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## **Countywide Bicycle Safety Is Focus of Latest Grand Jury Report**

How safe is riding a bicycle in Ventura County? The inquiring minds of the 2014-2015 Ventura County Grand Jury wanted to know. They investigated the effectiveness of bicycle laws in reducing injuries and deaths, as well as the need to create a safer cycling environment throughout the county.

The grand jury gathered information from the internet, newspapers, magazines and interviews with county and city officials.

Among the grand jury's findings:

- Most bicycle deaths are the result of motor vehicle driver errors.
- There is a need to educate the public as to the bicycle-related laws.
- Adult deaths may be reduced if adults wear helmets.
- In some cities, bicycle advisory commissions/committees working with city councils and transportation agencies, have been able to educate the public and create better cycling conditions, often helping obtain state and federal and other grant monies for those purposes.

(more)

Recommendations resulting from the investigation are:

- that the County Board of Supervisors and all cities within the County encourage their respective law enforcement personnel to increase enforcement of bicycle and related motor vehicle laws;
- that city councils of cities that do not already have a bicycle advisory commission or committee establish one to advise on improving bicycle safety, developing and maintaining bicycle lanes, paths, trails and signage, and encouraging the use of bicycles;
- that the BOS and the city councils continually promote bicycle laws and safety to people of all ages, concentrating on school-age children through events such as bike rodeos, bicycle rallies and other educational activities; and
- that the BOS and city councils use local media (e.g., public service announcements, public events and government websites) to educate the motor vehicle driving public and bicyclists of their responsibility to know and obey bicycle-related laws.

The complete report may be accessed at [www.ventura.org/grand-jury](http://www.ventura.org/grand-jury); click on the Annual Reports tab and consult "Fiscal Year 2014-2015."

The grand jury is a civil investigatory panel of 19 citizens created to serve as a voice of the people and a conscience of the community. Jurors are not appointed by politicians but are independent volunteer citizens.

Proposed photo caption:

"Ghost Bikes"—bicycles painted entirely white as memorials to riders who were killed—are becoming a more common sight at roadsides and intersections (such as this one in Simi Valley) throughout Ventura County.