



Oakland Police Department

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

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# Oakland Police Department's "Operation Clean Sweep" A Success

(Oakland, CA) On Wednesday, February 11, 2004 the Oakland Police Department (OPD) will conclude a five-day tow sweep, "Operation Clean Sweep", that was conducted throughout the City of Oakland. A press conference will take place at A & B Auto Inc., at 1:00 p.m., to announce its successful conclusion. Those in attendance will include: Councilmember Desley Brooks, Oakland Police Deputy Chief Peter Dunbar, Oakland Police Lieutenant Dave Kozicki and various other Oakland Police Department staff. Visual opportunities will include several abandoned autos, tow trucks and the A & B Auto Inc. tow yard.

Operation Clean Sweep was developed at the request of Councilmember Desley Brooks after she noticed increasing numbers of abandoned autos in her Council District and received increasing constituent complaints. Lt. Dave Kozicki, Commander of the Oakland Police Department Traffic Section states, "The City has long been plagued by abandoned autos. Some have speculated that Oakland is a 'dumping ground' for abandoned cars. Numerous parking violations and registration 'scofflaws' go unchecked. Abandoned cars are frequently the 'attractive nuisance' used to further other criminal activity including: a hiding place for drugs and weapons, prostitution activity, usage as 'shooting galleries' and storage of hazardous materials and other garbage. They are unsightly and contribute to an overall issue of blight in the City." In some cases the leaking fluids pollute local streams and the Bay.

Clean Sweep was developed to target not only abandoned cars, but also people who have not registered their vehicles in over six months or have more than five unpaid parking citations. In the first three days of the operation, with the cooperation of A&B Auto Inc. (the City of Oakland tow contractor), over 600 vehicles were taken off the streets. Two hundred of the cars were removed from Councilmember Brooks' district. These tows account for over \$150,000.00 in parking violations alone that will likely be repaid to the City of Oakland. Many of the cars were also cited under a new City of Oakland ordinance that will require the owner to pay a \$250.00 fine for abandoning the car. This fine attaches to any new vehicle the owner attempts to register.

The cost of the operation was funded by the State of California Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program, which is funded by vehicle registration fees. This year, the efforts of the OPD Traffic Section's Vehicle Enforcement Unit were hampered by a 50% reduction in staff due to budget cuts. Last year, the Unit towed almost 11,000 vehicles from City streets and private property.

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