

# Hit-and-run Tuesday ends with police guns drawn



Photo by Peggy Kelly

Santa Paula police conduct a high-risk felony stop Tuesday on Davis Street in Santa Paula after a series of hit-and-run collisions Tuesday that led to the arrest of three people, including the unidentified subject shown in the photograph.

**By Peggy Kelly**  
*Santa Paula Times*

A report of a hit-and-run Tuesday ended with a high-risk stop with officers' guns drawn in the Santa Paula business district.

According to Interim Police Chief Ish Cordero, the April 14 incident started shortly before 11 a.m. when police received a report "of a reckless driver, and a hit and run" that occurred in the area of Main and Olive streets.

Cordero said the "initial reporting party saw what was going on and attempted to stop the vehicle from leaving the area, but the driver of the vehicle kept lunging at him so he had to get out of the way" to avoid being struck.

Officers were dispatched to the scene and then looked for the vehicle, which they observed nearby still being driven recklessly.

They attempted to pull over the driver, but he driver refused, until he turned onto Davis Street and stopped near the intersection at East Santa Barbara Street, according to Cordero.

"The three occupants were not compliant" and refused to exit the vehicle, leading, to a "high-risk felony stop" involving

numerous police vehicles and a K-9 unit, Cordero said.

Under orders from officers who had their service weapons drawn, the three finally exited the vehicle.

"The two passengers were initially arrested" for suspicion of being under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. Cordero said that after an investigation, the two — both residents of Santa Paula — were released.

The driver, Andrew Hernandez, 20, also of Santa Paula, was arrested on suspicion of hit-and-run, reckless driving, driving under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol and assault with a deadly weapon, the latter charge stemming from allegedly trying to hit the initial reporting party with the vehicle.

Hernandez was taken to Santa Paula Hospital for blood work and charged.

"There were no injuries to anybody involved, which is very fortunate. They all were pretty intoxicated and hit four parked cars along the way," said Cordero. "I guess they thought it was funny."

Hernandez, he added, has had contact with police in the past for minor infractions.



Photo by the Ventura County Fire Department

Santa Paula-based Engine 26-A unit members are congratulated by Ventura County Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen (left) as the Engine Company of the Year at the 24th annual Ventura County Fire Department Awards. Shown are (from left) Capt. Brian Belitski, Engineer Alex Garcia, Firefighter Ian Hayward, Firefighter Paramedic Marcin Skowronski, and Firefighter Paramedic Kyle Lundgren. In the background (from left) are Assemblywoman Monique Limon, Supervisor Kelly Long, Supervisor Bob Huber, Supervisor Linda Parks, and Supervisor John Zaragoza.

## Santa Paula-based VCFD Engine 26-A recognized as Engine Company of the Year

**By Peggy Kelly**  
*Santa Paula Times*

Santa Paula-based Engine 26-A was recognized as Engine Company of the Year at the 24th annual Ventura County Fire Department Awards Ceremony.

Supervisor Kelly Long was the featured speaker at the event, noting the ongoing contributions of the Ventura County Fire Department to community safety, a theme continued in remarks by Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen.

The Ventura County Fire Pipes & Drums led off the program held Feb. 27 in Camarillo that featured Division Chief Gary Monday as master of ceremonies.

Engine 26-A's crew of Capt. Brian Belitski, Engineer Alex Garcia, firefighter Ian Hayward, firefighter paramedic Kyle Lundgren, and firefighter paramedic Marcin Skowronski were lauded for their leadership skills.

According to Battalion Chief Todd Leake, "The crew from FS-26 'A' took responsibility to update and change the programs with the annexation of Santa Paula City Fire into the Ventura County Fire District.

It was a large undertaking that included updating of the complete hydrant manual to include hydrant locations on Mobile Data Communications and reflective markers; adding all tactical pages; implemented the Fire Department's Fire Hazard Reduction

Program within the city of Santa Paula working with city officials describing the intent and implementation process; the Fire Department Knox Box key exchange and updating the location of addresses; working with other shifts, facilities, supply and other department bureaus to place new the new fire shift FS26 in service.

In addition, the crew worked with the Santa Paula Police Department, Santa Paula Public Works and the Santa Paula Water District to establish and maintain a professional and respectful business partnership, and continued participation in educational programs at UCLA.

Capt. Belitski started his career with the county Fire Department as a firefighter in 2004, promoted to fire captain in 2015; he earned a bachelor's degree in communications from Chico State. Belitski has been awarded Firefighter of the Year and a Meritorious Service Award. His family includes wife Stephanie, and children Taylor and Cody.

Alex Garcia began his career with the Fire Department as a fire cadet in 2002 and was hired as firefighter in 2007, promoted to engineer in 2015.

Garcia is a member of the Rapid Intervention Crew and Public Information Officer cadres. He was selected as Firefighter of the Year in 2017. His family includes his wife Lucy and children Arianna and Julian.

Firefighter Ian Hayward started his fire service career in 2012 as a firefighter for the Oklahoma City Fire Department. Heyward had been from Moorpark and wanted to come back home and he was hired as a county firefighter in 2016.

Hayward is also part of the Ladder and Tactical Emergency Medical Support Cadre and was awarded the Life Saving Award in 2019.

Firefighter Kyle Lundgren started his fire service career in 2017 with the Los Angeles Fire Department and was the hired by the county Fire Department in 2018; he holds a bachelor's degree from Arizona State in exercise wellness.

Lundgren has a twin brother, Kevin, who is also a county firefighter. Lundgren looks forward to coming to work every day because it's a day where you'll learn something new and have the opportunity to help someone in your community. He shares this award with his wife, Kelly, and their son, Levi.

Firefighter Marcin Skowronski started his fire service career as a reserve firefighter with the Culver City Fire Department and was hired as a county firefighter in 2016. He is a firefighter paramedic specialized teacher and was awarded the Life Saving Medal in 2016.

Skowronski's career highlights include fighting both the Thomas and Woolsey fires. He shares this award with his wife, Kimberley.

## Agricultural Commissioner's Office issues advisory for ag workers' protection during COVID-19 crisis

The county of Ventura has issued an advisory for agricultural worker protection to be used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The advisory has been issued in collaboration with the Agricultural Commissioner's Office, County Executive Office, the Farmworker Resource Program, Brokaw Ranch, Farm Bureau of Ventura County, Ventura County Agricultural Association, Reiter Affiliated Companies, Lideres Campesinas en California, and Good Farms.

"Our farmworkers are critical in keeping the system strong and healthy," said Ed Williams, county agricultural commissioner. "This advisory has been issued to help make sure that agricultural workers throughout our county are protected."

"Agriculture is part of Ventura County's critical infrastructure and farmworkers are carrying out essential functions to keep our food supply safe and strong every day, according to a county press release. "Agricul-

ture operations adhere to stringent policies related to worker safety and hygiene and each person in the chain of development, growth and production is vital to this effort."

Williams said: "I want to say how grateful I am to all of the hardworking farmers, farmworkers, pest control workers, fresh food packers and all those who bring high quality food from our fields and ranches to our communities near and far. Our food system is critical to our county and nation's collective health. The advisory provides information for employee hygiene, emphasizing hand washing, staying home when sick and social distancing to avoid the spreading of illness during work activities and breaks.

"The advisory also provides guidance for employers to have soap or disinfectant, potable water and single-use disposable towels available at worksites and throughout facilities. Instruction for routine environmental cleaning in high-traffic areas, training

Among the guidelines, employers are advised to:

- Install hand-washing stations and COVID-19 information posters at farm entrances.
- Extend breaks or lunch if necessary to allow time for hand washing.
- Facilities for hand washing should be within a 5-minute walk and should be checked for cleanliness throughout the workday.
- Let employees know that breaks are paid in addition to piece rate (nonproductive time).
- Reduce meetings and group gathering to essential communication only and limit meetings to 10 or fewer people.

To read the advisory, visit:  
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/Ashley?projector=1>

conditions, navigating services available from public agencies, and leveraging existing resources. The program is staffed by two trilingual employees who are knowledgeable about the agricultural industry and serve as outreach resources to farmworkers and their employers.

The partnerships developed through this program have been helpful in the COVID-19 response and outreach, according to the press release. Educational outreach materials have been provided with Farmworker paychecks, information has been provided through WhatsApp, which helps community members who do not read or write. Videos have been created in multiple languages and new platforms have been developed on social media to share the message.

Through effective outreach activities, the Farmworker Resource Program has established partnerships between healthcare, education, human services and many other agencies that serve

the agricultural community. "Building trust and relationships with farmworkers, employers, farmers, and advocates has allowed this program to be very successful in assisting with resolutions for workplace issues while also providing information when it is needed most for basic needs," said Program Coordinator Israel Vazquez-Nicolas. "These partnerships have been so helpful during this time of emergency. We are working together to help support people when they need it most."

For additional information about the Farmworker Resource Program, call 805-385-1899, email HSA-AGFRP@ventura.org or visit [www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/farmworker-resources/](http://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/farmworker-resources/).

For more information about the Agricultural Worker Protection Advisory, contact the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at 805-388-4222, or online at <https://www.ventura.org/agricultural-commissioner/>.

and limiting nonessential visits and travel are included in the advisory.

"Our farmworkers are essential to providing food," said Talia Barrera, county of Ventura Farmworker Resource Program manager. "During this time, we have been working to provide more than 43,000 farmworkers with important information so they are informed about the

situation and where they can get needed resources. This outreach is important during this time and has been very important throughout the year in meeting the needs of this important population."

The Farmworker Resource Program coordinators assist in facilitating prompt resolutions to workplace concerns such as payroll issues and working