

# Washington State Patrol

*Chief John R. Batiste*

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## Annual Report

## 2015

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## Executive Summary

As an agency, we face the ongoing challenge of interacting with motorists who do not speak the English language. Hispanic/Latino Spanish speaking motorists make up the majority of licensed drivers involved in serious injury, fatal, and felony collisions within the Mid-Columbia Valley (the southeast portion of Washington State). In 2003, the El Protector program was implemented to address the increased concerns of Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers.



**Chief John R. Batiste**

The El Protector program places special emphasis on people with limited English speaking abilities. The bilingual/bicultural program provides public education through dialogue with the Hispanic/Latino community, rather than focusing on specific enforcement measures.

The program officially began on February 20, 2003 at a community meeting held in Burbank, Washington. A variety of Hispanic/Latino community leaders, state and local law enforcement officials, and members of state and national traffic safety organizations were in attendance that evening. The Washington State Patrol (WSP) led a presentation that included statistics from all fatality and felony collisions in 2002. During the meeting, there was an overwhelming positive response and commitment from attendees to take action on the issue.



**Jeff Sass**  
Assistant Chief  
Field Operations  
Bureau

In response to the meeting, the WSP listened to the community by developing a citizen's advisory board and creating a full-time El Protector position to work with the Hispanic/Latino community. The advisory board was designed to provide guidance, develop shared goals and objectives, and to ensure that our traffic safety message was sent consistently through all outlets.

Since the implementation of the El Protector program in 2003, many adjustments have been made and best practices have been realized. The WSP and their partners continue to have a positive impact on reducing traffic-related deaths in the Mid-Columbia region through educational outreach and enforcement activities.



**Terry E. Liebrecht**  
Captain - District 3  
Field Operations  
Bureau

## **El Protector**

The El Protector program was originally developed to reach a segment of our community who may otherwise have limited access to traffic safety information or laws within the State of Washington. The program continues to make a positive impact, with the reduction of fatality and felony collisions involving Latino surnamed drivers. Troopers report more Latino surnamed drivers with operator licenses, vehicle insurance, using proper occupant restraint systems, and remaining at the scene of a collision instead of fleeing.

Most El Protector presentation attendees acknowledge the importance of the program and appreciate the efforts to bring them traffic safety information that may not be readily available to them otherwise. With the program, the entire community can better understand Washington's traffic safety laws and the important role law enforcement plays in helping to ensure a safe and secure community. As our society changes with the events that occur between law enforcement and citizens throughout the nation, the El Protector program has been an important connection between the Washington State Patrol and the Hispanic/Latino community. The program fosters trust and respect between the Hispanic/Latino community and law enforcement.

Recently, the El Protector program received requests to present in District 2 (King County) to Spanish groups, and to provide radio presentations on Spanish language stations in the Puget Sound area. We are proud of the collaborative effort this program has enjoyed. Without the work of our partners, the success of the program would be limited. Through a multitude of media and community outreach outlets, the information continually flows into the community year-round. This approach continues to make a difference in the overall reduction of fatalities in the district. With the help of stakeholders and allied law enforcement agencies, the El Protector program will continue to expand and have a positive impact on people's lives.

Trooper Sergio Cervantes is a ten-year veteran of the Washington State Patrol, assigned to the Kennewick APA. Trooper Cervantes' duties include patrol, El Protector, Control Tactics & Weapons (CTW) Instructor, and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team member. His involvement in the El Protector program began in 2007 when he transferred from Seattle to Yakima. Trooper Cervantes has been the lead coordinator since Trooper Oscar Garcia was promoted to Sergeant in 2014. He works directly with community stakeholders and community leaders to address traffic safety concerns.

## **Mission, Goals, and Action Plans**

**Mission:** To continue the Hispanic/Latino community outreach education program that addresses DUI and occupant protection education with built-in collaboration with community stakeholders.

### **Goals:**

1. Reduce the number of fatality collisions involving Hispanic/Latino drivers and/or occupants.
2. Reduce the number of felony collisions involving Hispanic/Latino drivers and/or occupants.
3. Reduce the number of Hispanic/Latino community members injured or killed as a result of failing to use vehicle occupant restraint equipment.

4. Evolve the program to address all traffic safety issues.
5. Create a good rapport and break down barriers within the Hispanic/Latino community to provide them with a better understanding about law enforcement in the State of Washington.

#### **Action Plans:**

1. Create a standardized training program in the Field Operations Bureau (FOB) core mission of traffic law enforcement. The focus will be on creating a Spanish presentation on the following topics:
  - A. DUI
  - B. Domestic Violence
  - C. Fear to report criminal activity due to legal residence status.
  - D. Occupant Restraints
  - E. Speeding
  - F. Aggressive Driving
2. Develop Hispanic/Latino community partnerships.
3. Develop Hispanic/Latino and general media partnerships.
4. Involve the Washington State Traffic Safety Commission.
5. Create a statewide information exchange within the Hispanic/Latino community.
6. Outreach to orchards, businesses, community groups, and local schools.
7. Work with our law enforcement partners to accomplish our goals.
8. Attend community activities.

#### **Strategies:**

1. Provide training and information on traffic safety issues affecting the Hispanic/Latino community in District 3.
  - a. Program introduction and training to area groups and businesses.
    - i. Develop program flyer.
    - ii. Correspondence with key stakeholders.
    - iii. Follow-up calls to larger groups and businesses.
    - iv. Develop additional training aids and static displays.
  - b. Attend major community events.
    - i. Cinco de Mayo
    - ii. 16<sup>th</sup> of September
    - iii. Fairs
    - iv. Fruit grower harvest celebrations
    - v. Fruit warehouse safety briefings
    - vi. AA workshops
    - vii. Mexican rodeos (Sunnyside, Washington)
  - c. Post-collision follow-up with family, friends, and co-workers of collision victims.
  - d. Cultural awareness classes in partnership with District Courts.
    - i. Coordinate classes with Benton/Franklin County Prosecutors.
2. Collaborate with all media to communicate a common and consistent traffic safety message.
  - a. Weekly newspaper columns in *tú Decides*, *LaVoz*, and *El Sol de Yakima* Hispanic newspapers.
  - b. Weekly on-air talk shows with major radio stations.
  - c. Development of television public service announcements.
  - d. Continue working together with Central Pre-Mix Concrete Company on advertisements on mixer trucks throughout District 3.

3. Program internal communication
  - a. Attend monthly/quarterly District SAF in Union Gap for District Command and Supervisors.
  - b. Attend Detachment meetings.
  - c. Maintain and update webpage.
  - d. Year-end report to stakeholders.
  - e. Continue the program throughout the district and surrounding districts.
  - f. Have quarterly El Protector meetings with stakeholders.
4. Recruiting to build a diverse foundation for the WSP.
  - a. Partner with the Human Resources Division.
    - i. Recruiting purposes.
    - ii. Testing of local applicants.

## Output/Outcomes

In 2015, the El Protector program was responsible for giving a total of **14** traffic safety presentations to the communities in District 3. Regionally, El Protector delivered **8** traffic safety presentations in the Yakima Valley; **6** traffic safety presentations in the Tri-Cities/Walla Walla. All of these presentations would not have been possible without the great support of our stakeholders and law enforcement partners.

### Fatality Collision Data for the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla

Year	Total # Fatality Collisions	Total # Hispanic/Latino Involved Fatality Collisions	DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Hispanic/Latino DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Total # Felony Collisions	Total # Hispanic/Latino Felony Collisions	Fatality Collisions Without Seatbelts	Total # of Deaths
2002	20	14	12	9	4	4	11	26
2003	12	7	5	2	0	0	3	12
2004	14	8	9	4	4	1	0	14
2005	8	5	2-drugs	2-drugs	0	0	2	9
2006	14	3	6	2	1	0	7	15
2007	19	5	9	2	2	0	9	23
2008	18	8	9	6	1	0	9	21
2009	15	7	10	3	2	0	11	16
2010	13	7	2	1	1	0	3	19
2011	16	5	4	2	2	2	5	18
2012	9	1	1	0	0	0	1	9
2013	10	3	0	0	2	0	3	10
2014	12	4	2	1	1	0	1	3
2015	11	4	2	0	2	0	3	6

### Involvement of Hispanic/Latino Surnamed Drivers

Since El Protector began in 2003, only 17% of the DUI related fatality collisions have been Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers. This is a substantial decrease from when the problem was

first identified in 2002 when 75% of the DUI involved fatality collisions included Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers. This is significant considering the region’s population base is estimated to be approximately 40% Hispanic/Latino.

For the third year in a row, Kennewick and Walla Walla APAs had no felony charges of Hispanic/Latino drivers. Over the thirteen years the El Protector program has existed, there are a total of three felony-chargeable collisions involving Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers compared to four in 2002 alone. Although felony charges involving Hispanic/Latino drivers remain very low (three out of fifteen since 2003), the existence of any felony-chargeable collisions combined with the total number of fatality collisions indicates a continued need for the El Protector program.

The El Protector program continues to focus efforts heavily during the peak harvest season, which runs from August through October. Historically, this has been the period of the year during which the majority of the region’s fatality collisions occur. In 2003, the El Protector program began placing special emphasis on educating migrant workers during this critical time of the year. The following represents the number of fatality collisions that occurred within the region during the harvest season:

**Annual Fatality Collisions August through October (Harvest Season)**

2002	11
2003	0
2004	3
2005	2
2006	1
2007	4
2008	2
2009	2
2010	5
2011	7
2012	3
2013	2
2014	2
2015	4

In 2015:

- One fatality collision that occurred during the harvest season involved a responsible Latino driver.
- Only five of the eleven fatality collisions in 2015 involved a Hispanic/Latino surnamed driver or occupant. In three of those collisions, the Hispanic/Latino driver was at fault.
- One of the Walla Walla APA fatalities involved a Hispanic/Latino surnamed driver/occupant.

In 2005, the El Protector program expanded and began tracking Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers involved in fatality collisions in the Yakima Valley. The analysis is represented in the matrix below. In 2006, the El Protector program began to immerse itself into the Yakima Valley in an attempt to understand the problem related to traffic safety and fatality collisions. The El

Protector program used resources and knowledge gained over the last five years to help the law enforcement agencies and community groups address this problem.

### Fatality Collision Data for the Yakima and Sunnyside Areas

Year	Total # Fatality Collisions	Total # Hispanic/Latino Involved Fatality Collisions	DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Hispanic/Latino DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Total # Felony Collisions	Total # Hispanic/Latino Felony Collisions	Fatality Collisions Without Seatbelts	Total # of Deaths
2005	42	16	27	9	12	3	23	46
2006	35	16	19	8	8	3	13	38
2007	38	9	15	6	7	4	19	39
2008	22	7	13	4	4	2	10	22
2009	36	15	19	5	11	3	19	41
2010	19	3	10	1	3	0	7	24
2011	25	18	10	8	5	3	7	27
2012	28	13	12	2	2	2	11	32
2013	23	9	8	5	2	2	14	23
2014	28	10	4	4	1	1	4	13
2015	26	11	11	5	6	5	2	11

### Involvement of Hispanic/Latino Surnamed Drivers

Since 2005, a total of 61 DUI related collisions have resulted in felony charges. Of these, 25 (or 46%) have been Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers.

The El Protector program will continue to strive to meet the educational needs in the Yakima and Sunnyside areas as there is still considerable work to be accomplished in both APAs. The El Protector program was responsible for several traffic safety presentations in the Yakima Valley and has established contacts with local community groups, businesses, law enforcement, and other Washington State agencies that provide services to the Hispanic/Latino community.

### Successes in 2015

- **Target Zero Spanish video.** After working with Angie Ward of the WTSC during the Governor's Safety day in February, Trooper Cervantes came up with the idea to make a Target Zero Spanish-language video. He consulted and worked with Ms. Ward to get this idea off the ground and make it a reality to help our state with its Target Zero Goal. That Target Zero video is now being played on radio spots and television throughout the state to help the Hispanic communities believe in the goal and help reduce collisions that involve Hispanic people; making that project a state-wide success.
- **Wapato Harvest Festival 2015.** During this three day event, Trooper Cervantes contacted over 500 people in the lower Yakima Valley. He participated in an event parade, giving away El Protector T-shirts to citizens in attendance.
- **Governors Agricultural Safety Day.** In February, Trooper Cervantes provided safety talks on the dangers of Distracted Driving.

- **Yakima Police Department Hispanic city leadership Citizens Academy.** In March Trooper Cervantes assisted the Yakima PD with his cultural leadership by speaking at their citizens academy.
- **Zirkle Fruit Safety Day.** Back to the roots of El Protector, Trooper Cervantes assisted one of largest agricultural operations in the region by providing traffic safety talks related to Distracted Driving.
- **Pasco Shooting.** Following the shooting of a Hispanic person in February, Trooper Cervantes partnered with the Washington State Commission of Hispanic Affairs and KKMO El Rey 1360 AM radio. For two months following the shooting in Pasco he provided on-air information to the Hispanic Community and gave them a place to voice concerns and ask questions. This reached the Hispanic population in the Yakima Valley, Tri-Cities, and Seattle.
- **Ledezma Employment Security Department.** Trooper Cervantes expanded into Grant County to assist the Mattawa Community and DOT with the installation of a new roundabout on HWY 243. He Provided information and education through traffic-safety presentation focused on round about safety and education.
- **Cinco de Mayo festival.** In May, Trooper Cervantes partnered with the Sunnyside Police Department to assist with community relations at their annual event.
- **Pasco High School Career Day.** Met with students to assist the District Three recruiter to reach out to students in Pasco.
- **Broetje Orchards.** Provided distracted driver safety talk.
- **Grupo Un Nuevo Camino.** Provided Impaired and Distracted Drivers safety talk to this Hispanic community organization.
- **Benton County Fair.** In partnership with the District Three Recruiter, worked every day at the Fair to provide another outreach opportunity.
- **Mabton High School Career Day.**

## Problem Oriented Public Safety

In 2015, Trooper Cervantes opened a POPS project to address the problem of unlicensed Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) drivers operating during the harvest season.

While working the road, he noticed a trend among CMV drivers working for local area farms. The drivers were often Hispanic, non-English speaking people with limited knowledge of the rules related to CMV operation. He consulted with CVD personnel to come up with a plan to educate such drivers on the most common violations troopers observe. CVD saw an opportunity to also provide educational outreach for farm exempt vehicles regarding MAP-21. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (**MAP-21**) is a funding and authorization bill to govern United States federal surface transportation spending. One of the results of this initiative provided exemptions for farm workers in critical areas such as CMV licensing and hours of service.

Trooper Cervantes and CVD partnered to create an educational brochure in both English and Spanish that could be distributed statewide. That project has progressed to the Response phase and is



awaiting final approval by GMR. The goal is to have these brochures printed and ready for distribution before the 2016 harvest season.

## **Community Outreach and Education**

The El Protector Advisory Committee (EPAC), and the El Protector Law Enforcement Advisory Committee (LEAC), is comprised mostly of Hispanic/Latino police officers from local agencies and works collectively under the umbrella of the El Protector program. Members of the LEAC were present at many Hispanic/Latino events and were able to facilitate communication through contact and dialogue. During harvest season, an El Protector LEAC member addressed groups of 60 to 120 individuals and discussed traffic safety issues during their break periods. We continually find workers who desire information and an opportunity to speak with a police officer about law enforcement issues. As a result, they better understand our objectives as police officers and our concerns for public safety.

Most people do understand the importance of traffic safety and appreciate having a LEAC member explain our concerns and issues, thus educating them about the traffic safety problems and the laws of the State of Washington. This positive interaction allows them the opportunity to ask questions and clarify laws that they do not fully understand. Through these efforts, we hope to establish a more positive, interactive rapport between law enforcement and the Hispanic/Latino communities.

The El Protector coordinator attends annually the Latino Expos, hosted by *tú Decides* Hispanic newspaper, in Kennewick, Yakima, and Bellevue. This event is normally attended by 3,500 to 5,000 people from all over Washington State. The El Protector informational booth is a success and well received by participants. This event provides an opportunity for the El Protector program to reach out to the Hispanic/Latino community through educational pamphlets and one-on-one conversation. The primary focus of educational efforts is related to alcohol and/or drug impaired driving and the use of seatbelts and child restraints. The event also gives the program an opportunity to make new contacts throughout the State and explain what the WSP is doing as an agency to educate the Hispanic/Latino, non-English speaking members of the community.

## **Media Outlets and Advertising**

Like any successful traffic safety campaign or program, the effective use of media outlets and community partnerships cannot be understated. The El Protector program has developed strong ties with local businesses, media groups, and local government agencies. Media outlets such as the Tri-City Herald and *tú Decides* newspapers have been instrumental in delivering our traffic safety messages to the community. The Tri-Cities also has a strong Spanish radio network with five FM stations and two AM stations that broadcast in Yakima, Ellensburg, Tri-Cities, Walla Walla, and the Moses Lake/Quincy, and Wenatchee/Brewster area. Recorded and live Public Service Announcements (PSA) makes it possible for the El Protector Program to reach thousands of listeners at work, at home, and in their vehicles.

The El Protector program continues to develop PSA commercials which include topics like; child seat safety, seatbelt, drinking and driving, underage drinking, driving under the influence of illegal and/or prescribed drugs, and winter driving. Six television commercials were also produced with the help of our media relation group and air on three Spanish television channels.

The commercials include the introduction to the El Protector program, child seat safety, the importance of using seatbelts, and the dangers associated with impaired driving. All of these commercials and public service announcements are developed in both English and Spanish and are aired throughout Central and Eastern Washington.

Television media groups such as Univision have been longtime supporters of the El Protector program. Univision makes it possible to air important traffic safety messages in Spanish. El Protector also advertises a weekly column in *tú Decides*, a bilingual Spanish/English newspaper, hoping to raise awareness about traffic safety-related topics. A key component of the El Protector program is to establish positive relationships with the Hispanic/Latino community and to provide traffic safety education in both the English and Spanish languages. We continue to work toward this end by placing advertisements and traffic safety messages in as many media outlets as possible.

## Recruiting

The El Protector program assists the WSP Human Resource Division and the District 3 Recruiter with recruiting efforts, seeking to increase Spanish-speaking recruits in the WSP. This will enhance outreach and allow us to dissolve the cultural barriers between the Hispanic/Latino community and law enforcement. The El Protector program continues to use its trailer to communicate the recruiting message. The El Protector program has received phone calls from Hispanic/Latino individuals from all over the state inquiring about the program and asking how to apply to become a State Trooper.

With the strong support of the Washington State Patrol, local law enforcement agencies, and the community, the El Protector program will continue to make huge strides in becoming the leader in the Hispanic/Latino outreach arena.



## **Citizen Advisory Board**

Throughout the year, the following committed individuals contributed many hours of donated time to the El Protector program:

*Ms. Lucy Cartagena* – Ms. Cartagena is currently the Human Resource Manager for Broetje Orchards. She also works directly with employees, supervisors, and manages all aspects of safety, personnel issues, workers compensation, and employee benefits. She has been with Broetje Orchards for ten years. She holds a BS Degree in Social Sciences from Washington State University.

*Ms. Sylvia Gonzales* – Ms. Gonzales owns a home custodial entrepreneur business and has been a community activist for several years. She is a very busy woman but always makes the time to help out at all events. Sylvia was born in Mexico and grew up as a migrant worker in Washington State.

*Ms. Maria Vera* – Ms. Vera owns her own business and spends lots of time traveling. She owns a translating business, which helps the El Protector Program produce the many educational flyers and pamphlets. She donates time helping at events throughout the year.

We would like to thank all of our stakeholders for their unwavering support of the El Protector program and we look forward to many successful years ahead. We are committed to “MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY” as we strive to educate the Hispanic/Latino community about traffic safety issues and work toward reducing the number of fatality and injury collisions within our communities.