from the state Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.