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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**TRAFFIC GRANT PROVIDES SYSTEM TO TRACK COLLISIONS**

**MERCED** – Merced County has received a \$30,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, which will provide a new Geographic Information System (GIS) for tracking traffic incidences. The addition of this system will allow Merced County the ability to pinpoint the county's high incident collision locations and analyze the traffic patterns in these areas. These studies will be the groundwork for the new traffic safety measures and improvements. GIS is a computerized system which collects, analyzes, and presents data that is linked to specific locations.

*"The software will allow for the automatic reading of Statewide Integrated Traffic Record System (SWITRS) data files, the storing of relevant traffic count and speed survey data, interface with Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping software, plot collision diagrams, and produce a variety of data reports," said Steve Lyon of Merced County Public Works Department.*

Traffic collisions have been an issue for Merced County. In 2008 there were 14 reported fatal crashes and another 253 injury crashes, which occurred on County roadways. Merced County spans 1,972 square miles, including 1,761 miles of county streets, which will now be tracked by the new system.

*"Now Merced County will have the information necessary to better understand why and where traffic crashes occur," said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. "This is a case where technology will be at work saving lives far into the future."*

Funding for the system comes from a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. For further information about the grant or Traffic Safety, please contact Steve Lyon at (209) 385-7601.

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