



## SANTA BARBARA COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT

117 E. Carrillo St., • Santa Barbara, CA 93101

[www.countyofsb.org/probation](http://www.countyofsb.org/probation)

(805) 882-3700 • FAX (805) 882-3767

# **PRESS RELEASE**

### **News Media Contact:**

Laurie Holbrook

Public Information Officer (805) 882-3667

(805) 680-9144 (cell)

[Lhobro@co.santa-barbara.ca.us](mailto:Lhobro@co.santa-barbara.ca.us)

Probation No. 08-07

DATE::

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Probation Department Receives Grant Funding to Enhance Supervision of DUI Offenders and Focus on Community Safety**

**Are you driving on a suspended license? Are you thinking of absconding from probation supervision after a conviction for driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol or drugs? Do you have a DUI warrant for your arrest?** These are questions the Santa Barbara County Probation Department wants nearly 900 convicted DUI offenders, and another 400 who have absconded from supervision, to consider. Why ponder these questions?

On October 1, 2006, the Santa Barbara County Probation Department's DUI Supervision Program first went into effect, targeting these offenders. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. The grant has been renewed, effective October 1, 2008 to allow continued enforcement efforts.

The Probation Department's DUI Supervision Program involves a proactive approach to detect offenders who continue to drive when not licensed, as well as apprehend those offenders who have absconded from supervision. The funding provides resources to effectively monitor DUI offenders by increasing compliance checks, accountability, sanctions and apprehension. Probation officers will assist law enforcement with roadside sobriety checkpoints and conduct surveillances regarding suspected unlicensed drivers. Those probationers found to be in violation of probation by drinking, using drugs or driving without a valid license will be arrested and may be sent to jail or face a state prison commitment. Probation officers will also educate the public about the consequences of driving under the influence, as well as provide information regarding available treatment options.

Grant funding obtained in 2006 led to a 23% reduction in the number of probation cases with outstanding warrants. In 2007, 96% of local DUI offenders who did not abscond from supervision successfully completed probation. "Continued funding of this program will allow our department to work towards further reducing the number of outstanding warrants, and increasing the number of those who successfully complete probation. Our goal is to reduce the incidence of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, provide a higher degree of safety to the community, and ultimately, save lives as a result," says Deputy Chief Probation Officer Karen Wheeler.

“Repeat DUI offenders and those who ignore the judicial system after a DUI are over-represented in tragic drunk driving crashes,” said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. “The more and tighter supervision of offenders this grant provides will make Santa Barbara County that much safer of a place to live, work and drive.”

So, if you considered answering “yes” to any of the aforementioned questions, you are encouraged to contact your probation officer so that together the two of you can develop a plan for your ultimate success.

For more information about the Probation Department’s DUI Supervision Program, contact Probation Manager Tanja Heitman at (805) 739-8537.

###