
Partnership Request: Community Bike & Traffic Safety Education Event — City Hall, May 17, 2026

From Torie Cortez <torie.cortez@dismalfreedompress.org>

Date Wed 4/1/2026 2:09 PM

To LPD_Citizens_Dist_Group <lpolice@ci.lathrop.ca.us>

Cc Dismal Freedom Press <newsroom@dismalfreedompress.org>

Dear Chief Sealy,

My name is Torie Cortez. I am the publisher and managing editor of Dismal Freedom Press, an independent investigative newsroom covering education, civil rights, and community issues across California's Central Valley, and a Lathrop-area parent.

I am reaching out at the recommendation of Todd Sebastian, Director of Parks, Recreation & Maintenance Services, who indicated that the Lathrop Police Department is the appropriate point of contact for bike and traffic safety education initiatives.

I have submitted a formal request to Mayor Paul Akinjo and the full City Council, dated March 23, 2026, to host a free community Bike and Traffic Safety Education Event at the City Hall parking lot on Saturday, May 17, 2026, during National Bicycle Safety Month.

WHY THIS EVENT MATTERS

This event was prompted by a documented safety crisis on Lathrop streets. My family has been nearly struck by vehicles four times while biking this spring. Within the last 30 days, my daughter was nearly hit by a distracted driver who failed to yield at a school driveway during after-school hours. These are not isolated incidents — they reflect a community-wide gap in knowledge of California's basic traffic laws.

Under California law, drivers must yield to cyclists at driveways (CVC § 21804). Cyclists have the same right to the road as any motor vehicle (CVC § 21200). Distracted driving is a criminal infraction. Too few Lathrop residents — drivers and cyclists alike — know this.

PROPOSED EVENT

A free, half-day family event focused on community law education. Programming includes:

- Driver education on CVC §§ 21804, 21950 (yield laws) and distracted driving
- Cyclist and family education on rights of way, hand signals, and road rules
- Free helmet fittings and safety gear distribution
- A kids' bike skills course in the City Hall parking lot
- Co-presentation by Safe Kids San Joaquin County and the San Joaquin Bike Coalition
- Full editorial coverage by Dismal Freedom Press

PARTNERSHIP REQUEST

We are asking the Lathrop Police Department to:

1. Co-present the event as a named institutional partner
2. Provide community outreach officers for on-site engagement and Q&A
3. Participate in the driver education component with your department's expertise
4. Support event logistics and safety coordination

Chief Sealy, your department's participation would bring the institutional credibility and community trust that makes this event genuinely impactful and positions the Lathrop PD as a visible partner in the safety of our families. The department already has a strong presence in the community. This is an opportunity to reinforce that relationship directly with residents.

Please respond in writing to newsroom@dismalfreedompress.org. I am available to meet at your convenience or to present to your team at a time that works for your department.

Respectfully,

Torie Cortez
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