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SANTA MONICA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Press Release

Alcohol Decoy Operation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2014

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Agents from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) as well as officers from at least 109 local Police and Sheriff's Departments joined forces throughout California in a Statewide Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation on Saturday, March 15. The Santa Monica Police Department was among those local agencies that participated.

ABC agents and local law enforcement conducted a program called a Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation which can lead to the arrest of adults who purchase alcohol for people under 21 years old. Under the program, a minor under the direct supervision of a peace officer will stand outside a liquor or convenience store and ask patrons to buy them alcohol. The minor indicates in some way he or she is underage and cannot purchase the alcohol.

If the adults agree to purchase alcohol for the minor, officers then arrest and cite them for furnishing alcohol to the minor. The penalty for furnishing alcohol to a minor is a *minimum* \$1000 fine and 24 hours of community service.

The program is intended to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. According to the American Medical Association, underage drinking can increase chances of risky sexual behavior and teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, compromise health, and result in unintentional injury and death.

544 arrests and citation were issued throughout the State. Most individuals were issued citations for furnishing alcoholic beverages to minors, however, there were some cited for open containers and false identification. In addition 60 individuals were arrested for crimes such as driving under the influence, illegal drugs, public drunkenness, parole violations, resisting arrest and outstanding warrants. Santa Monica Police Vice Investigators deployed 2 decoys to 15 different locations on Saturday. In total, they contacted 227 people in an attempt to get them to purchase alcohol for them. The Vice Investigators were proud to report that they did not encounter one violation. In fact, they encountered situations where clerks at alcohol

establishments came out of their stores and told the decoys that what they were doing was illegal and asked them to leave.

The Santa Monica Police Department's Vice Unit's intention during these decoy operations is to have alcohol establishments and members of the public comply with existing alcohol laws. The fact that there were 227 attempts to circumvent those laws, and they all failed, was good news to investigators. The results indicate that people are complying.

Many local operations were funded by the California Alcoholic Beverage Control through the department's Grant Assistance Program (GAP), and some were funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). ABC is a Department of the Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency.

