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## **SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY JUDGE TO RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARD**

STOCKTON – Judge Richard A. Vlavianos, of the Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin, will be honored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) with the agency’s Public Service Award on March 27 at the 35th Annual Lifesavers National Conference on Highway Safety Priorities in Charlotte, N.C.

NHTSA presents the recognition every year to individuals or organizations that exemplify high standards of achievements in the field of traffic safety, and through the recipient’s accomplishments, has contributed to the quality of life in the community, state or nation. Winners were nominated by NHTSA staff members and chosen for the award by senior leadership within the administration.

“The San Joaquin County bench is proud of the national-level leadership Judge Vlavianos has taken in the collaborative courts arena,” said Presiding Judge Jose L. Alva, of the Superior Court of California, County of San Joaquin. “We are certainly glad he is part of our team.”

Judge Vlavianos is acknowledged for starting an innovative DUI Court Program that monitors repeat DUI offenders over a course of one year and diverts them into intervention programs or substance abuse treatment. What makes San Joaquin County’s DUI Court Program unique from other DUI Courts is that it consists of two tracks – one designed for substance abusers and one for offenders who are substance dependent. This strategy allows the court to manage a greater portion of repeat offenders, as most DUI Courts only focus on those who are substance dependent. This strategy also allows the court to generate savings, as early intervention strategies cost fewer resources than treatment or incarceration. NPC Research, in a 2012 study of San Joaquin County’s DUI Court, documented a one-third decrease in recidivism and a 50% reduction in alcohol related collisions among participants of the DUI Court. Recently, the program was chosen to be a model court, included in the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

The DUI Court Program in San Joaquin, established in 2008, is primarily funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety with grant funds from NHTSA. NHTSA's Office of Regional Operations and Program Delivery administers more than \$500 million in grant programs every year in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories and the Bureau of

Indian Affairs. Grants are awarded for occupant protection, state traffic safety information systems, impaired driving countermeasures, distracted driving, motorcyclist safety and state graduated driver licensing laws.

Lifesavers is a nonprofit organization made up of a diverse group of public and private organizations involved with improving highway safety. Its annual conference is the nation's largest gathering of highway safety professionals, drawing more than 2,000 attendees and numerous exhibitors. The conference lasts three days and covers emerging traffic data, issues, life-saving programs and best practices.

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