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True Grit: Traffic reporters, from left, Doug Dunlap, CHP Officer Miguel Luevano, Sabina Mora, 'Commander' Chuck Street and Tommy Jaxson. (Not pictured: Rick Dickert) *Photo by Juan Ocampo*

Southland Transit Agencies Honor Traffic News Reporters

- 12th Annual Golden Pylon Awards spotlight true-grit traffic reporters whose on-air traffic talk keeps rush-hour commuters in the know.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Oct. 2, 2008) Southland transit agencies handed out coveted Golden Pylon Awards to the region's top traffic reporters at an awards luncheon Wednesday, honoring the true-grit reporters whose on-air traffic talk keeps the region's traffic moving by promoting rideshare options such as carpool lanes, vanpools and public transportation.

Illuminating a stellar effort in unraveling the region's huge traffic knot, gleaming Lucite trophies inscribed with a traffic cone pylon went to five reporters who report on the daily traffic grind for numerous broadcast outlets. And, the winners are:

- Rick Dickert, a meteorologist who reports the weather, traffic and breaking news from SkyFox helicopter on FOX 11 Morning News and Good Day L.A.
- 'Commander' Chuck Street, a popular air traffic reporter, helps Southern California motorists navigate their way through the clogged freeways of L.A., Orange, and San Diego counties on KIIS FM

- Sabina Mora, on-air television personality, radio reporter and news producer who broadcasts on KABC-7, KAVL, MyFM, KDB, KFI, KGGI, KIXW, KTDD and KSTT
- Doug Dunlap, longtime traffic reporter, currently broadcasts on KABC and KFWB and monitors and reports on traffic conditions from the L.A. Dodgers Transportation Center
- Tommy Jaxson, a familiar Southland radio personality for some 16 years, gives a bird's eye view of the region's freeways on KNX 1070
- California Highway Patrol Officer Miguel Luevano, who reports traffic conditions on FOX 11 Morning News, Univision 34 morning news, Primera Edicion of Univision 34, 6 p.m., and on radio stations KWRM Radio Mexico mornings; KFRN 1280 Family Radio, La Poderosa 1550 and on the Internet Real Time Traffic internet show on Myfoxla.com for Fox network.

The Awards ceremony is sponsored by five regional transit agencies: Metro in Los Angeles County, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission, San Bernardino Associated Governments and Ventura County Transportation Commission.

The Golden Pylon Awards is a traditional prelude to Rideshare Week – Oct. 6-10 – a statewide campaign to encourage thousands of commuters to 'share the ride' to help reduce traffic and smog. Currently 77 percent of commuters drive alone to work, and traffic congestion increases by 3 percent each year.

The awards underscore the Texas Transportation Institute's Annual Urban Mobility Report, which noted in 2007 that traffic congestion continues to plague American cities of all sizes, creating a \$78 billion annual drain on the U.S. economy in the form of 4.2 billion lost hours and 2.9 billion gallons of wasted fuel.

Citing 2005 statistics, the report noted public transportation saved 541 million hours in travel time in the 437 urban areas studied in 2005. Without public transportation, fuel usage would have been 340 million gallons greater and congestion costs would have been \$10.2 billion more in that year.