

## Police, Fire Show Prop. H Results

By Kurt Helin  
Editor

Last May, Long Beach voters increased the tax on the oil that comes out of the field underneath the city by passing Proposition H.

That money is specifically dedicated to public safety — the city's police and fire departments. And now the police and fire departments want to show what that extra oil money bought — 14 new motorcycle officers for the city and new BMW bikes for them to ride, plus a new ladder truck for the Fire Department and 12 firefighters to man it.

"I want to thank the voters for passing Prop. H," said Mayor Bob Foster at an event designed to show what the money has brought. "It means almost \$4 million more a year for public safety, and this is a demonstrable sign of what that brings to the city."

The 14 new motorcycle officers — nine of whom are on the street, the rest are in training and should be deployed at the end of the month — technically will be traffic officers, said Long Beach Police Chief Anthony Batts.

However, the motorcycle officers (there will be 23 total in the city now) will focus mainly on some of the areas most impacted by gang crime in the city, he said.

Just having the officers on the streets in those areas, even if they are writing speeding tickets, lowers crime.

"They have an unexpected

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**SHINY RIDE.** A line of new BMW motorcycles on display Monday as the city showed what seven months of increased oil taxes brought to Long Beach.

—Gazette photo by Kurt Helin

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impact on high crime areas," Batts said.

The new ladder truck — which is on order and will be here in the fall — replaces one the Fire Department had to get rid of in budget cuts in 1990, said Fire Chief Dave Ellis. While waiting for that one to come, an older ladder truck that had been out of commission was restored with the money from

Prop. H and is now in service at Fire Station 14 (near Colorado Lagoon).

The ladder trucks are rescue trucks and are largely rolling toolboxes for firefighters, carrying things like the "jaws of life" machine and more, Ellis said. The new ladder truck will help with fires in high-rise buildings (the ladder extends up to 100 feet) as well as with a host of other situations.

The new fire truck cost about \$700,000 Ellis said, and was

paid for out of the \$1.8 million the city got in the second half of last year from Prop. H. (the tax took effect May 22). There is no debt service on the truck, the Mayor added.

Last May, as part of a special election, voters in Long Beach passed Prop. H with 70% of the vote. It is estimated that this year about \$3.6 million will come to the police and fire departments through the increased oil tax. That will be additional money — it will not supplant the existing budget, Foster and others said,

"I am pleased with the leadership demonstrated by Police Chief Tony Batts and Fire Chief Dave Ellis," Third District Councilman Gary DeLong said. "They used the Prop H funds to directly benefit the taxpayers — putting more cops on the street, and reinstating a fifth 100-Foot Ladder Truck to improve eastside response times."

But nobody at Monday's event had a bigger smile than Ellis and Batts.

"When you see a new ladder truck and 14 new police officers, (people) have something tangible for their vote," Ellis said.