

2021 QUARTER 1

January 19, 2021

On Sunday night, January 17 Soledad Police Officers busted 3 men for weapons charges. The arrest occurred after the vehicle they were in was stopped for a code violation in the city of Soledad. The driver was found to be operating the vehicle with a suspended driver's license. Lazaro Ortega, Juan Garcia and Marcus Morales, all of Soledad, were removed from the vehicle. During the stop Officers found a fully loaded short barreled AR-15 rifle which was determined to be a homemade "Ghost Gun." All three men were booked into the Monterey County Jail on numerous charges.

February 3, 2021

On Tuesday night, February 2 at 7:13 pm, 27-year-old Balthazar Donato of Greenfield was driving a Lincoln MKS, and due to his level of intoxication drove his vehicle northbound onto the US-101 southbound traffic lanes near Alvarado Road in San Ardo and continued northbound traveling the wrong way. 23-year-old Sabrina Leece of Shandon was driving a 2002 Mazda southbound in the southbound lanes of US-101 approaching Alvarado Road and due to Balthazar driving the wrong way on the highway, he allowed the left front of his vehicle to collide head on with the left front of the Mazda Leece was driving. After the impact of the collision, Balthazar's vehicle continued out of control in a northeasterly direction before overturning and coming to rest on it's wheels within the median, while Leece's vehicle continued in a southwesterly direction and came to rest on it's wheels partially up the embankment. Leece sustained fatal injuries and was killed as a result of this collision. Her passenger, 23-year-old Grisey Castro of Shandon was injured and was transported by ambulance to a nearby Hospital for treatment, while Balthazar also picked up injuries from the fatal crash and was arrested on the scene for suspicion of driving under the influence. The collision is still under investigation and no further information is available at this time. If anyone witnessed this accident, please contact the California Highway Patrol - King City Area at 831-385-3216.

March 2, 2021

Just after midnight on Monday, March 1 several residents in South Monterey County reported that an Audi SUV was driving the wrong way southbound in the northbound lanes of Highway 101, near Camphora Gloria Road between Gonzales and Soledad. Monterey County Sheriff's deputies were able to locate the car as it was still driving the wrong way down Hwy 101, near Hudson Road in Greenfield. The deputies attempted to stop the car while driving alongside it on the correct side of the highway. Through a coordinated effort, Greenfield and King City Police Officers were able to stop northbound traffic ahead of the wrong-way driver to prevent anyone from driving into danger.

The driver, went around a roadblock on Hwy 101, near Underwood Road, and continued driving southbound. A deputy deployed a spike strip, near Central Avenue in King City. The driver attempted to drive around it but the spike strip punctured two of his tires. The driver then crossed over onto the southbound lanes and continued driving away. Due to the highway construction in King City, the pursuit

intervention technique (PIT) maneuver, was used to attempt to stop the driver, by spinning out the wrong way driver's car.

After the car spun out, the driver rapidly accelerated at a deputy's patrol car, striking the patrol car and stopping. The driver, identified as Armando Alfaro Jr, was then taken into custody for DUI, Evading a Peace Officer, and other criminal charges. The deputy who was rammed in the patrol car was taken to a local hospital for evaluation and treatment of minor injuries.

Despite the deputy's injuries and the loss of a patrol car, this incident ended without the loss of human life. The Monterey County Sheriff's Office is thankful for the citizens who reported the wrong-way driver and for the teamwork of the CHP, the Greenfield PD, and the King City PD in helping prevent a potentially tragic accident.