

CHP has suspect in custody after 11-hour standoff that closed Highway 101

June 8, 2020



A standoff between an armed motorist and law enforcement that closed down both directions of U.S. Highway 101 over the weekend came to a peaceful conclusion at about 2:30 a.m. Sunday.

According to the California Highway Patrol press release, on June 6, at approximately 3:17 p.m., CHP Crescent City Area was advised that the National Park Service (NPS) was in a pursuit of a tan Buick Century. The pursuit was heading northbound on U.S. Highway 101 at mile post marker (MPM) 101 HUM 131.7, in Humboldt County.

At the Del Norte County line, NPS requested CHP take over the pursuit. According to the CHP, their units got in position and deployed a spike strip, successfully deflating all tires. The suspect vehicle continued traveling north for about one mile before coming to a stop at MPM 101 DN 16.00, blocking the northbound traffic lanes.

As CHP units initiated felony stop procedures, the driver and, sole occupant of the vehicle, displayed a firearm and would not relinquish the weapon to law enforcement personnel. The suspect remained in the vehicle pointing the gun at himself and threatening his life. The subject refused to comply with the directions of the officers for approximately 11 hours. U.S. Highway 101 was closed due to public safety while negotiations were made with the subject.

At around 10 p.m. Saturday, California's Office of Emergency Services allowed hotels and motels to rent rooms to travelers stuck in an hours-long closure of U.S. Highway 101 south of Crescent City, according to the Del Norte County Office of Emergency Services.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, California lodging establishments have been allowed to providing rooms only to essential workers.

However, a number of travelers and area residents became stranded late Saturday afternoon, June 6, when the California Highway Patrol closed the highway between mile markers 14 and 22 in Del Norte County.

As traffic backed up, the Del Norte County Sheriff's Office moved the closure on the north end to Highway 101 and Humboldt Road.

In addition to announcing that stranded motorists would be allowed to rent rooms, the Del Norte County Office of Emergency Services announced at around 11 p.m. that it was working with the Red Cross and Yurok Office of Emergency Services to provide blankets and other supplies to motorists stranded on the hill between South Beach and Klamath due to the ongoing law enforcement incident.

"By order of Public Health and OES hotels can allow emergency rental of rooms to stranded motorists in Del Norte County who are trapped on either side of the Hwy 101 shutdown," DNOES said. "Yurok OES will open their hotel to stranded motorists as well. People stuck in Klamath can wait in the hotel parking lot until assistance arrives."

According to the CHP, with the assistance of the Del Norte County Sheriff Erik Apperson, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Fish and Wildlife, National Parks Service, State Parks, Yurok Tribal Police and the California Department of Transportation, the subject ultimately surrendered and was taken into custody.

According to CHP Public Information Officer Brandy Gonzales, the suspect is in CHP custody, awaiting charges and the investigating officer completing his report.

"He just wanted to be let go," Gonzales said about the subject of hours-long negotiations. "We just wanted to safely get him removed and safely get everybody out of there."