



DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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**OHMVR COMMISSION MEETING
Palmdale, CA 93551**

March 1, 2019

STAFF REPORT: Law Enforcement/Public Safety
STAFF: Steve Schory, Law Enforcement Superintendent II
SUBJECT: King of the Hammers 2019 Report

Summary

The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division Law Enforcement Section, along with assistance from State Park Peace Officers from across the State, recently assisted the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and multiple other allied agencies with the annual King of the Hammers race event.

Allied agencies involved with this event include BLM, the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twentynine Palms, San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office (SBSO), San Bernardino County Fire (SBCF), and California Highway Patrol (CHP).

The unified command of the agencies is responsible for the safety and security of the participants and spectators attending this one-of-a-kind event. Each agency has a particular specialty during this event, with State Parks' contribution being that of a highly mobile law enforcement unit due to the special skills and equipment of off-highway vehicle (OHV) qualified officers.

The results of this specialization can be seen in the overall safety and minimal number of incursions reported during this event. The reported incursions onto the race course and the restricted Marine Corps base was at an all-time low.

Discussion

Background

The King of the Hammers event was first held in 2007 and has seen continued growth over the ensuing years. This event attracts over 60,000 spectators and hundreds of competitors racing over extremely challenging terrain in several race events that are spread out over a week-long period. The race course sprawls across the floor of the Johnson Valley, on lands administered by both the BLM and the MCAGCC. The support of State Parks that started as supplemental law enforcement staffing to BLM has, over

the years, evolved into a specialized focus. This focus centers on ensuring the safety of race participants and spectators through the use of skilled OHV Officers operating in the more rugged terrain that makes up a major portion of the race course. This support is a natural extension of the OHMVR Division's mission to provide quality OHV recreation opportunities through the coordinated efforts of education, conservation, and enforcement.

Participating Agencies

BLM is the lead agency for this event, working closely with race promoter Dave Cole's staff at Hammerking Productions for the overall safe operation of the races while ensuring adequate resource protection and acting as the primary law enforcement agency. BLM works closely with MCAGCC staff to ensure that no one strays into restricted areas of the Marine Corps base where unexploded ordinance can prove to be a tremendous hazard. Since Johnson Valley lies within San Bernardino County, the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Office has responsibility for crimes against persons or property that may occur during the event. Similarly, San Bernardino County Fire is the agency with primary responsibility to respond to requests for medical service. And finally, CHP assists with traffic control and is the agency with primary responsibility for investigating any vehicle accidents that may occur.

Focus of Deployment

The emphasis for State Park officers for this year's event was that of race course and boundary patrol for the MCAGCC. This was made more challenging because live fire exercises in the MCAGCC were active during certain times of the week. These patrols were carried out by 20 State Park Peace Officers from more than 14 park units across the State. Patrols were conducted using off-highway motorcycles, recreational off-highway vehicles (ROVs), and off-road capable law enforcement patrol vehicles. In addition, the OHMVR Division Education and Outreach staff teamed up with the BLM and U.S. Marine Corps to educate the public about the desert environment and provide information on safety and OHV areas in Johnson Valley.

Results

During the patrols, officers made over 300 contacts to keep spectators off the race course and out of Marine Corps restricted areas. Additionally, approximately 250 contacts were made by officers addressing issues ranging from alcohol, vehicle equipment and safety violations, to accidents, medical aids, and requests for assistance or information.

Commission Action

For information only.

Attachments

None