



Kids Will Collect Baseball Cards Featuring Sheriff's Deputies, MTA 'Safety Guy'

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(April 6) Sheriff's deputies patrolling the Metro Blue Line on motorcycles and bikes now have an unusual "partner" in their effort to emphasize a rail safety message to kids. It's a baseball card.

Only, these baseball cards feature a photo of a motorcycle or bicycle deputy on one side and the MTA's "Safety Guy" with a rail safety message on the other.

Opportunity to talk about safety

"Kids come up to talk to the deputies when they're out on patrol," says Sgt. Brad Wright, who first approached the MTA about producing the cards. "Having the baseball cards to hand out will give us an opportunity to talk about rail safety."

The MTA will provide 2,000 of the glossy color photo cards to each of the eight motorcycle deputies and seven bicycle deputies - a total of 30,000 cards. Another 15,000 cards will be given to MTA Public Affairs for use in the agency's rail safety program at schools along the Metro Blue Line.



Eight different safety messages under the heading "Tracks mean trains so look, listen and live!" are shown on the various cards. Messages include, "Don't play on or near railroad tracks" and "Don't run, skate, or ride your bike on the platform, stairs, escalators or near trains." The cards were produced by the MTA Marketing Department.

Foster good relations with kids

"The cards really help us get a safety message across," says Sgt. Ann Ramirez, bicycle team sergeant. "They also foster good relations with the kids."

Ramirez' six bike deputies primarily patrol the Metro Blue Line stations in downtown Los Angeles - Washington station to Pico station - and the stations along the loop in Long Beach. They look for pedestrians illegally crossing the tracks, issuing citations for infractions.

The deputies often ride their bikes along the rail line between the Rail Operations Center at Imperial/Wilmington and downtown Long Beach. On most days, they're on duty from 5 a.m. until 11 p.m., pedaling their Tequesta GT mountain bikes from station to station.

One is different from the rest

Flipping through a stack of 15 baseballs reveals one card that's different from all the rest. Deputy Robert Green is posed with three neighborhood children.

Green underwent surgery, April 5, for a shoulder injury sustained when a motorist swerved in front of his motorcycle last October as he rode to work. With the baseball card project underway while he was on medical leave, Green sent in the only photo he had. The deputy will have at least six more weeks of recovery before returning to work.

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