2003
Herman Goldstein
Award Submission

Fontana Serious Traffic
Offender Program
F-STOP

FONTANA POLICE DEPARTMENT
May 2, 2003

PERF: Attention Herman Goldstein Award
1120 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 930
Washington, DC  20036

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Chief of Police for the Fontana Police Department, I proudly present to you the Fontana Serious Traffic Offender Program (F-STOP) and submit it for consideration for the Herman Goldstein Award for 2003. The outcomes of the program were far superior to anything our organization had hoped for when the program was conceived and ultimately the City of Fontana has become a far safer place to travel through than it otherwise would have been were it not for this program.

In the late 1990's leading into the early 2000's we became aware of a very serious traffic issue that was looming on the horizon. The question we asked ourselves was, with the population explosion we were experiencing combined with the massive freeway and roadway construction projects that were ongoing, how could we prevent a significant increase in our fatal and injury traffic collisions? Members of our Traffic Unit secured funding, developed the F-STOP program, and implemented it in such a way that not only prevented an increase in fatal and injury collisions, but dramatically reduced that number while our population grew by 24%.

Fontana Police Officers consistently and routinely engage in problem solving and do great police work. We believed this was just another example of that. More importantly, based on the research we had conducted prior to implementation, and the assessment phase following the program, we believe we are able to show a direct correlation between the removal of unlicensed and suspended drivers from the roadway and a reduction in fatal and injury traffic collisions. One only needs to look at the remarkable outcome numbers in the attached submission to see that there is really no other explanation for such sharp reductions.
I would like to thank PERF and the Herman Goldstein Award panel for the opportunity to showcase this program. The Fontana Police Department and the community it serves are both very proud of what it has been able to accomplish.

Sincerely,

Frank J. Scialdone
Chief of Police

FJS:ash
SUMMARY
Fontana Serious Traffic Offender Program

(F-STOP)

1). SCANNING

- Fontana was experiencing explosive residential, commercial, and industrial growth along with associated population growth in the late 1990’s and it continues today. We are consistently ranked as one of California's top ten fastest growing cities.
- Numerous major roadway construction projects including construction of a new freeway through the north end of town and a demolition and construction project of a major freeway overpass in our largest business district.
- Traffic issues are the greatest concerns of the members of our community.
- Traditional methods of enforcement were not very effective in reducing traffic collisions.
- Extremely large number of unlicensed and suspended drivers operating in our city - a dangerous and collision prone group of drivers.
- One of the smallest, understaffed traffic units in the region combined with the aforementioned issues equaled a looming traffic safety crisis of significant proportions.
- With all of this growth, a very small traffic unit, and an incredibly large number of unlicensed and suspended drivers, how would we prevent a major increase in traffic collisions in Fontana?
2). ANALYSIS

- Demographic pattern in Fontana: Very young, low income, large undocumented immigrant population. This pattern resulted in a very high number of unlicensed and suspended drivers operating in our city.
- Research proves that the unlicensed and suspended drivers are one of the most dangerous and collision prone groups on our roadways.
- Fresno study showed that targeting this group could have a significant impact on reducing traffic collisions.
- The City of Fontana lacked the financial resources to develop and implement a broad and effective program to combat this problem.

3). RESPONSE

- Secured $434,000 in grant funding.
- Hired personnel and purchased material and equipment to develop program (F-STOP) that would target unlicensed and suspended drivers.
- Program included strict and aggressive enforcement, which included a department-wide zero tolerance philosophy, checkpoints, sting operations, and specialized officers assigned to the problem. This was coupled with a far-reaching education and public relations campaign.
- Program included close cooperation and support of many facets of the police department and business community.
4). ASSESSMENT

> Massive increases in the numbers of citations issued to and vehicles impounded from unlicensed and suspended drivers.

> During the two year period of the program, while undergoing explosive development and population growth we achieved the following outcomes:

- Overall fatal and injury collisions reduced by 21%. Per capita decrease was 38%.
- Nighttime collisions were reduced by 6%. Per capita decrease was 34%
- Speed related collisions were reduced by 7%. Per capita decrease was 25%.
- Hit and run fatal and injury collisions were reduced by 31%. Per capita decrease was 52%.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A. Scanning

Throughout the 1990s, the City of Fontana saw tremendous growth. Between 1990 and 2000, the population of the City increased 46%. We were consistently ranked as one of the top ten fastest growing cities in the State of California. Along with this growth rate came significant problems. Major construction programs were on-going throughout the city, including a new freeway interchange in the center of the city's business district and a new freeway being constructed through the north end of the city. Traffic congestion and traffic collisions related to that congestion and population explosion were expected to increase dramatically.

Traffic related problems were consistently identified by citizens attending community meetings as the number one issue in our city. Our City council had also identified traffic related problems as a major issued that needed to be addressed by city staff. As our crime rate continued to drop, traffic problems became a progressively more critical issue in our city.

Police staff felt that one way of improving traffic flow in the city would be to reduce the number of traffic collisions. The city had a small yet aggressive traffic enforcement program. All patrol officers were encouraged to write traffic citations. By the late 1990’s, the police department was issuing over 20,000 citations for traffic violations each year.

When we started looking for ways to reduce our traffic collision rate we first attempted to look at targeting locations where collisions were occurring or specific violations that were causing most of our collisions. We were unable to see any patterns of
either violations or locations that could be targeted. The primary collision factor in our collisions varied and the worst location for collisions was an intersection that had only eight collisions in the last year.

One thing we did notice was the serious issue of the large number of unlicensed drivers operating in our city. In April of 1998 the Fontana Police Department conducted its first Driver's License Checkpoint and by September of 1998 we had conducted three. During these checkpoints, which lasted 5 hours each, we towed 154 vehicles (over 10 an hour) for license violations. In addition to these checkpoints, a review of statistics showed that the Fontana Police Department averaged 5,682 misdemeanor arrests per year during calendar years 1996, 97, and 98. Of those misdemeanor arrests, an average of 2,077 arrests per year were for driving on a suspended license or driving with no license. This represents a staggering 37% of all misdemeanor arrests. Adding to this problem, Fontana has a large population of undocumented immigrants, many of whom are found to be driving regularly without a driver's license.

The challenge facing the Fontana Police Department was to find a method by which we could reduce traffic collisions in Fontana during a population and development explosion while remaining fiscally prudent as an organization. We believed that if we could find a way to begin targeting unlicensed violators, rather than our standard practice of targeting traffic violations in general, we could make a significant impact on traffic safety in our community. The ultimate goal of our organization was to combine an aggressive and proactive traffic enforcement component with a broad yet effective public relations and education campaign in order to make our streets safer.
This problem was selected from among other problems the department faced because we believed it was the most pressing issue related to the safety of all of our citizens. While violent crimes affect relatively few people throughout our city, a looming traffic safety crisis would affect the actual physical safety of our entire community. We felt that we owed it to our growing community to get ahead of this problem and cut it off so that it would not get beyond our control. Organizationally, we were engaged in basic risk management. We were making a sound prediction based on residential, commercial, and industrial development along with massive roadway and freeway construction projects throughout the city. We viewed these factors in the context of our community's demographic make-up (young, lower income, large undocumented population) and our understaffed traffic unit. When all of these factors were looked at together, our prediction was that the current method of enforcement would result in continuing increases in fatal and injury collisions of various types over the course of the next several years.

B. Analysis

Research indicated that drivers with convictions for driving while intoxicated or who have received a significant number of citations are identified as "high-risk" and typically have their licenses suspended or revoked for varying amounts of time. A California DMV study released in 1998 showed that at any given time there are 2 million unlicensed and suspended drivers throughout the state. About 75% of these drivers drive without regard to their license status and this group causes four times as many fatal accidents as the average driver (DMV 97/98). The same study showed that the 30 day impound law passed in 1995 that allowed for the impoundment of vehicles for up to 30 days if a driver
was suspended or unlicensed had reduced crashes involving this offender group by 38%. It had also reduced subsequent traffic convictions by these same offenders by 22%. We were able to find several studies from around the country that demonstrated that the use of vehicle-based sanctions (impounding the offender's vehicle) had a much greater impact on the offender than citations alone.

In 1996 the City of Fresno received a two-year grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety. Fresno assigned five full time officers to target subjects driving with suspended licenses or who were unlicensed. Those officers were also required to present educational programs directed at unlicensed drivers and serve arrest warrants on subjects wanted for license violations. They had one deputy district attorney hired and assigned to file cases and vertically prosecute offenders. Fresno Police Department reported that over the two years of the grant they saw a 54% increase in the number of vehicles impounded for license violations over the base year of 1995. During the first year of the grant, fatal and injury collisions were reduced by 30%. During the second year there was an increase in fatal and injury accidents of 12%. While there was a slight increase in the second year, a significant overall reduction in the number of injury and fatal collisions over the two-year period did occur (Fresno PD, 1999).

After Fresno started their program a 1997 California Department of Motor Vehicles study evaluating the effectiveness of California's thirty day impound law found that a weakness in the law was the difficulty of detecting violators. Since subjects who were unlicensed but not violating any other law could not be stopped, the deterrent effect of the law was found to be diminished. That study speculated that large-scale use of driver's license checkpoints might help solve that problem. There was no mention about
the possibility of courthouse sting operations in his report but it would appear that they are an example of another type of program that would address that problem.

We believed that we could build on the success of the Fresno program by concentrating our resources on what appeared to be its most effective parts and incorporating the suggestions made in the 1997 DMV study. Fresno was more effective during the first year of the program when they concentrated on citing violators and impounding their vehicles than during the second year when they spent more time serving arrest warrants on previous violators. This was consistent with our research that showed that impounding an offender's vehicle was a more effective deterrent than subsequent prosecution. By including the use of license checkpoints and courthouse stings operations, which Fresno had not included in their program, we would be adding to the deterrent impact of the program as suggested in the DMV study.

Prior to implementation of the F-STOP program, Fontana PD responded to traffic collisions and problems of traffic safety in the traditional way. We would attempt to identify "high collision" locations and the associated primary collision factors that appeared to be responsible for those collisions. We would send traffic officers to those locations and strictly enforce traffic laws in that location, paying particular attention to the specific collision factor that seemed to be involved in the majority of collisions. We would also pay close attention to traffic-related complaints that came in to the police department from members of the community and watch carefully for any patterns that might emerge from these complaints. Our traffic officers were and are one of the best sources of information on what is occurring in the city as it relates to traffic safety.
The result of this traditional type of enforcement is that it is primarily reactive. This was a very common, yet somewhat ineffective, form of traffic enforcement for most police departments in the 1980's and 1990's. Targeting unlicensed and suspended drivers and impounding their vehicles, or the instrument of their crimes, as a primary means of traffic enforcement and collision reduction strategy represented a sea change in thinking for our organization.

The studies that we reviewed along with a review of our own circumstances and statistics revealed that the City of Fontana had a significantly high number of unlicensed and suspended drivers operating in our city. One example of the depth of this problem prior to F-STOP being implemented is to compare statistics in the City of Fontana to similar statistics of our neighboring city, Rancho Cucamonga. During calendar years 1996, 1997, and 1998 Fontana towed nearly as many vehicles for drivers being unlicensed or suspended (average of 2,202 per year) as Rancho Cucamonga did for ALL violations (average of 2,290 per year). At the time this occurred, Rancho Cucamonga had a traffic unit nearly twice as large as Fontana’s and there were approximately 15,000 more residents in Rancho Cucamonga than in Fontana. Fontana averaged 4,465 total impounds per year compared to Rancho Cucamonga's 2,290 impounds. There are a number of factors that have caused this to occur. We have a very young population. The median age of a Fontana resident at the time the analysis was taking place was 26 years old (A.O.B. 98/99). This compared to a statewide median age of 33 (US Census, 2000). We have a large number of undocumented immigrants that live in and travel through our city. The sheer nature of their undocumented status tends to cause this group to avoid
applying for government identification or driving privileges. For many citizens and non-
citizens living in our community, English is a second language.

While the median income is beginning to climb in Fontana, the population can still be
described as primarily "blue collar" and oriented towards service industries. According to
the City of Fontana Operating Budget, the median income in Fontana during the analysis
phase of this program was $43,600 and per capita income was $14,230 (A.O.B. 98/99).
This compares to the statewide median income of $47,493 and statewide per capita
income of $22,711 (US Census 2000). While none of these factors in and of itself were
responsible for this large number of unlicensed drivers operating in our city, the
combination of all of them seems to have caused Fontana to see more of these violators
than many other surrounding cities.

C. Response

All of our research indicated that targeting our high-risk drivers (those that were
unlicensed or had a suspended license) and impounding their vehicles would be an
effective way to reduce traffic collisions. We were also aware that impounding a large
number of cars could be a public relations problem. We had talked to several cities that
had reduced their emphasis on impounding vehicle due to public pressure. Based on our
analysis however, we believed we could avoid that problem by adding an aggressive
public relations / education component to our program.

In order to start our program we applied for grant funding through the California
Office of Traffic Safety (OTS). We submitted the facts of our traffic safety problem to
the funding source and made a pitch for a large amount of money in order to support a
very ambitious program. Fortunately for us, the Office of Traffic Safety clearly saw the serious nature of our problem and awarded us over $434,000 over two years to combat it. Our program had two major components with several strategies included in each one:

1). **Enforcement:**

As part of the "F-STOP" program we decided to concentrate on traffic violators rather than strictly traffic violations. We felt, based on research, that we would have the greatest impact on traffic collisions by targeting these high-risk drivers and removing them from our roadways. We did this by developing the "F-STOP" motto, "**No License=No Vehicle, No Exceptions!**" The following activities were undertaken in order to give true meaning to that motto:

*Checkpoints*- We conducted bi-monthly driver's license checkpoints. During the driver's license checkpoints we set up a roadblock for traffic and randomly checked driver's to determine whether or not they had a valid drivers license. One of the strengths of our checkpoints is our use of Citizen Volunteers to assist in the operation. As much as half of all of the personnel working the checkpoints were citizen volunteers. One of our checkpoints was conducted in conjunction with another local agency. We focused our efforts on one side of the roadway and they focused theirs on traffic traveling the opposite direction on the other side of the roadway. With the same number of officers working, we were able to impound over twice as many vehicles as did that other agency. We were able to do this because of the assistance of our Citizen Volunteers, who while not able to actually write tickets or impound vehicles, assisted by counting cars, making
sure cars were parked in the proper spaces, handling traffic control, running the command post and filling out paperwork.

**Court House Sting Operations** - During a courthouse sting operation, a plain-clothes officer sits in the courtroom during traffic court. When subjects come into court and plead guilty to driving without a license or a suspended license, the officer gives their description to officers outside the courtroom. They then stop that person if they drive away from court in a vehicle. While we do not generally catch as many violators on these operations as we do in other types of operations, they target the most serious offenders, those who have multiple counts of driving without a license.

**Zero Tolerance** - Using the funds from the California Office of Traffic Safety Grant, we were able to assign two full time motor officers whose primary duties were to stop unlicensed drivers and impound vehicles. They also attended patrol briefings and trained all officers on impound laws and laws related to unlicensed and suspended drivers. The zero-tolerance philosophy was reinforced with all officers in the department during this training.

2). **Public and Community Involvement** - One thing that sets Fontana's "F-STOP" program apart from other programs is our partnership with community members, businesses, and organizations. The following are examples of what the community has done to assist in making "F-STOP" an effective program:

- Volunteers supplied thousands of hours assisting us on enforcement related programs.
• Community Volunteers have participated in, and in many cases conducted, presentations on the "F-STOP" program at community events around the city.

• The “IN-CAR-CERATOR” used to publicize the "F-STOP" program was built and maintained by the department's Explorer Scouts.

![F-STOP "IN-CAR-CERATOR"](image)

• Numerous community businesses have participated by donating free food and turkeys for good drivers.

D. Assessment

When the grant was originally submitted to OTS in 1999, the last full year of traffic collision data that we had was calendar year 1998. The F-STOP program actually was staffed and started in September of 2000 and it ended in September of 2002. For statistical purposes, we compared calendar year 1998 with the two consecutive 12-month periods after the grant officers actually started to work the grant program. The first 12-month period was September 2000 through August 2001. The second was September 2001 through August 2002.

By any standard, the F-STOP program has been an overwhelming success. Using a combination of strategies which included checkpoint and courthouse sting operations, a
massive public relations and education campaign, along with training our officers on the appropriate laws and taking a department-wide zero tolerance approach towards unlicensed and suspended drivers, we accomplished the following:

- During the first year of the program we increased 30 day impounds for license violations from the 1998 total of 1,697 to 3,390. This represents a 100% increase.
- During the second year of the program, impounds for license violations were down slightly to 2,959 however this still represented an 85% increase over 1998.
- During the first year of the program we increased the number of citations written to unlicensed / suspended drivers to 3,660 from 2,000 in 1998, an 83% increase.
- During the second year of the program we increased the number of citations written to unlicensed / suspended drivers to 4,283 from 2,000 in 1998, a 114% increase.
- Over the two-year program period Fontana impounded a total of 10,996 vehicles.

Of even greater significance than enforcement statistics were the outcomes related to traffic collisions in the city of Fontana. When compared with the 1998 data, fatal and injury traffic collisions were down significantly in all categories:

- Overall fatal and injury collisions dropped from 602 to 476 by the end of the program - a 21% decrease.
- Nighttime collisions were down from 248 to 235 by end of program - a 6% decrease.
- Speed related collisions were down from 180 to 168 by end of program - a 7% decrease.
Hit and run fatal and injury collisions were down from 52 to 36 by end of program - a 31% decrease.

* Statistics taken from Fontana Police Department Final Grant Report, 2002

These reductions, while significant standing on their own, are even more significant when one considers that the population of the city of Fontana during the base year in 1998 was 112,000 people. The average population of the city of Fontana during the last 12-month period of the F-STOP program was 139,000. The city saw a 24.2% increase in population from 1998 to the second 12-month period of the grant, which ended in September 2002. Based on this population growth rate analysis, the per capita collision rates are even more impressive and the decrease in collisions even more astounding:

- Overall fatal and injury collisions - a 38% per capita decrease.
- Nighttime collisions - a 34% per capita decrease.
- Speed related collisions - a 25% per capita decrease.
- Hit and run fatal and injury collisions - a 52% per capita decrease.

* Fontana Police Department Final Grant Report, 2002

The city of Fontana has also been extremely successful in our public education efforts. During the grant program period, media representatives were routinely invited to cover and publicize our program. Grant officers and other members of our traffic unit participated in and conducted programs in over 50 community events that were attended by a total of over 30,000 people. These events ranged from our school and community safety fairs, where educational and informational booths were set up, to the Fontana Days Parade where the department showcased our Motor Santa program. In this program, motor officers dressed as Santa and his elves and gave out coupons for free holiday turkeys to good drivers. As a result of these efforts, we had over 65 positive articles and
stories about our program that appeared in local print and regional broadcast media. We used a number of different strategies to get out the message of our F-STOP program including our motto, "No License = No Vehicle, No Exceptions!"

During the entire course of the grant, both the community at large and the city council were extremely supportive of the entire grant program and philosophy of targeting high risk and unlicensed drivers using vehicle-based sanctions. We believe that it was our aggressive and comprehensive public relations and education program that allowed us to tow almost 11,000 vehicles in a two-year period while receiving very few complaints from the community.

The most obvious way to make our response more effective would have been to have a larger program in place. We included our Patrol Division, Multiple Enforcement Team, Traffic Unit, Explorer Scouts and Citizen Volunteers in the program. All of these groups worked the driver's license checkpoints and when officers from any unit stopped an unlicensed driver, the vehicle would be impounded under the zero-tolerance policy. With more personnel assigned specifically to the grant program, there is no doubt that we would have removed even more unlicensed and suspended drivers from our roadways, further enhancing traffic safety in our community.

We did not have any concerns regarding displacement as we conducted this program. It is somewhat difficult and inconvenient for drivers to drive around an entire city, particularly when they live in that city. Most likely, rather than displacing a problem into another jurisdiction, we unwittingly assisted our surrounding jurisdictions through our efforts. It can be safely assumed that all of our surrounding jurisdictions, whether knowingly or not, felt some positive benefit by our taking as many unlicensed and
suspended drivers off of the road as we did. The overall impact can be assumed to be regional.

Our response will require continued monitoring and effort to maintain these results. We will continue to examine our collision rates and look for signs of an increase in the number of unlicensed and suspended drivers. We continue to maintain our "impound account" so that revenue generated from impounding these vehicles will go directly towards making this a self-funding and sustainable program.

While we believed that targeting high-risk drivers with vehicle-based sanctions would reduce traffic collisions, no study or program had been able to demonstrate a direct long-term relationship between increasing impounds and reducing traffic collisions. The success of the F-STOP program demonstrates that targeting unlicensed and suspended drivers using vehicle-based sanctions is a very effective method of reducing traffic collisions.
References


1). This problem solving initiative was adopted through our Traffic Unit. Once funding was obtained and the program was developed and implemented, the entire organization was brought into the problem solving process through training and adoption of the zero tolerance philosophy.

2). Our entire organization prides itself on being a community and problem oriented policing agency. This philosophy permeates every facet of our organization, all of our officers receive training in this style of law enforcement, and all officers in all units are expected to engage in community and problem oriented policing.

3). Standard management incentives (commendations and recognition) were given to officers who performed particularly well in this program.

4). The additional $434,000 provided by the California Office of Traffic Safety and the grant guidelines provided by them were the primary resources and guidelines used in this program. A number of research materials were used to study, analyze, and respond to the problem (see reference section).

5). We did not have any major issues to deal with in applying the problem-solving model to this community problem. This type of problem fits nicely into the SARA model and, due to the large amount of data regarding traffic issues, is easy to assess upon completion of any traffic program.

6). The large majority of the program was funded outside of our existing budget through grant funding. We did provide some "in-kind" contributions of personnel and equipment, however this program would not have gotten off the ground
without the OTS grant funding. Revenue raised through vehicle impounds now goes into a separate account that is for the purpose of maintaining this program.

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MEDIA
Chino Hills, Fontana show most growth in Inland Valley

By Nicole White
Staff Writer

For expanding most of California, the Inland Valley is one of the fastest-growing portions of the fastest-growing region in the state, according to figures released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The population of the Inland Valley— including Pomona, Claremont, San Dimas, La Verne, and western San Bernardino County— grew nearly 20 percent over the past decade, far faster than the state's 13.5 percent growth rate, according to figures show.

The Inland Valley's 13 cities grew to just under 1.6 million people, up from 1.3 million a decade ago.

Perhaps nowhere is the growth more obvious than Chino Hills, which grew 12 percent, more than doubling in population,compared to 13.5 percent in the state as a whole.

The population of the Inland Valley, the state's fastest-growing region, grew by 13.5 percent, according to figures released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

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Fontana is now third largest city in county

Fontana’s population is nearly 129,000, census says;
City had biggest growth (41,000) in county since 1990

By ED TIEGGEN and
RUSSELL INGOLD

Fontana’s population grew 47
percent over the past decade, bring-
ing the city’s total from 87,555 all
the way to 128,959, according to
statistics released last week by the
U.S. Census Bureau.

Fontana now ranks as the third-
largest city in San Bernardino
County, slightly ahead of four-
place Rancho Cucamonga (which
has 127,743 people), the census re-
sults show. San Bernardino retains
the largest city with 185,401 and
Ontario is second with 158,007.

From 1990 to 2000, Fontana
added more people — 41,000 — than
any other city in the county. To
put this number in perspective,
Fontana’s population growth in
the past 10 years was larger than
the average person-day population of
the city of Tustin (41,207).

“It’s exciting, and it shows how
much Fontana has to offer and how
much people want to be here,” said
City Councilmember lava
Richardson.

Fontana’s current total of nearly
129,000 was higher than most of
the estimates made in recent years
by local officials and economic ana-
lysts, who believed that the popula-
tion was between 115,000 and
120,000.

“It’s a little higher than I
thought, but I’m not surprised,” said
Mayor David Ehleman.

“We’ve been the fastest-growth
city in San Bernardino County for
the past 10 years.”

“I suspect Fontana will contin-
ue to grow because of our afford-
able housing, inexpensive land, and
all of the infrastructure improvements.”

Continued on page 3-A

Population

Continued from page B-7

we’re doing. We will probably
edge out Ontario soon. I predict in
20 years Fontana will be the No. 1
city in San Bernardino County.”

Due to the huge surge in home
construction during the past five
years, the population totals have
streamlined in many areas of
Fontana, particularly in the north-
west section.

City Manager Ken Hunt said the
city is at 80 to 100 percent build-
out, meaning there is still plenty
room for growth.

“The degree of saturation is pheno-
nomenal,” said City
Councilmember Jose Gonales.

“We have what a lot of other
people want.”

However, Gonales added: “The
growth is fine as long as we have
good management to control the
growth wisely and we have high
development standards.”

Ehleman said the city will ben-
efit in several ways from the new
growth.

“We should get additional rev-
ue because of our increased
numbers,” he said. “This will help
with obtaining grants and special
funding. Also, we will gain more
sales and property tax revenue.”

Gonales said: “Fontana’s num-
bers are beginning to make state
and federal elected officials pay
attention. We’ve got a lot of
money in this city that we must make
sure is used effectively.”

Gonales added: “The city will
need more police officers to meet
the needs of the city’s growth.

Police Chief Frank Schialdone
data that the city’s ratio of officers to
1,000 population has actually gone
down since 1990. Eleven years
ago, Fontana had 111 officers (1.26
per thousand), and last year, the
city had 136 officers (1.06 per
thousand).

According to the U.S.
Department of Justice, the western
U.S. average for cities over
100,000 population is 1.8 officers
per thousand, and the national aver-
age is 2.5 per thousand.

“Officers are expensive,”
Schialdone said. “We need more
money to have more officers.”

San Bernardino County
Largest Cities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Percent Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. San Bernardino</td>
<td>164,186</td>
<td>185,401</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ontario</td>
<td>133,179</td>
<td>158,007</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Fontana</td>
<td>87,555</td>
<td>128,959</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Rancho Cucamonga</td>
<td>101,409</td>
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<td>5. Rialto</td>
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<td>6. Upland</td>
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<td>7. Chino</td>
<td>58,682</td>
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<td>8. Chino Hills</td>
<td>27,808</td>
<td>66,787</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Victorville</td>
<td>40,674</td>
<td>64,029</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Redlands</td>
<td>50,394</td>
<td>63,591</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is based on the number of
people that have been building,
new business licenses, vehicle
permits, and real estate agency
figures, she said.

Even this number is small
compared to the estimated total in
the city, including surrounding
areas totaling 170,000 people.

“While the population has
grown at a rate of 47 percent,
we have been able to maintain
canals and parks,” Ehleman said.

“We have to make sure that
Fontana is a place where
people can afford to live.”

PUBLIC OFFICIALS USE THE 170,000
figured for planning purposes.
This total includes all the people
who use the city’s roads, parks,
and facilities, even though they
may not be inside the city
limits.”

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Continued on page A-3
Fontana traffic faces slow going

Improvements at Sierra, Etowanda and Cedar avenues to take awhile

By Emily Atwood

The city is growing by leaps and bounds, and with growth comes traffic congestion. However, the city of Fontana is taking steps to improve traffic flow and make the commute easier for its residents.

The Sierra Avenue and Valley Boulevard interchange is expected to be completed by the end of this year. The project is estimated to cost approximately $10 million and will include the construction of a new bridge and the widening of existing roads.

Fontana growth clashes with Interstate 210 project

As Fontana continues to grow, the city is facing challenges with the construction of Interstate 210. The project is estimated to cost $5 billion and will affect residents in the area.

"The city is growing so fast, and it's hard to keep up," said Mayor Maria Paredes. "We're doing our best to accommodate the growth, but it's a challenge.

Fontana is one of the fastest-growing cities in California, and with that growth comes increased traffic. The city is working hard to find solutions to the traffic issues, including the construction of new roads and the expansion of existing ones.

For more information on the growth of Fontana and its effects on the traffic, please contact the city's Transportation Department at (909) 386-3186.
New 210 freeway opens in Fontana

Numerous public officials (including Gov. Gray Davis, center) and Caltrans workers stood in a choir following the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new 210 freeway in Fontana on Aug. 20. Fontana Mayor David Eshleman and his daughter Krystal also took part in the historic celebration.

Freeway will help bring economic development

By RUSSELL BINGOLD
Fontana Herald News
Editor

The Route 210 freeway opened in Fontana last Monday, and not too many people were happier about this historic occasion than Ray Allard.

"This is wonderful," said Allard, reflecting his opinion as a Fontana resident, a business owner (Allard Engineering), and president of the Fontana Area Chamber of Commerce.

"For the business community and for residents, too, this freeway will be great," he said. "I live in Serrano Lakes and all business in the Fontana area on the north side will enjoy the economic benefits brought by this freeway." Allard said the new freeway, which cuts across northern Fontana along the former Highland Avenue (just south of the Sierra Lakes development), will serve a vital role in the continuing revitalization of Fontana's economy.

"So many businesses and home builders have been waiting so long for this freeway," he said. "Something like this can help carry the city through the next 10, 15, 20 years."

Fontana Planning Commissioner Ken Galasso, who owns Sierra Realty, agreed wholeheartedly with Allard's sentiments.

"The freeway will bring the economic development that the city needs," Galasso said. "When the Sierra Lakes subdivision is finished (scheduled for 2002), it will bring new businesses and people to the city."

"I'm glad this is happening," Galasso said. "I've been waiting so long for this freeway."

"The freeway will help bring the city's economy back to where it used to be."

Economic

Continued from previous page

of several components of Fontana's explosive potential, "It's all coming together," he said.

"Galasso is a member of the planning group which has made recommendations for the city's new general plan, focusing much attention on the area surrounding the freeway.

"There are a lot of things that could happen up in northern Fontana, but whether we get commercial or residential development, it will all benefit the city," he said.

City Councilmember Leslie Gonzalez, who owns Mexico Lindo, and the freeway's opening means that Fontana's future is bright. "There are unforeseen opportunities that will be opened up by the freeway," Gonzalez said. "There will be uncountable revenue sources."

City Manager Ken Fuentes, who lives in Rancho Cucamonga, enjoyed driving on the freeway following the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"The freeway opens up a whole new world for us," Fuentes said. "I view the north end as a land of opportunity. As you drive from Rancho to Fontana, you can see the wide open spaces that are available for us. Fontana has a lot of this outstanding land, and we want to use it for a combination of commercial, housing, and job-pertinent opportunities."

Will the freeway help bring about these opportunities? "Absolutely," Fuentes said.

The new 210 freeway has on- and off-ramps at Sierra, Citrus, Beech, and Cherry avenues in Fontana.
Fontana

Congestion relief for

Project set for Interstate 10/Sierra Avenue interchange

By Steven Good and Dan Lee

FONTANA

After years of suffering through congestion on the heavily traveled Interstate 10/Sierra Avenue interchange, relief is finally on the way for motorists. About 110,000 people celebrated the start of the $15.5 million project with a groundbreaking ceremony Thursday morning at the Island Empire Shopping Center along Sierra Avenue, with cars streaming toward the intersection in front of them.

"Fontana citizens and travelers have been waiting for this for ten years," Fontana Mayor David Ethelmann said. "It really hits home.

Several councilmen said late Thursday afternoon that while they're not looking forward to the noise associated with construction, the benefits will be worth it if they see completion.

"It's pretty crazy, it takes forever to get across," said Joe Lee of Victorville, who often commutes in Fontana as a commuting pool service operator.

Louis Romero, who lives near the interchange and drives it frequently, said that on Fridays at 4 p.m., it takes almost an hour to get to the freeway.

"I think it'll be good, but I know it's going to be a pain for the next two years," Romero said.

The construction project will relieve the traffic congestion at the interchange by expanding the overpassing and freeway ramps.

Built in 1956, the interchange was designed for four lanes.

TRAFFIC

Designed to handle 20,000 to 30,000 vehicles a day, the current volume has grown to more than 65,000 vehicles daily.

Ethelmann said something has been done in the 45 years since the interchange was built to increase the capacity of the interchange even as Fontana grew from a rural town of 15,000 to an urban center with 125,000 residents.

The city had plans on the drawing board to rebuild the interchange since 1983, but Fontana did not get the funding until two years ago when it received $17.5 million in federal, state, and regional funds. The remaining $800,000 will come from city funds.

The construction is expected to take 26 months and be completed by Fall 2021.

With those funding freezes, flies couldn't stop long-awaited project in Fontana.

By Emily Sachs

FONTANA - Against a backdrop of heavy traffic, local elected officials and transportation officials broke ground Thursday on a long-awaited project to improve one of the county's busiest interchanges.

The $15.5 million interchange project at Interstate 10 and Sierra Avenue has been in the works for more than a decade, falling victim to funding freezes and delays.

A lack of political will to address the project's start in a timely manner, the state and city transportation officials have backed the project by more than 10 years ago to serve just 25,000 commuters a day.

"Fontana is just a small, walkable community with 15,000 residents," Mayor David Ethelmann said. "Today we are an urban center. Our population exceeds 125,000.

With that growth, interchange traffic has jumped to 65,000 vehicles a day. Morning and afternoon commuters make up a significant share, often blocking traffic from reaching Kaiser Permanente Medical Center and keeping emergency vehicles from reaching fires and medical patients.

The congestion has also hurt schools and businesses. With better

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The congestion has also hurt schools and businesses.
'... WE ARE PUTTING OUT THE MESSAGE'

ABOVE: Fontana police Officer Mike Dorsey tickets William Quiñones for not carrying proof of vehicle insurance at a checkpoint on Sierra Avenue in Fontana. BELOW: Officer Phil Hinkle checks cars for proof of insurance.
Fontana Police impound 29 cars during safety checkpoint Feb. 28

The Fontana Police Department conducted a traffic safety checkpoint on Feb. 28, impounding 29 vehicles. Officers cited 87 drivers for various violations, including speeding, red light violations, and driving without a license.

The checkpoint was part of the department's ongoing traffic safety initiative. Since the start of the year, 67 drivers have been impounded, with a total of 133 vehicles being impounded overall.

"This is part of our ongoing commitment to improving traffic safety in Fontana," said Police Chief JohnRecognition. "We will continue to conduct these safety checkpoints to ensure that our streets are safe for all motorists."

continued from previous page

Checkpoint

Continued from previous page

"We have adopted a zero tolerance policy against this," said Fontana Police Sergeant Robert Bolman.

Official proposed that a recent study by AAA indicated that those driving without seats were driving at least 10 mph faster than those with seats.

Police hope that increased level of enforcement will reduce the number of fatal and injury collisions, increase public awareness.
58 vehicles impounded

Police said they impounded 58 vehicles and arrested two people on outstanding warrants during a sobriety and vehicle checkpoint between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Wednesday on Sierra Avenue and Athol Street. More than 4,300 vehicles passed the checkpoint, police said. Most of the vehicles impounded were for unlicensed or suspended driver’s licenses, police said. Officers issued 201 traffic citations for equipment and licensing violations and for lack of proof of financial responsibility, police said.

120 lose their cars to police impound

CHECKPOINT: Fontana set a record for number of impounded vehicles.

BY RICHARD BROOKS
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Fontana Police impounded a record 120 cars and trucks Thursday, a safety checkpoint that nabbed an unusually high number of motorists driving without a valid driver’s license, officials said.

"When someone gets into an accident and needs the scene more than likely they don’t have insurance or they don’t have a driver’s license," said motorcycle Officer Wayne Blesssinger. "Blesssinger is among 8 officers, volunteers and cadets who staff the safety checkpoint from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. every third Thursday of the month.

The checkpoint was planned by the Fontana Police Department in September 1996, when 95 were towed away. Since then, officers have set up a safety checkpoint on Athol Street.

The goals of the checkpoint are to inspect use of seat belts and child restraints, sobriety and whether the driver has a valid license.

Drivers passing through the checkpoint will be asked to show their licenses, current registration and proof of auto insurance.
Fontana police officers ticket drivers as they leave court after entering guilty pleas.

Gene Maddaus
gmaddaus@ InlandValleyDailyBreeze.com
and Joanna Corman
joannac@inlandvalleydailybee.com

FONTANA - Steven Payne has had better days.
Not five minutes after pleading guilty to driving on a suspended license and paying a $500 fine, Payne drove out of the parking lot at Valley Superior Court and was immediately pulled over.

"You're going to pull me over for that?" he screamed. "I got a baby in the hospital and everything!"

Cpl. Fred Flores calmly explained that Payne was the object of a "sting operation" to which undercover officers follow traffic violators who have just been admonished not to drive, and watch them get into their cars and drive away. They radio to motorcycle officers, who quickly pull the offender over.

"There's public transportation," Flores explained. "You know what public transportation is?"

Payne, 27, of Highland, was in court Wednesday to take care of a ticket issued two months ago for driving on a suspended license with invalid registration. It was his second ticket for a suspended license, and he also had a pair of DUI convictions.

"I do," Flores said.

"Before he gets his license back, he must complete 24 hours of alcohol education. His new Cadillac sedan Deville, for which he paid $11,000, will be impounded for a month. The cost to impound a car is about $1,000.

STING CONTINUED FROM 1

"I tried to do good, I try to obey the law and obey my ticket. All I want to do is make more money for them."

These undercover officers watched from the back of Commissioner Deborah Dreessen's courthouse as offenders pleaded guilty Wednesday afternoon. Then they retrieved their descriptions to three motorcycle officers and one officer in an unmarked car.

Several people walked to their cars, others waited for the bus and one was actually arranged for someone to pick him up.

But three, including Payne, drove their own cars out of the courthouse parking lot.

They were among about 80 people who went before Commissioner Daniels in a little more than two hours Wednesday.

Odelle Arzola, 26, drove his black pickup to court, even though he lives around the corner from the courthouse.

"I had to pick up some people in the courthouse parking lot."

"Then I had to drive home."

Payne, 27, of Chino, was arraigned on charges of driving on a suspended license.

He told police he was on his way to the Department of Motor Vehicles on Wednesday to pay a $500 fine when he was pulled over.

"I haven't driven in about two years," he said, before walking home to Paula.

After Payne was pulled over, he called his mom, Paula Payne, who was at work.

"I was driving home when the police came up to me."

"I could have called me on the cell phone." She said. "I have a license. You should have called me."

Tina Rice, 34, of Chino, was pulled over after pleading guilty to driving on a suspended license.

He paid a $500 fine.

Fernando Rivas, 25, talks with Sgt. Eric Wendel as he writes him a citation for driving on a suspended license while fellow Fontana Officer Danny Coretta looks on. Rivas was one of three people caught during a sting conducted by Fontana police.

Before he gets his license back, he must complete 24 hours of alcohol education. His new Cadillac sedan Deville, for which he paid $11,000, will be impounded for a month. The cost to impound a car is about $1,000.

See STING Page 2

Odlingo Arzola, 26, holds his head after being pulled over for driving on an expired license. Arzola had just pleaded guilty to a prior violation of driving with an expired license at Valley Superior Court in Fontana.
Eight cited for violations as they leave traffic court

FONTANA: A "countrthouse sting" program focuses on drivers who have just pleaded guilty.

FONTANA—Police said yesterday that the program, which is set to begin on Monday, will be targeting those who have recently pleaded guilty to traffic violations.

The program will involve setting up a "countrthouse sting" where drivers will be directed towards a courthouse where they will be asked to pay a fee for a "countrthouse license." The program will be run by the council, which will have the power to set the fees.

During the program, undercover officers will be on the lookout for drivers who appear to be evading traffic citations.

"We are targeting those who have recently pleaded guilty to traffic violations," said Chief of Police John Johnson. "We want to make sure they are paying the fees they owe."