



City of Santa Barbara
Police Department

Memorandum

DATE: 4/26/2012

TO: Fire and Police Commission

FROM: Holly Perea, Police Technician

SUBJECT: Selection of 7th Tow Company to the City's Tow Rotation List

At the Fire and Police Commission meeting held on January 27, 2012, the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners ("the Board") voted to add a seventh company to the City's current Tow Rotation List.

In February 2012 the Police Technician sent application packets to all tow companies licensed to do business in the City that were not already on the Rotation List. Two companies submitted applications within the 30-day application period: "Nieves Towing" and "805 Roadside." On March 28, 2012, Police staff met with the owners of both tow companies to complete site visits of all listed tow yards and offices, as well as to verify the information listed in each application.

Both companies meet all minimum criteria for inclusion on the City's Tow Rotation List. However, the following differences were learned and confirmed after a thorough review of each application and completion of site visits at all listed locations (see Attachment A for full comparison of the companies):

Nieves Towing:

- Nieves Towing has been in business for over 10 years, whereas 805 Roadside has been in business for less than one year.
- Nieves Towing is on the rotation lists of both the SB Sheriff's Department and UCSB Police Department, and has high recommendations from both agencies, whereas 805 Roadside is only on the rotation list for the Sheriff's Department at this time. Neither company is currently on the CHP's rotation list.
- Nieves Towing has approximately 20,000 square feet of outdoor storage available, whereas 805 Roadside has just under that, at approximately 17,500 square feet. It should be noted, however, that it is very rare for the City to use more than, or even up 10,000 square feet of outdoor storage space at any one time, so despite the difference in square footage, both companies offer ample outdoor storage for City needs.
- Nieves Towing washes all vehicles before releasing them to customers. They do this as a courtesy to customers and do not charge extra for the service. 805 Roadside does not wash vehicles prior to release.

805 Roadside:

- 805 Roadside has had a Tow Permit to operate within the City since September 2011. Nieves Towing does not currently have a Tow Permit to operate within the City. However, this is a minor issue, as Nieves Towing could obtain a permit once approved for the Rotation List.
- The primary storage facility for 805 Roadside is within City limits, approximately 10 blocks away from the Police Department. Nieves Towing's lot is located in Goleta, approximately 8.5 miles from the Police Department.
- 805 Roadside's primary outdoor storage facility is paved, whereas Nieves Towing's primary storage facility is a dirt lot.
- 805 Roadside has 4 tow trucks, and Nieves Towing has 3. Both companies have one flatbed and one medium-duty truck, but 805 Roadside has 2 light-duty tow trucks and Nieves Towing has only one such truck.
- 805 Roadside has one driver currently licensed with a Class A Driver's License. Nieves Towing does not have any Class A drivers.
- 805 Roadside has over 3,000 square feet of indoor storage/evidence storage available. Not only is the space large enough to accommodate up to 6 vehicles easily, but the space is configured in such a way as to allow ample room around any cars stored for evidence so that law enforcement officers can easily perform inspections of those vehicles. The space is also large enough to store evidence vehicles from multiple law enforcement agencies at one time. Nieves towing's indoor lot is listed on the application as 1,000 square feet, though it appeared smaller by at least a couple hundred feet during the premise walkthrough. Only one vehicle would adequately fit in this indoor lot.
- 805 Roadside's primary outdoor storage facility and indoor storage area are both located on the same premise as the company's office. Customers wishing to retrieve their vehicles can do so all at one time in one place. However, although Nieves Towing's business office and indoor storage facility are on the same premise, they are located at a separate address than the company's outdoor storage facility. Therefore, Nieves Towing's customers must go to two separate locations, first the office and then the storage lot, in order to claim their vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION:

Taking into consideration all of the above factors, with particular consideration given to the size of the indoor storage lot and the proximity of the storage yards to the Police Department, the Santa Barbara Police Department recommends that the Board approves 805 Roadside as the seventh company on the City's Tow Rotation List.

The Police Department further recommends that should the City's Rotation List fall below seven companies at any time for any reason within the next year, that Nieves Towing be permitted to assume a place on the List until the next Tow Rotation review period, without submitting a new application.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Tow Company Comparison for City's Rotation List