



State of California • Department of Transportation

News Release

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Nine Caltrans Workers Receive Governor's Medal of Valor

Sacramento — The State of California today honored nine Caltrans employees by presenting them with the Governor's State Employee Medal of Valor, the highest honor California bestows on its public servants. The awards are given annually to state employees for acts of heroism to save lives or protect state property.

"We are extremely proud of these nine Caltrans workers who courageously saved others while putting their own lives at risk," Caltrans Director Tony Tavares said. "Today, our entire Caltrans family joins Governor Newsom in honoring them and thanking them for their selfless acts."

Receiving the Gold Medal of Valor is:

- **Geoff Clute**, District 4 Bridge Maintenance Supervisor, for saving a man trapped inside a burning vehicle in Solano County on July 7, 2023.

Receiving the Silver Medal of Valor are:

- **Sultan Abassy**, District 12 Transportation Engineering Technician, for heroism during a dangerous rescue to save an unconscious motorcyclist after his bike skidded sideways in Orange County on July 20, 2023.
- **Danny Dube**, District 2 Electrician, for saving a woman from her damaged vehicle that had rolled over into the center highway divide on a foggy day in Siskiyou County on Feb. 7, 2023.
- **Kenny Myers, Bruce Perry and Darrell Van Natta**, District 3 Equipment Operators, for rescuing a driver and five passengers who were trapped in their burning vehicle in the Sierra Nevada on Dec. 28, 2022.
- **Michael Butner and Gonzalo Garcia**, District 1 Tree Maintenance Workers, for rescuing a couple after their RV became trapped in heavy snow and low hanging trees in Mendocino County on Feb. 23, 2023. The trees crashed through the RV and split it in half.

- **DavidRay Sumaya**, District 7 Electrician, for rescuing two travelers that became trapped in their vehicle by flood waters on Interstate 5 during winter storms in Los Angeles County on Feb. 23, 2023.



Caltrans Director Tony Tavares and Chief Deputy Director Mike Keever with the Department's 2024 Governor's State Employee Medal of Valor Awardees (Pictured from left to right: Director Tavares, Darrell VanNatta, Bruce Perry, Kenneth Myers, Sultan Abassy, DavidRay Sumaya, Geoff Clute and Deputy Director Keever. Awardees not pictured: Danny Dube, Michael Butner and Gonzalo Garcia.)

The State Employee Medal of Valor award was first presented by Governor Edmund G. Brown Sr. in 1959. Gold medals are awarded to state employees who perform extraordinary acts of heroism at great risk to their own life to save another human being. Silver medals are presented to those whose act of heroism extended above and beyond the normal call of duty at personal risk to their safety to save human life or state property.

In the 65 years of these awards, more than 800 state employees, including 125 from Caltrans, have earned medals of valor for their courage and selflessness in the face of danger.

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