

Placer County spending \$30,000 to analyze traffic safety

Placer County Public Works Department has been awarded a \$30,000 grant to improve its high-tech tools for analyzing traffic safety on county roads.

The grant from the state Office of Traffic Safety will allow Public Works to develop computer software that will identify segments of rural roads with high concentrations of traffic collisions more precisely than is possible now.

The issue is a high priority because approximately 50 percent of the 3,152 collisions on county-maintained roads from 2007-09 occurred along stretches of roadway away from intersections. During that period, 82 percent of collisions with fatalities and 64 percent that involved severe injuries took place on roadway segments outside of intersections.

The county maintains more than 1,000 miles of roads, including many rural roadways with long distances between intersections.

Since 2009, Public Works has used a computer-based Traffic Accident Analysis Program to review county-maintained roadways and intersections and identify stretches with high concentrations of traffic collisions. The program stores, analyzes and reports traffic-collision data similar to the reporting system used by Caltrans.

The grant will allow the county to address a key problem with the current program: the software analyzes the number of collisions on roadway segments, lengths of road between intersections, to draw comparisons, regardless of how long each segment is. Thus, two segments are treated identically by the software if they have the same number of collisions even

if one segment is significantly longer than the other.

That problem is particularly pronounced on rural areas, where distances between intersections vary substantially.