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UC Berkeley Dispatches Traffic and Pedestrian Safety Experts Throughout California

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) has renewed funding for the Pedestrian Safety Assessment and Traffic Safety Evaluation programs, two popular roadway-safety audit services administered by the Technology Transfer Program (Tech Transfer) at the University of California, Berkeley.

A total of 22 one- or two-day evaluations will be conducted by Sept. 30, 2011. Both services help local agencies identify and implement solutions that will lead to improved safety for all users of California's roads.

Tech Transfer Director Laura Melendy said that after three years of especially high demand for the new pedestrian safety service, this year demand is more evenly split between these two essential community-support programs.

"Now that the pedestrian safety program is successfully launched, Tech Transfer is seeing increased demand for traffic safety evaluations," Melendy said. She said that the increase may be due in part to Tech Transfer's targeted outreach to communities ranked highest for traffic safety problems. "We are making sure the communities who most need our help know about the service," Melendy said.

Since its inception in 1999, the OTS-funded Traffic Safety Evaluation program sends engineering and enforcement evaluators to visit California cities and counties to evaluate conditions such as traffic control, operations, and enforcement, and make recommendations on how to improve traffic safety and incorporate best practices. Pedestrian Safety Assessments launched in February of 2008 as a companion program more narrowly focused on helping to make communities more walkable. The program and its technical guide have been recognized as best practices at the local, regional and national levels, including by the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the American Planning Association.

"The outcomes of these assessments are immediate and positive," said Christopher J. Murphy, Director of the California Office of Traffic Safety. "Cities make plans and implement strategies that often affect death and injury rates quickly."

Tech Transfer, a division of the UC Berkeley Institute of Transportation Studies, provides professional training, workshops, conferences, technical assistance and information resources in the transportation-related areas of planning and policy, traffic engineering, project development, infrastructure design and maintenance, safety and the environment.

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