



City of
SANTA CLARITA

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**SANTA CLARITA EMPLOYEES NAMED FINALISTS FOR
CALIFORNIA ON LOCATION AWARDS**

City Employee and Sheriff's Department Nominated as Public Employees of the Year

A City of Santa Clarita employee and local law enforcement officers were named finalists in the "Public Employee of the Year" category as part of the 17th annual California on Location Awards™ (COLA) on Sunday, October 16, 2011, at the Millennium Biltmore.

Ben Gonzales, administrative analyst for the City of Santa Clarita Transit Department, along with Deputy Westfall, Deputy Velek, Sergeant Myers, Sergeant Olfert, and Sergeant Lewison were all nominated in the category for their film-friendly practices and efforts to help keep location filming successful in Santa Clarita.

"Our City's success in bringing film projects to the community is attributed to the hard work and coordination of our public employees," says Mayor Marsha McLean. "The continued efforts of our City staff help bring in extra revenue and contribute to our area's reputation as one of the best places to film on location in the state."

Gonzales is recognized for his efforts in coordinating bus stop closures to accommodate film projects within Santa Clarita, while maintaining reliable and quality bus service in the community. For the past year Gonzales has worked to relocate bus routes to allow for the filming of hit television shows such as, "NCIS," "Big Love," and "CSI." He is also known for going above and beyond his duties to ensure that transit services remain unaffected, accessible, and on-time during film projects.

In July 2010, as part of the 21-Point Business Plan for Progress, the Santa Clarita Sheriff's Department and the City's Film Office began coordinating all assignments for location filming involving the Sheriff's Department. This new system not only reduced costs for production, but

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also eliminated the need for production to coordinate with the Sheriff's Department in Los Angeles, providing faster services.

Deputies Westfall and Velek, along with Sergeants Myers, Olfert and Lewison, received numerous compliments from production companies for their abilities to respond to numerous filming requests and frequent changes to filming schedules, while providing a higher level of service. Collaboratively, they have resolved unexpected incidents, fulfilled last minute requests, and provided film crews with traffic control services while saving production more than \$30,000 in the first year of the program.

Last year, COLA recognized City employee, Gus Pivetti, senior traffic engineer, for regularly coordinating complicated closures of major thoroughfares while meeting the needs of motorists and film productions.

COLA recognizes film location professionals, production companies, and public employee liaisons for their excellence while working in the state of California. Every year COLA selects public employees for their professional experience and willingness to go beyond their job description to serve as a liaison between film companies and the communities they work in – efforts that are helping to keep filming and its economic benefits in California.

For more information on the California on Location Awards™, please contact Russell Sypowicz with the City of Santa Clarita's Film Office at (661)-255-4347.

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