



[Home](#)

[CEO Hotline](#)

[Viewpoint](#)

[Classified Ads](#)

[Archives](#)

[Metro.net](#) (web)

#### Resources

▶ [Safety](#)

▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)

▶ [Ask the CEO](#)

▶ [CEO Forum](#)

▶ [Employee Recognition](#)

▶ [Employee Activities](#)

▶ [Metro Projects](#)

▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

▶ [Archives](#)

▶ [Events Calendar](#)

▶ [Research Center/ Library](#)

▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)

▶ [Bazaar](#)

#### Metro Info

▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)

▶ [Policies](#)

▶ [Training](#)

▶ [Help Desk](#)

▶ [Intranet Policy](#)

#### Need e-Help?

Call the Help Desk at 2-4357

[Contact myMetro.net](#)



Transit Services Bureau Detective Ron Smith, at left, recently received a Distinguished Service Award from Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca for his work combating robberies on Metro. Smith and his partner Keith Shoemaker have a remarkable record for solving cases.

*Photo by Ned Racine*

### Transit Services Bureau Detective Maintains High Arrest Rates

- Smith and partner track robbers on Metro bus and rail

By NED RACINE, Editor

(June 14, 2008) Transit Services Bureau (TSB) Detective Ron Smith loves his job, and Metro System riders are fortunate that he does.

Smith and his partner, Sheriff's Detective Keith Shoemaker, are responsible for catching criminals who rob Metro riders, whether they ride bus or rail. Smith and Shoemaker have been remarkably successful.

On May 20, Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca presented Smith with a Distinguished Service Award. The award noted that Smith's "efforts have made a serious impact on crime within the [Metro] transit systems."

The award also noted that Smith's robbery solve rate over the past four years is 35 percent—42 percent in 2007. In part because of the Metro video surveillance and in part because Smith is dedicated and innovative, his arrest rate is more than double the arrest rate of the average Sheriff's station, according to TSB Sgt. Mike Estrada.

Estrada believes the ability of Metro's video system to show deputies crimes in real time gives the Transit Services Bureau a real advantage over other Sheriff's stations.

Smith and Shoemaker start with the robbery report taken by the deputy in the field.

"We take it from there and do whatever it takes to put it together," Smith said. "We rely on video, we rely on informants. I've worked at Metro for seven years, working robberies for the last six. I've developed a lot of informants out in the field. Depending on where the robbery occurred, I'll reach out to those."

Smith believes the nature of a transit system makes solving robberies easier.

"You're not going to commit a robbery in an area that you're not comfortable with," he explained. "To rob on the system, you're going to have to use the system and have knowledge [of it], which means you're going to return to the system."

And he doesn't believe the system is unsafe. "As far as the robberies go, it's usually a robbery a day, systemwide [on average]," Smith said. "Given the number of Metro riders, that's not really too bad when you think about it."

Smith, a 17-year veteran of the Sheriff's Department, finds electronics are the target of most robberies on the system. "Hot now is the T-Mobile Sidekick cell phone, the Apple iPod and the Sony PSP handheld video game."

Smith's advice to Metro riders is to be aware, take notice and perhaps hide electronics.

In six years of solving robberies on the system, Smith has noticed that more juveniles are involved and that armed robberies have decreased. Most robbers now use strong armed [intimidation] methods to separate riders from their possessions."

Smith, a frequent Metrolink rider, likes the transit work. "I've just found my little niche. I've got knowledge of the system and find it's interesting, and I've already developed informants. It's fun," he said. "You grow up as a kid playing cops and robbers and I'm doing it. This is cops and robbers right here—literally."

Smith has arrested some robbers on multiple occasions. He stunned one criminal last year when he explained how he tracked the man down. The robber responded, "Man, I've seen this on CSI [a television show], but I never thought it would catch up to me."

Most of the people Smith has arrested bear him no ill will. They will approach him and mention they have a new baby or how they have turned their lives around.

"You would think that most of the time these crooks you've sent to prison would hate you, but it's all how you conduct yourself. You just tell them, 'Hey, it's just business.' "

Smith and Shoemaker are now working on a series of Red Line robberies.

"Because of his work ethic and his desire to solve these crimes, he is top notch," Estrada said of Smith. "He told me once that solving a 211 [robbery] is like having a puzzle on your desk. What he loves to do is put it all together. We're lucky to have him, especially at TSB, and [Metro] is lucky to have him."

MORE> [See myMetro.net report July 24, 2007:](#) Smith and Shoemaker use a Trojan Horse to solve another crime.

---

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)