

California puts money toward DUI checkpoints

California traffic safety officials continue to tighten their grip on drunken drivers by and declaring 2010 as "The Year of the Checkpoint" and announcing a record \$8 million in grant funding to 148 law enforcement agencies for DUI checkpoints " up from \$5 million in 2009.

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) will fund more than 2,500 sobriety checkpoints in 2010, a 47 percent increase over the 1,700 conducted this year, more than 250 of which will take place between Dec. 18 and Jan. 3 as part of the December DUI Crackdown enforcement campaign, "Report Drunk Drivers. Call 911."

"To my knowledge, California conducts more checkpoints than any other state," OTS Director Christopher J. Murphy said in a press release. "DUI checkpoints are time-tested and proven as the most effective DUI countermeasure and I'm gratified that we're seeing the life-saving results."

Since OTS and law enforcement began placing increased emphasis and funding toward sobriety checkpoints in 2006, alcohol-related deaths have declined in California. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System, DUI deaths declined in California by 9.1 percent between 2007 and 2008, marking a total decrease of nearly 21 percent from the most recent high point in 2005. In addition, statewide DUI arrests in 2008 were 214,811 " the highest since 1993.