

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



DISTRICT ATTORNEY

LARRY D. MORSE II

2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340
Phone (209) 385-7381
Fax (209) 725-3669

Assistant District Attorney
JOSEPH M. TRESIDDER

Chief Deputy District Attorney
HAROLD L. NUTT

Chief Deputy District Attorney
MARK V. BACCIARINI

Director of Administrative Services
JEANNETTE PACHECO

INVESTIGATIONS

(209) 385-7383

Chief Investigator
PATRICK N. LUNNEY

VICTIM WITNESS

(209) 385-7385

Victim Witness Program Director
LISA DeSANTIS

LOS BANOS DIVISION

445 I Street
Los Banos, CA 93635
Phone (209) 710-6070
Fax (209) 827-2029

MERCED MULTI-AGENCY NARCOTIC TASK FORCE DONATES MONEY FOR “SOBER GRAD” AND “EVERY 15 MINUTES PROGRAMS.”

The Merced Multi-Agency Narcotic Task Force Council will be making financial donations to area high schools for this year’s Sober Grad night and Every Fifteen Minute programs. Merced Police Chief Norm Andrade announced recently.

“The law enforcement leaders in Merced County are committed to doing everything in our power to keep our high school students from making the tragic mistake of mixing substance abuse with driving. Both these programs send powerful messages to teenagers about the often fatal consequences of impaired driving,” Andrade said.

Andrade, Chairman of the Task Force Council, said the decision was made at the March meeting of the Merced County Police Chiefs’ and Sheriff’s Association which is comprised of the county’s seven police agencies, the Sheriff, the California Highway Patrol, the District Attorney, Probation Department, the state Department of Justice Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement and State Parole. The leaders of these agencies meet every two months to discuss public safety issues in Merced County, Andrade said.

The Narcotic Task Force is governed by the members of the Chiefs and Sheriff Association in partnership with the Bureau of Narcotic Enforcement, Andrade noted. The members voted unanimously to provide \$1,000 to high school Sober Grad Night programs and \$500 to “Every Fifteen Minute” programs, both of which are designed to deter high school students from driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. These funds are made available through the forfeiture of money seized in drug trafficking cases, Andrade said.

“Sober Grad Night” is a non-profit organization run exclusively by volunteers who create graduation night celebrations that are designed to provide graduating seniors a memorable, yet alcohol and drug free, evening. At Golden Valley High School last year, more than 1,000 graduates participated in the Sober Grad Night festivities, Andrade noted.

He described “Every 15 Minutes” as a two-day program involving high school juniors and seniors in conjunction with the California Highway Patrol and the state Office of Traffic Safety which encourages local high school students to think about personal safety when drugs and alcohol are involved. The program challenges the involved participants to make mature decisions and recognize that their actions affect others besides themselves.

“My colleagues in the Merced law enforcement community believe that the best possible use of money seized from drug dealers is to help programs like “Sober Grad Night” and “Every Fifteen Minutes” continue to impress upon kids the deadly mixture of alcohol, drugs and driving. We’re honored to contribute to such worthwhile projects,” Andrade said.