



The Facebook page for the California Highway Patrol's Truckee division mixes humor with important information for the community.

Cop jokes

CHP Truckee

When someone cracks a cop joke on Facebook and gets 1,500 likes, you might not expect that someone to be a cop—unless, of course, you're looking at the Facebook page of the California Highway Patrol's Truckee division.

The page is hugely popular. It's received nearly a quarter-million likes and has more than 239,000 followers. And it's funny. On a March 25 post showing a highway patrol vehicle buried axle-deep in mud on the side of the road, the page's administrator responded to comments with a GIF from the movie *Super Troopers*, leading another commenter to say, "My God. Admin on this page is a savage."

The admin for the page is Officer Pete Mann. He's spent 13 years in CHP and serves as the Truckee division's public information officer. Mann started his division's Facebook page in November 2014. He said he knew from the start that he wanted the page to be different from other law enforcement pages.

"I went to our commander at the time, and I kind of talked to him about it and said, 'Look, I really want to do this, but I've been looking at a lot of other law enforcement pages, as well as other emergency services pages, and seeing what works and what really doesn't work ... and I have this idea. And we're going to hurt some feelings, and we're going to have some fun and some laughs and everything else. But we see stuff 24 hours a day that nobody else sees because we're always out there.'"

Mann said he initially received some pushback on his joke-heavy approach. But fast forward to 2019, and now the CHP is encouraging its departments across

California to take a similar approach on their own social media pages.

"By using humor and that kind of stuff, we're able to slide in the underlying safety message. And here we are with 218,000 likes, and it seems to be working," Mann said. "We always try, I mean even when we're having fun with somebody—whether it be a truck driver or a local motorist or an out-of-state motorist ... or even something goofy we did, because that happens quite a bit—it doesn't matter, we're always going to try to slide that underlying safety message in there. And that's the big thing, right?"

Mann is humble about the page, crediting its popularity in part to the fact that Truckee and Tahoe are "worldwide destinations."

"The interstate being such a pivotal area going through Donner Pass is another one," he said.

But it's clearly also Mann's posts, which are often sweet and usually funny—like a video of a CHP Truckee officer engaging in a race on saucer sleds with an officer from the Placer County Sheriff's Office with a caption noting it was the second race Placer County had lost to CHP.

"The first one was actually a bicycle race," Mann said. "We were doing a bicycle event for a bunch of kids at the Boys & Girls Club in Kings Beach last summer. And we had a ... bike race with them, officers in full uniform trying to ride very, very small bikes. And let's just say CHP Truckee held its own, and we took them down."

Ultimately, Mann said, his goal is to inform his community while also humanizing its officers.

"One of my big things is showing that side of us, showing that we're fallible and that we have fun, and we have families, and these guys have families," he said. □

Check out CHP Truckee on Facebook at www.facebook.com/chp.truckee/.

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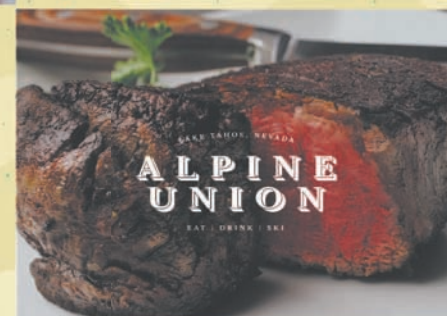
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