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Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Date: April 24, 2013
Vallejo, California

VALLEJO HIGH SCHOOL WILL HOST A REAL DUI TRIAL

Vallejo, California – On April 25, 2013, Solano County Superior Court Commissioner William J. Pendergast, will hold a Driving Under the Influence (DUI) trial before approximately 360 students at Vallejo High School, 840 Nebraska Street, Vallejo California from 8:15 AM to 12:15 PM.

This is not a mock court, but rather an actual criminal trial. Conducting a real DUI trial in a high school setting is an innovative strategy to help reduce community alcohol problems, including motor vehicle crashes. Students will witness the legal consequences of drinking and driving, and learn about the defendant's arrest, jailing, public trial and, if convicted, the imposed fines and penalties. They will also have an opportunity to learn more about the judicial branch of government.

Following the trial, Commissioner Pendergast will make a brief presentation and co-facilitate an interactive civics lesson. The intent is to allow for significant dialogue among the students, defendant, judge, attorneys, witnesses, law enforcement officers, teachers, and special guests.

"It is extremely difficult for many young people to fully appreciate and understand the potential tragic results of drinking and driving. This program is intended to heighten their awareness and hopefully influence their conduct, said Presiding Judge Paul L. Beeman."

Drinking and driving continues to be the leading cause of collisions resulting in injury or death. Statistics show that three out of ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related motor vehicle crash at some point in their lives. Furthermore, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for 15-19 year olds - with the primary collision factor being alcohol.

Judges struggle in their courtrooms daily with individual and community problems created by DUI offenders. Many judges are looking for innovative ways to help reduce alcohol-related problems. This prevention program is designed to help students make more informed choices for resisting enticement from the alcohol industry, the media and social pressures to drink.

Vallejo High School is one of several high schools in Solano County that will have the rare opportunity to witness an actual DUI trial during this school year. The DUI Court in the Schools Program is a cooperative effort involving the Superior Court, District Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Sheriff's Office, County Probation Department, and participating school districts in Solano County. The Program is funded through a grant from the California Administrative Office of the Courts.