



## PRESS RELEASE

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- I. DATE AND TIME OF PRESS RELEASE: December 16, 2009
  
- II. TYPE OF INCIDENT/SITUATION/ANNOUNCEMENT:  
Livermore Police to recognize driver with "Saved By The Belt" award after driver is hit by suspected drunk driver.
  
- III. FACTUAL INFORMATION:  
On December 11, 2009 at approximately 6:22 p.m., the Livermore Police Department was advised of a head on collision occurring in the area of Vallecitos Road and Isabel Avenue. When officers arrived on scene they found that John "Tony" Martin (45 year old from Tracy) had been driving his 2006 Ford Ranger Northbound on Isabel Avenue and had turned right onto Eastbound Vallecitos Road. At the same time, Michael O'Connell (45 year old from Newark) was driving his 2003 Infiniti Westbound on Vallecitos Road approaching Isabel Avenue. O'Connell crossed over the double yellow lines and struck Martin nearly head on.

As a result of this collision Tony Martin, and his passenger, Mary Martin (47 years old from Hawaii) received injuries requiring them to be transported to the hospital. Tony and Mary were treated for back, neck, and chest pain and eventually released from the hospital. Both Tony and Mary had been wearing their lap/shoulder belts. The investigating officers believe that had they not been wearing their seatbelts they would have suffered major injuries or death.

While conducting this collision investigation, LPD officers believed that O'Connell was intoxicated and impaired. Officers placed O'Connell under arrest for suspicion of felony drunk driving. O'Connell was transported to the hospital for medical clearance and then booked into custody at Santa Rita Jail.

The Livermore Police Department will be awarding Tony and Mary Martin (brother and sister) with the "Saved By The Belt" award for properly wearing their seatbelts and avoiding serious injury or death. Statistics show that by wearing seatbelts, properly restrained drivers, passengers and children have a 50 percent better chance of surviving a crash than unbelted occupants. Those ejected from vehicles in crashes, or roll-overs, are up to 35 times more likely to die than restrained occupants.

The Martins will receive their award during the Avoid the 21 "Strike Night" dinner being hosted by the Livermore Police Department on Friday, December 18, 2009 at the Robert Livermore Community Center. The Strike Night dinner will have over 250 Alameda County law enforcement officers in attendance as they prepare to kick off the Avoid the 21 anti-impaired driving campaign for the holiday season.

We believe that it is important to recognize our community's drivers for buckling up appropriately and avoiding serious injuries. We also want to point out the importance of impaired driving enforcement and removing drivers from our roadways who are under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The Livermore Police Department will be taking a zero tolerance

approach to impaired driving enforcement during the holidays in an effort to eliminate the type of collisions that the Martins had to experience last Friday night.

IIV. CONTACT PERSON: Sgt John Hurd  
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Should you require further information please call the contact person designated in this press release. If the contact person is not available, and you have a deadline, please call the on duty Watch Commander at (925) 371-4820.

Steve Sweeney  
Chief of Police

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