



## LIGHTS & SIRENS

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Tuesday, June 16, 2009 - Tacoma, WA

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### Lights & Sirens

Go behind the yellow tape with the The News Tribune's Crime & Breaking News Team.

Monday, June 15th, 2009

## UPDATED: Breakdowns mark beginning of third humanitarian mission to Mexico

Posted by **Stacey Mulick** @ 01:23:28 pm



What a surprise ... it's not been a smooth start for a team of South Sound residents who are driving 10 used emergency vehicles to a handful of Mexican towns.

Two vehicles have broken down, hours have been spent in small towns and there was a rain storm in the mountains.

But the good news is, it appears they are planning to cross the border today.

The 22 volunteers pulled out of a Gig Harbor on Saturday morning for the [third "Mission to Mexico" trip](#). Besides the vehicles, which include four patrol cars, a fire truck and

ambulance, they'll be delivering medical supplies, soccer equipment, computers and other emergency services gear.

Pierce County sheriff's spokesman Ed Troyer, and three-time mission volunteer, has been delivering on his promise to [Twitter from the road](#). He's sent 24 dispatches since they headed south. We've requested some photos but haven't gotten any yet. (The photo included here is from the first Mission to Mexico trip.)

It's been a bit of a comical start - at least to us back here at home.

"We are on the freeway heading south after a rough start," states a Twitter message at 9:51 a.m. Saturday. "We are passing through Morton."

It appears the man who spearheaded the humanitarian mission after a trip to his hometown of Ayulta four years ago - Jose Lopez - was having fun.

"Making good time will make up for the late departure jose driving fire truck he's happy as a 5 year old Xmas morning," states a Twitter message at 12:59 p.m. Saturday.

The first break down occurred less than four hours later near Grants Pass. It was the fire truck.

"We are back up and running as a group thanks to a kid at the gas station who helped us after the mechanics failed," states a Twitter message at 6:16 p.m. Saturday.

"Now we need to make up 3 hours on grants pass," states a Twitter message at 6:52 p.m. Saturday, "now should be in california by 7 30 if we get through the rain storm have great photos."

The truck lasted only a couple of hours, then broke down again.

"Bad news fire truck dead again we sent everyone on down south," states a Twitter message at 10:09 p.m. Saturday, "jose hauge phil and i are stuck in a town called weed for the night."

The truck and crew got back on the road an hour later. It appears the driving was smooth.

For awhile.

Sunday morning, the air pump of the ambulance blew up. A crew found the parts to fix it but they were 12 hours behind schedule.

"Good news the other 8 vehicles are a few hours away from tucson and will be ready to go tomorrow for the border," states a Twitter message Sunday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the ambulance was getting fixed.

"Well the mechanic started the ambulance," states a Twitter message about 3 p.m. Sunday, "the problem was he left his tools in the engine compartment a wrench wrapped around the transmission."

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### LIGHTS & SIRENS

This blog provides breaking news, updates on on-going investigations and insights into other news from the Tacoma, Pierce County and South Puget Sound criminal justice community. It also gives The News Tribune an avenue to interact with readers, answer "What was that?" questions and provides a venue for readers to ask about on-going criminal justice issues and problems in their neighborhoods. The blog aims to inform, educate and, at times, entertain with weird or wacky crime news.

#### THE LINEUP

**Stacey Mulick** covers Pierce County crime and safety issues for The News Tribune. She's worked at The News Tribune since May 1998. Contact her at [stacey.mulick@thenewstribune.com](mailto:stacey.mulick@thenewstribune.com).

**Adam Lynn** covers courts as part of the Crime and Breaking News Team at The News Tribune, where he's worked since 2003. Lynn has spent nearly half of his 21-year career chronicling criminal justice matters in Washington and won reporting awards for his coverage of serial killer Robert Yates. "The Corpse Had a Familiar Face" by renowned Miami Herald reporter Edna Buchanan is among his favorite books. You can contact him at [adam.lynn@thenewstribune.com](mailto:adam.lynn@thenewstribune.com).

**Brian Everstine** is a night breaking news and general assignment reporter for The News Tribune. The Spokane native arrived in Tacoma in the summer of 2008 and still is adjusting to life on this side of the mountains. He has written for papers in the Tri-Cities and his hometown. Contact him at [brian.everstine@thenewstribune.com](mailto:brian.everstine@thenewstribune.com).

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- [Seattle Police Department](#)
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"Transmission line and tore it off dumping all the fluid in their parking lot. So here we sit again," another quickly-posted message states.

The ambulance and crew got moving again and made it to Los Angeles on Sunday night.

This morning, they were steaming toward the border.

"We are all up and moving about an hour from border the fire truck is in shop getting fixed right gonzo and phil stayed behind with truck," states a Twitter message at 10 a.m.

"If things work out and we are due for that we will see Phil and Gonzo at the border and be rolling south in Mexico by 1 PM," another message states.

There's been no update since. That could be good news.

Or bad.

**UPDATE:** They've made it to the border. Even the fire truck is there, Troyer Twittered just before 2:30 p.m.

"At the border now we are slowed down due to permits and the large amount of items we have being told that we may hit road at 7 pm," he posted at 2:25 p.m.

He noted the crew is a day behind schedule.

**Categories:** [Mission to Mexico](#) • 5 comments

COMMENTS:

**joyceloveland** @ 14:00 - Monday, June 15th, 2009

Good deeds sometimes take time to achieve but believing in what you're doing and the end results should be able to keep you focused. Good luck and make sure you all get back okay. :)

**Bob** @ 19:05 - Monday, June 15th, 2009

Gig Harbor to Los Angeles by way of Morton and Tucson.

Must be sunspots messing up the gps?

**jmhoward** @ 21:49 - Monday, June 15th, 2009

why not put the taxpayers equipment on a flatbed or train, save the gas and wear and tear on the taxpayers equipment that is being sent to a foreign country free of charge

**lesliekohler** @ 22:37 - Monday, June 15th, 2009

Good luck and keep on trucking. So much attention gets focussed on other parts of the world, we sometimes forget the struggles of our neighbor to the south.

**t1954** @ 07:54 - Tuesday, June 16th, 2009

If these vehicles breakdown all the time...how can the cities these are going to afford to fix them? Will they just end up on blocks and rust away. Sometimes one mans junk is still another mans SAME JUNK.

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