



## NEWS RELEASE

### County Administrative Office

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## County honored with state, national awards in 2014

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SAN BERNARDINO - Teaching homeowners to prevent fires around their homes, training inmates to fight wildfires and working to end human trafficking are three innovative County programs honored today by the California State Association of Counties.

California State Association of Counties Associate Legislative Representative Cara Martinson appeared at today's Board of Supervisors meeting to deliver the three 2014 CSAC Challenge Awards to the Land Use Services Department, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department, the County Fire Department, and the District Attorney's Office.

"These awards demonstrate our County's commitment to developing new and innovative approaches to enhancing public safety," San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chair Janice Rutherford said.

The CSAC Challenge Awards are part of a highly competitive recognition program that honors the best and most innovative among California's 58 counties.

The following are descriptions of each CSAC Challenge Award:

### **Demonstration Property Program - Land Use Services and County Fire**

The creation of the Demonstration Property Program teaches residents how to create defensible space around their homes to survive a wildfire. Since the inception of this program, Land Use has seen a 20 percent decrease in non-compliant properties across the mountains and a 20 percent decrease in public inquiries from the mountain communities. Land Use met more than 5,000 residents since the beginning of the program and the amount of fuels reduction is in the thousands of tons.

### **Fire Crew Program - San Bernardino County Sheriff and County Fire**

The San Bernardino County Sheriff and Fire departments work together to identify and train inmates to assist the County Fire Department in fighting wildfires. The project started with one crew of 15 inmates and has now grown to three crews of 45 inmates. The crew is expected to grow to six crews and a total of 90 inmates by the end of 2015. The crews are available to respond to all types of emergencies, including wildfires, floods, search and rescue, and earthquakes. The crews are also busy with conservation and community service work projects, including brush abatement and wood chipping.

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Each inmate must pass a four-week training course that consists of classroom work. Inmates must also complete rigorous physical fitness training. Job placement for graduates in the landscaping and construction industries is also helping to reduce recidivism.

### **Campaign to End Human Trafficking - District Attorney and Sheriff**

The District Attorney's Office created a Human Trafficking Vertical Prosecution Unit comprised of one Deputy District Attorney, one investigator, and a victim advocate. There was also a formation of a countywide Human Trafficking Joint Investigative Task Force with the Sheriff's Department that consists of a senior District Attorney investigator and a Sheriff's Deputy. The office also implemented the "Stop-the-John" Project in which the District Attorney's Office releases and posts online the names and photographs of defendants convicted of solicitation. Outreach was made with community members using the 45-minute documentary *Teenage \$ex & \$ale: Human Trafficking in San Bernardino County*. The documentary was nominated for an Emmy by the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. This campaign has led to increased prosecutions of those who exploit young children and increased awareness throughout the County.

The CSAC awards are just one example of the many honors the County's excellent programs received this year. In June, the County surpassed its own record, winning 31 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties for its groundbreaking programs and services.

The NACo Achievement Awards Program recognizes innovative county government programs in the areas of children and youth, criminal justice, county administration, environmental protection, information technology, and health.

This year, San Bernardino County led the region with more NACo awards than the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and Ventura. Only 29 of California's 58 counties received top NACo awards. [Click here](#) to read more information about the County's NACo Awards.