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News Advisory

METROLINK, MTA AND FREIGHT RAILROADS JOIN TOGETHER TO DEMONSTRATE DANGERS OF RAIL CROSSINGS

Officer on a Train part of statewide rail safety education campaign

LOS ANGELES, CA, Feb. 16, 2001: In an effort to heighten awareness about the importance of rail safety, Metrolink, Southern California's commuter rail system, as well as the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), and the Union Pacific (UP) and Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) freight railroads, in coordination with the L.A. County Sheriff's deputies and the California Highway Patrol, will be operating an Officer-on-a-Train ride-along in Compton on **Wednesday, Feb. 21.**

The Officer-on-a-Train event is part of a new statewide rail education effort spearheaded by Operation Lifesaver, a national nonprofit highway-rail safety education organization. The new campaign called "Take Safety to Heart" features a series of public service spots that depict how taking risks around the tracks can affect entire families and loved ones.

California leads the nation in the number of fatalities along its tracks with 98 people killed in 2000. In addition, the new public education campaign comes at a time when Metrolink has already experienced two trespasser fatalities in January, compared to a single fatality in all of 2000.

Members of the media are invited to ride along with the officers to witness what train engineers observe daily as people risk their lives walking on or along railroad tracks or attempting to beat trains at railroad crossings. A special camera will be set up in the front of the train, giving riders the same view as the engineer operating the train. Members of the local police departments will also be on board, and will be citing any motorists driving illegally through rail crossings or pedestrians trespassing on the tracks.

What: Officer-on-a-Train ridealong with Metrolink, MTA, BNSF, UP Railroads, the L.A. County Sheriff's Dept. and the California Highway Patrol

When/Where: **Wednesday, Feb. 21** Train departs at 10 a.m. (Train will travel over crossings in one direction and then reverse direction back to the Rosa Parks Station for anyone wishing to depart train).

MTA Rosa Parks Station
2000 E. Imperial Hwy
(Imperial and Wilmington)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Feb. 16, 2001