

NEWS

From the Office of

Bill Postmus

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors
San Bernardino County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 11, 2006



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SUPERVISORS APPROVE OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ORDINANCE

SAN BERNARDINO -- The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today unanimously approved a new ordinance aimed at dealing with impacts caused by increased off-highway vehicle use. Such impacts include trespassing, noise, dust and fumes. "This ordinance is necessary to reduce the impacts on county residents while also allowing for the responsible use of off-highway vehicles," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Bill Postmus.

A draft ordinance was created last year and presented to nine community groups throughout the county. A stakeholders group was formed to develop an ordinance that balances the needs and concerns of residents and riders alike. The group was composed of OHV users including members of OHV advocacy groups, members of groups concerned about environmental preservation, county residents and county staff. The group reached a compromise that was acceptable to all parties involved. Supervisor Postmus said the ordinance has received support from all affected stakeholders because of its balanced and reasonable approach.

The ordinance will not apply in legal, designated riding areas. The Bureau of Land Management currently maintains approximately 300,000 acres of legal riding area in San Bernardino County alone.

The ordinance requires written permission to ride on property owned by another. Under the ordinance, a group of ten or more riders planning to stage their vehicles on private property would be required to obtain a temporary special event permit from a County Code Enforcement office.

The same noise standards that apply on public lands will apply to private lands. If a resident claims someone is riding in his or her neighborhood and causing a nuisance, a process that will allow the resident to address his or her complaints is provided under the ordinance.

The ordinance also established consequences for violations. The first contact with a violator will typically result in a written warning. The second contact could result in a citation with a \$200 fine. The third contact within three years could increase that fine to \$400. A third citation within three years could result in a \$500 fine. Any subsequent violations, within three years, could constitute a misdemeanor punishable by a \$1,000 fine and/or 90 days in jail.

The Sheriff's Department and the County Code Enforcement Division will enforce the ordinance. Postmus said he expects the Board of Supervisors' recent approval of 37 new deputy Sheriff positions for unincorporated county areas will help ensure the ordinance is enforced. The ordinance becomes effective in July. Additional Code Enforcement staffing and equipment for OHV enforcement will be considered in next fiscal year's County Budget process in June.

The first 4-6 weeks of enforcement of the ordinance will be spent on education, during which time the ordinance will be explained and riders will be directed to legal riding areas. "Our county is not against off-highway vehicle use, but it should be done responsibly," said Supervisor Postmus.