

# Washington State Patrol

*Chief John R. Batiste*

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## Annual Report

2007

# Washington State Patrol

*Chief John R. Batiste*

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## Executive Summary

In 2003, the “El Protector” program was developed to address the increasing concern of Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers being over-represented in fatal and felony collisions in the Mid-Columbia Valley region located in the southeastern portion of Washington State. The idea for the program came from the highly successful California Highway Patrol’s program with the same name. The program places special emphasis on people with limited English speaking abilities. In addition, this bilingual/bicultural program provides public education through dialogue with the Hispanic/Latino community, instead of focusing specifically on enforcement measures.

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

In response to the results of this meeting, the WSP listened to the community by developing a citizen’s advisory board and by creating an “El Protector” position to work full-time 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. Retired Trooper Rey Gomez was selected as Washington’s first El Protector to work directly with the Hispanic/Latino community in June of 2003.



**John R. Batiste**  
Chief



**Les Young**  
Assistant Chief  
Field Operations Bureau



**Shawn E. Berry**  
Captain- District 3  
Field Operations Bureau

Significant accomplishments for that year included: Advisory board selections, the designation of Trooper Rey Gomez as the first El Protector, establishment of law enforcement partnerships, official program kick-off, community events, working in the fields, web-site development, program flyer development, bilingual coloring book development, becoming members of the Tri-City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and working with the Spanish-speaking media as well as the English-speaking media.

In addition to the accomplishments, the program has decreased or maintained the number of traffic-related deaths involving Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers in 2007 compared to our baseline data in 2002. Since the program started in 2003, it has made a significant impact on traffic-related deaths compared to 2002 especially during the harvest season in the Mid-Columbia Valley. In combination with the dedicated enforcement effort by the troopers in both the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla, the results continue to remain positive.

## **El Protector**

In my 10 year tenure with the Washington State Patrol, I have worked with our community stakeholders and community leaders to address the immediate concern of traffic safety. I am very proud of the accomplishments and support that the El Protector Program has received since its inception in 2003. We look forward to future success into 2008 and, with the help of stakeholders and allied law enforcement agencies, the El Protector Program will continue to expand and improve.

The most important and significant accomplishment was the reduction of traffic-related deaths involving Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers. The El Protector Hispanic/Latino outreach program was developed to reach that segment of our community who may have limited access to traffic safety information. It continues to make an extreme impact in our communities by reducing the number of fatalities, along with having a better understanding of our laws in the State of Washington. The majority of people who listen to a presentation acknowledge the importance of this program and appreciate the effort made to bring them this very important traffic safety information that they would not receive otherwise.

We are extremely proud of the collaborative effort this program has enjoyed. Without the work of all of our stakeholders, we would not have been as successful. We continued to face many new challenges and overcame social barriers to gain the trust in our community to make this program work. In 2007, we continued the expansion of the El Protector program to include the Yakima Valley and encountered the same barriers. With the help of our partners, we were able to overcome those barriers and were able to make this program successful throughout the entire district and region.



**Trooper Oscar Garcia**  
El Protector

In 2007, we delivered **23** traffic safety presentations in the Yakima Valley, **79** traffic safety presentations in the Tri-Cities, and **19** presentations in Walla Walla County. In 2007, the El Protector program was responsible for giving a total of **121** traffic safety presentations to the communities in District 3. This 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 Involved Fatality Collisions	DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Hispanic DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Total # Felony Collisions	Total # Hispanic Felony Collisions	Fatality Collisions Without Seatbelts	Total # of Deaths
<b>2002</b>	20	14	12	9	4	4	11	26
<b>2003</b>	12	7	5	2	0	0	3	12
<b>2004</b>	14	8	9	4	4	1	0	14
<b>2005</b>	8	5	2-drugs	2-drugs	0	0	2	9
<b>2006</b>	14	3	6	2	1	0	7	15
<b>2007</b>	19	5	9	2	2	0	9	23

In 2002, Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers were involved in a majority of all fatality collisions within the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla regions. In addition, Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers accounted for 9 (or 75%) of the 12 DUI related fatality collisions in the region, as well as all of the 9 felony collisions in the region. The data below demonstrates the success of the program:

There were a total of 19 fatality collisions within the region during 2007. The Tri-Cities and Walla Walla regions experienced a 35% increase in fatality collisions compared to the previous year. Of the 19 fatality collisions, 9 of them (or 47%) involved a driver who was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. Only 2 (or 11%) of the 19 fatality collisions involved a Hispanic/Latino surnamed driver who was under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. For the third consecutive year, there were zero felony collisions involving Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers within the region.

Although the region experienced a significant increase in total fatality collisions in 2007, Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers were not over-represented according to census data. Currently, the region's population base is estimated to be approximately 35% Hispanic. In 2007, the Hispanic/Latino drivers were involved in only 5 (or 26%) of the 19 fatality collisions within the region.

The data shown in the matrix above demonstrates that fatality collisions have been increasing in the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla regions since 2005. It is important to note that the number of Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers involved in fatality and felony collisions continues to remain lower than their population levels within the region.

The harvest season in the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla region begins in August and concludes in 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 during this critical time of the year, and the success of that strategy is demonstrated below. The following data represents the number of fatality collisions that occurred within the region during the harvest season:

- 2002- 11 fatality collisions
- 2003- 0 fatality collisions
- 2004- 3 fatality collisions
- 2005- 2 fatality collisions
- 2006- 1 fatality collision
- 2007- 4 fatality collisions

In 2007, two of the four fatality collisions during the harvest season involved drivers who were under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs. The remaining two fatality collisions did not involve alcohol and/or drug impairment but did involve commercial motor vehicles associated with the transportation of farming produce.

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

Year	Total # Fatality Collisions	Total # Hispanic Involved Fatality Collisions	DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Hispanic DUI Involved Fatality Collisions	Total # Felony Collisions	Total # Hispanic Felony Collisions	Fatality Collisions Without Seatbelts	Total # of Deaths
<b>2002</b>	30	Unknown	10	Unknown	6	Unknown	14	31
<b>2003</b>	23	Unknown	9	Unknown	0	Unknown	Unknown	24
<b>2004</b>	24	Unknown	11	Unknown	4	Unknown	Unknown	31
<b>2005</b>	42	16	27	9	12	3	23	46
<b>2006</b>	35	16	19	8	8	3	13	38
<b>2007</b>	38	9	15	6	7	4	19	39

In 2005, the El Protector program began to track the ethnic groups involved in fatality collisions in the Yakima Valley. The analysis is represented in the matrix shown above.

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 three years to help the law enforcement agencies and community groups address this problem.

In 2006, there were a total of 35 fatality collisions in the Yakima Valley. Of those 35 fatality collisions, 16 (or 48%) of them involved Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers. Of the 35 fatality collisions, 19 of them were caused by alcohol and/or drug impaired drivers. Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers accounted for 8 (or 42%) of the 19 alcohol and/or drug impaired fatality collisions. We also discovered that 13 of the fatally injured drivers were not wearing seatbelts at the time of the collision.

In 2007, there were a total of 38 fatality collisions in the Yakima Valley. Of those 38 fatality collisions, 9 (or 24%) of them involved Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers. Of the 38 fatality collisions, 15 of them were caused by alcohol and/or drug impaired drivers. Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers accounted for 6 (or 40%) of the alcohol and/or drug impaired fatality collisions. Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers also accounted for 4 (or 57%) of the 7 felony collisions within the region. There were 19 drivers and occupants who were fatality injured while not wearing seatbelts at the time of the collision.

The primary causes of fatality collisions within the Yakima Valley continue to be impaired driving (DUI) and failure to wear seat belts. We will be focusing our educational efforts and community outreach presentations on these two life-saving topics throughout 2008.

In 2007, 19 (or 50%) of the 38 fatality collisions within the Yakima Valley occurred on county roadways and not on the State Route or Interstate systems. We will attempt to improve our partnerships with the local city and county law enforcement agencies within the region. It is important that the El Protector program expand its education and enforcement resources to all areas of the Yakima Valley as it had done within the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla regions. We have already expanded the number of community outreach and educational activities in 2007 and are looking for new partners to join the El Protector program as we move forward into 2008.

The number of fatality collisions in the Yakima Valley has been steadily increasing over the last several years, however, the number of fatality collisions involving Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers has been decreasing. The El Protector program has been used as a model in attempting to address the problem of fatality collisions involving Hispanic/Latino surnamed drivers in this area.

In 2007, the El Protector program continued its expansion to address traffic safety concerns in the Yakima Valley. We were able to accomplish our 2007 goals with the addition of Trooper Sergio Cervantes. Trooper Cervantes speaks fluent Spanish and was assigned to the Sunnyside detachment effective July of 2007. The addition of Trooper Cervantes to District 3 allowed us to expand our traffic safety message to more members of our communities through more presentations and opening the doors to a new audience that we had yet to reach.

The El Protector program was responsible for 25 traffic safety presentations in the Yakima Valley and began to establish contacts with local community groups, businesses, and law enforcement groups throughout 2007.

## Community Outreach and Education

The El Protector Advisory Committee (EPAC), and the El Protector Law Enforcement Advisory Committee (LEAC), which is comprised mostly of Hispanic police officers' from local agencies, works collectively under the umbrella of the El Protector. Members of the LEAC were present at many Hispanic/Latino events and fiestas, and were able to break down barriers that existed through contact and dialogue. Another method used to reach the Hispanic/Latino community was to go out to the fruit orchards, warehouses and fields. Each day during apple harvest, an El Protector LEAC member addressed a group of 50-80 individuals and discussed traffic safety issues during their break periods. We found that these workers wanted the information and the opportunity to speak to a police officer where normally they would not have had that opportunity. As a result, they better understand our objectives as police officers and our concerns for public safety for everyone. Most of the people that we speak with 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. It also allows them the opportunity to ask questions and clarify laws that they do not fully understand.



Trooper Cervantes at the Yakima Valley Convention Center

In 2007, we delivered **23** traffic safety presentations in the Yakima Valley, **79** traffic safety presentations in the Tri-Cities, and **19** presentations in Walla Walla County. In 2007, the El Protector program was responsible for giving a total of **121** traffic safety presentations to the communities in District 3. This would not have been possible without the great support of our stakeholders and law enforcement partners.

We were invited to have a booth at the agriculture expo in the Yakima Valley Convention Center. There were approximately 475 people from eastern and western Washington in attendance. Our El Protector booth was a huge success, and we were able to reach out to the Hispanic/Latino community and educate them on the dangers involved with drinking and driving and the importance of using safety restraints. The photograph above shows Trooper Cervantes educating a group of people about the dangers of drinking and driving through the use of "Fatal Vision" DUI simulator goggles.

The El Protector program has developed strong ties with local businesses, media groups and local government agencies. The media groups such as the Tri-City Herald, Tu Decides, La Voz, Viva and El Sol de Yakima newspapers have been instrumental in delivering the traffic safety message to the community. The Tri-Cities also has a strong Spanish radio network with five FM stations and two AM stations that cover Yakima, Tri-Cities, Walla Walla and the Moses Lake/Quincy area. Recorded and live PSAs make it possible for the El Protector program to reach thousands of listeners at work, home and in their cars. We currently have developed six commercials, with the help of our media relation group, which air on three Spanish television channels. The commercials consist of the introduction to the El Protector program, child seat safety, the importance of using seat belts, and the dangers associated with driving under the influence. All of these commercials and public service announcements are developed in both English and Spanish.

Television media groups such as Univision, Hispanivision and Telemundo are very interested in airing more of these traffic safety messages in Spanish. This program is also facilitating a weekly column in the Spanish newspapers, La Voz and El Sol de Yakima, where safety messages, issues, and concerns are being addressed.



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.

We continue to look for opportunities to build partnerships with new businesses and media outlets and to develop creative methods to spread our traffic safety messages to the Hispanic/Latino communities.

Along with our weekly column in the Spanish newspapers we have been able to place a rolling advertisement on a Central Pre-Mix concrete truck in the Yakima Valley. With the support of Central Pre-Mix, they will place a total of four trucks from Yakima, Toppenish, Sunnyside and the Tri-Cities displaying the safety message..... DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!



## Recruiting

The El Protector program provided assistance to the WSP Human Resource Division with recruiting efforts in diversification by attending career fair events and testing applicants. It is important that we strive to recruit more Spanish-speaking community members into the field of law enforcement. Having more Spanish-speaking officers will allow the program to grow and allow us to dissolve the cultural barriers between the Hispanic/Latino community and law enforcement. The El Protector program has transformed a trailer into a tool that can be used to educate the public about traffic safety issues and aid in recruiting local Spanish-speaking officers into the field of law enforcement.



## RECRUITMENT TRAILER



**SIDEWALK**



**TRAFFIC**



**FRONT**



**BACK  
(inside door)**

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.

The El Protector program continues to be recognized statewide for its achievements in reaching the Hispanic community and educating them about traffic safety concerns. The El Protector program has received phone calls from Hispanic individuals in Seattle, Mount Vernon, and Brewster inquiring about the program and asking how to apply to become a State Trooper.

### **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.

**Mrs. Maria Stidham**- Mrs. Stidham works for Pasco Police Department as a Crime Prevention Specialist. She is Washington State Regional Director for the Crime

Preventions Association. She is fluent in Spanish and works with the community neighborhood watch and business watch, crime-free multi-housing, runs volunteer programs, and is an adviser for their Explorer program.

**Law Enforcement Partners:**

Chief Dennis Austin – Pasco Police Department  
Sheriff Larry Taylor – Benton County Sheriff’s Office  
Sheriff Michael Humphreys- Walla Walla Sheriff’s Office  
Sheriff Richard Lathim – Franklin County Sheriff’s Office  
Under Sheriff Kevin Carle – Franklin County Sheriff’s Office  
Captain Ken Roske – Pasco Police Department  
Captain Gary Bainter – Walla Walla Police Department  
Captain Bill White – Walla Walla County Sheriff’s Office  
Sergeant Ron Sabin – Benton County Sheriff’s Office  
Officer Rigo Pruneda – Pasco Police Department  
Officer AC Castillo – Walla Walla Police Department  
Deputy Abel Campos – Benton County Sheriff’s Office  
Deputy Jason Nunez – Franklin County Sheriff’s Office  
Ms. Nancy Walters – WTSC Regional Coordinator, Walla Walla  
Ms. Lynda Lou West – WTSC Regional Coordinator, Tri-Cities

## **2007 Mission, Goals, and Action Plans**

### *Mission*

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

### *Goals*

1. Reduce the number of fatality collisions involving Hispanic/Latino drivers/occupants.
2. Reduce the number of felony collisions involving Hispanic/Latino drivers/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 and create a good rapport and break down barriers within the Hispanic/Latino community. Provide them a better understanding about law enforcement in the State of Washington.

### *Action Plan*

1. Create a standardized training program in the Field Operations Bureau (FOB) core mission of Traffic Law Enforcement. The focus will be creating a Spanish presentation on the following topics: DUI, Occupant Restraints, Speeding, and 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.

### *Barriers to Entry*

- Skepticism that a state governmental agency can bring together all of the necessary resources in a community to address this issue.
- Long term financial commitment to a sustained effort.
- The common fear of law enforcement.
- Lack of commitment from stakeholders.
- Continual population fluctuation and migration in the Hispanic/Latino community.
- Language, social, and cultural differences.

## Benton/Franklin County Fair



The goals and objectives listed above were all accomplished with the assistance of many different people in our community. The El Protector program is proud to present the following significant accomplishments:

- Attended many community events and fairs and provided traffic safety information
- Made contacts and built relationships with key community members
- Members of the Tri-City Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Created numerous public service announcements while working with the WSP Office of Government and Media Relations, Univision, Hispanivision, Telemundo Television, Radio KZHR, La Voz, and Viva Hispanic newspaper.
- Partnered with the Washington Traffic Safety Commission to provide educational guidance in the development of informational pamphlets
- Established relationships with Mr. Gabriel Portugal, a member of the Governor's Commission for Hispanic Affairs.
- Attended many local meetings with members of the local Hispanic/Latino community
- Worked with local business owners, including Broetje Orchards, Borton Fruit, and Monson's Fruit Company to provide traffic safety education presentations to their employees.
- Established and maintained strong relationships with local law enforcement agencies and included them in the decision making and goal setting processes.

We overcame all of the barriers that were outlined prior to 2007 because of our unwavering commitment to working with our community and allowing Trooper Garcia to form relationships built around trust. In addition, we attended every event we were asked to participate in and provided material in Spanish that we created to open up positive dialogue.

## Goals for 2007

The “El Protector” program in District Three will continue to work with community stakeholders to collaborate in the execution of our educational outreach program for the Hispanic/Latino community. We will continue the program into the Yakima Valley area with the help of Trooper Cervantes and local law enforcement officers. The program will focus its efforts on education about the topics of driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, occupant restraint protection, dangerous speeding and aggressive driving as they relate to fatality, felony and injury collisions.

1. Provide training and information on traffic safety issues affecting the Hispanic/Latino community in District Three.
  - A. *Program introduction and training to area groups and businesses*
    1. Develop program flyer
    2. Correspondence with key stakeholders
    3. Follow-up calls to larger groups and businesses
    4. Develop training aids and static displays
  - B. *Attend major community events*
    1. Cinco de Mayo
    2. 16<sup>th</sup> of September
  - C. *Post collision follow-up with family friends, and co-workers of collision victims*
  - D. *Cultural awareness classes in partnership with the District Court*
    1. 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 LaVoz and El Sol de Yakima Hispanic newspapers*
  - B. *Weekly on-air talk shows with the major radio stations*
  - C. *Development of television public service announcements*
    1. Hispanivision/Univision/WSP
  - D. *Work together with Central Pre-Mix Concrete company on advertisement on mixer trucks in District Three.*
3. Program internal communication
  - A. *Monthly/Quarterly SAF in Yakima for District Command and Supervisors*
  - B. *Squad room bulletin board – El Protector section*
  - C. *Attend Trooper meetings*

- D. Maintain and update web-page*
  - E. Year-end report to stakeholders*
  - F. Continue the program throughout the district and surrounding districts.*
4. Recruiting to build a diverse foundation for the WSP
- A. Partner with Human Resources Division*
    - 1. Recruiting purposes
    - 2. Testing of local applicants



We would like to thank all of our stakeholders for the unwavering support of the El Protector program, and we look forward to many successful years ahead. We are committed to “making a difference everyday” 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.