



COUNTY OF YOLO
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
JEFF W. REISIG, DISTRICT ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 1, 2020 **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy District Attorney
Phone: Jonathan.raven@yolocounty.org

District Attorney's DUI Program Receives Grant Funds
The CA Office of Traffic Safety awarded
the DA's Office \$200,000 for its DUI program

(Woodland, CA) – October 1, 2020 –The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) recently awarded the District Attorney's Office \$200,000 for the continuation of its statewide recognized DUI program. The unit, which was formed in 2012, focuses on the prosecution and prevention of DUI cases as well as outreach, and law enforcement training. The program's goal is to prevent impaired driving and reduce alcohol and drug-impaired traffic fatalities and injuries.

The Deputy District Attorneys that are assigned to the program prosecute the most serious and complex DUI cases, such as those involving injury and death, and those involving drug impairment. Deputy District Attorneys assigned to these cases handle them through all stages of the criminal process, from the time of the arrest through sentencing. They also focused closely on training law enforcement throughout California on DUI investigation. To date, close to 1,400 officers have been reached through DUI training by the Yolo County District Attorney's OTS grant.

The program has also been very active in community outreach. The team has taken steps to be involved with local high schools, youth programs, UC Davis programs, local Greek organizations, and the Yolo County Citizen's Academy. During the last three years the OTS program has focused on educating youths on the dangers of DUI especially as it relates to drugs. While marijuana is now legal the program has made it a point to educate that marijuana causes impairment despite 34% of teenagers believing it is safe to drive

after smoking marijuana. Since beginning this program the Yolo County District Attorney's Office has reached nearly every high school in the area with live DUI trials that are conducted in front of the students.

Recently, on September 17, 2020, a Yolo County jury found 47-year-old Woodland woman Marcella Fitzgerald guilty of driving under the influence of marijuana, driving under the influence of alcohol, and driving under the combined influence of both alcohol and marijuana. Ms. Fitzgerald denied recent alcohol or marijuana use. Officers conducted field sobriety testing and arrested Ms. Fitzgerald for DUI, and later found a marijuana grinder and smoking pipe in her vehicle. A test of Ms. Fitzgerald's blood revealed a 0.06% blood alcohol concentration, as well as the presence of THC. Although her blood alcohol level was under 0.08%, the jury found that she was under the influence, due to the marijuana and alcohol in her system, and unsafe to be driving.

District Attorney Jeff Reising emphasized the continuing need to recognize the threat that DUIs pose to the public: "Yolo County, along with all of California, will face a unique time in its history with cannabis becoming more accessible through businesses this year. With an increasing number of DUIs nationwide over the last few years it is crucial that law enforcement agencies and District Attorney's offices dedicate resources toward protecting unsuspecting victims from the destruction that DUI drivers leave both physically and emotionally on their victims and the victims' families. Our OTS program allows us to be proactive in deterrence through education, but at the same time reactive through holding those accountable who break the law and put the public at risk."

Funding for the program comes from a grant by the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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