

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 17, 2009
PR 09-59

**ABC San Diego District Office, Investigators Bret Ajax , Cynthia Verbis and
Supervising Investigator Kimberly Wachowski Receive Awards**
Modesto Police Detective Jim Rokaitis is also Honored

(Sacramento) The ABC San Diego District Office, Supervising Investigator Kimberly Wachowski and ABC investigators Bret Ajax and Cynthia Verbis have received honors from the California Office of Traffic Safety for outstanding law enforcement work. The ABC Officers have been recognized along with Modesto Police Detective Jim Rokaitis.

Investigators Ajax, Verbis, and Modesto Detective Rokaitis were given their awards at a brief ceremony at ABC's Northern Division Office in Sacramento on Tuesday, December 15, 2009. Supervising Investigator Wachowski, and ABC San Diego District Administrator Jennifer Hill accepted their awards at ABC's Southern Division Office in Cerritos on Thursday, December 17, 2009.

All of the law enforcement officers received awards for increasing safety in the communities they serve. Each year the State of California presents plaques and certificates to police officers around the State as part of the California Law Enforcement Challenge (CLEC) Awards.

ABC Director Steve Hardy presented the awards and said "it gives me great pride to hand out awards to people who put it on the line everyday to make California a safer place to live."

The California Office of Traffic Safety presented each officer with a plaque and a certificate for their outstanding efforts.

Supervising Investigator Wachowski was recognized for her work on several high profile Target Responsibility for Alcohol Connected Emergencies (TRACE) investigations which have resulted in criminal filings and administrative actions including revocations of ABC licenses. Her willingness to assist in any TRACE investigation or assume lead investigator status went above and beyond her assigned duties.

Sacramento area Investigator Bret Ajax and Modesto Police Detective Jim Rokaitis were honored for their leadership efforts on March 14, 2009 when ABC and Modesto Police launched an operation involving 33 local law enforcement agencies. The effort covered 10 counties throughout Northern California. A total of 171 arrests were made, which included 147 misdemeanor citations

and 24 felony bookings. The operation reduced underage drinking during the St. Patrick's Day Weekend by preventing adults from furnishing alcohol to minors.

ABC Investigator Cynthia Verbis, who works out of Concord, was honored for her work on the California Collaborative Urban Communities (CUCC) project. The project has focused on alcohol related crime in four designated zones in the city of Oakland. Programs such as Informed Merchants Preventing Alcohol Related Crime Tendencies (IMPACT) and the Minor Decoy program were implemented to provide education to Oakland merchants. This was followed by enforcement efforts. At the completion of a citywide outreach in September, 2008, nearly every ABC licensee in the CUCC zones was visited by ABC and Oakland Police officers helping to reduce alcohol related crimes.

ABC's San Diego District Office was recognized for efforts made toward Impaired Driving Awareness and Underage Alcohol Prevention. Over the past year, investigators from the San Diego office have arrested 42 persons before they left a business and drove under the influence of alcohol. The individuals were arrested for PC 647(f) "drunk in public." ABC also made 14 arrests for BP 25602(a) "sales to an obviously intoxicated person." Additionally, in an effort to curb underage drinking, investigators from San Diego have made over 230 arrests of minors and those adults that sold or provided them alcohol.