
Vintage Sheriff's Car "Otis" Rolls Into Fair Booth, Woman Struck; Cause Under Review

By LINDA SUTTER August 12, 2026

A Thursday afternoon incident at the Del Norte County Fair raised safety concerns after a vintage 1954 sheriff's patrol car—affectionately known as Otis—unexpectedly rolled from its display area and into a neighboring booth, striking a woman.

The classic black-and-white patrol car had been parked at the Del Norte County Sheriff's Office booth as part of their community outreach display. Throughout the day, deputies had allowed children to sit inside the vehicle, explore the interior, and take photos.

What remains unclear is how the vehicle began to move. Early accounts differ on whether the parking brake may have been released or whether the transmission was inadvertently shifted into neutral. The booth area sits on a slope, and once the car began rolling, it gained enough momentum to cross into an adjacent vendor space.

The car struck one woman near the neighboring booth. The extent of her injuries has not yet been confirmed, and officials have not released her name. Emergency personnel responded quickly, and the Sheriff's Office removed Otis from the fairgrounds shortly afterward.

Fairgoers described the moment as startling but brief, with deputies and bystanders rushing to secure the vehicle and check on the woman.

The Sheriff's Office has not yet issued a formal statement regarding the cause of the roll or whether safety protocols for display vehicles will be reviewed. Additional details are expected as officials determine exactly how the vintage patrol car became mobile.

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