

Nancy Smith is the new crime analyst for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

No Badge, No Gun but LASD Analyst Helps Prevent Crimes

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(August 28, 2003) She may not wear a uniform, carry a badge or a gun, or make daily rounds in a squad car, but Nancy Smith plays a fundamental role in the prevention of crime on Metro bus and rail lines.

Smith is the new crime analyst for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau – a job she took late last month after leaving the Marina Del Rey station.

She was settled into her new job for just two weeks when her investigative work contributed to the arrest of a man wanted for murder and other crimes, including several robberies on the Metro Green Line.

Using a database to transmit criminal suspect information to 700 law enforcement agencies across the country, Smith sent out a "wanted" bulletin with the suspect's photo. With the bulletin in hand, two Las Vegas bicycle police recognized and apprehended the suspect.

From her office on the Plaza level of MTA headquarters, Smith monitors criminal activity at MTA properties by evaluating written crime reports issued by the Sheriff's deputies.

"One of the things that I do is watch the crime to see if we have any trends, spikes or anomalies that we need to pay attention to," she says.

Reports and maps

From the compiled data, Smith creates monthly reports and geographical maps that detail which MTA properties have experienced crime and at what frequency.

"I'm in a unique position to read all the reports, which no one else has the luxury of time to do," she says. "From this analysis, I let the lieutenants know where to best deploy our officers."

The information is passed on to MTA Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein, who determines how many deputies must be deployed into a problem area.

"I am very excited about adding Nancy to our staff," says Finkelstein. "Her skills and equipment will allow us to work smarter, rather than harder to better serve the MTA. Coordination of crimes to geographic locations or common suspect descriptions will be critical in the investigation of crimes such as vandalism - a big cost issue for the MTA."

Smith received her bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology/behavioral science from California State University, San Marcos. Before joining the LASD six years ago, she had worked as a crime analyst at the Cold Case Homicide Unit in San Diego.

As crime analyst for MTA, Smith has several aspirations. She hopes to have cameras installed on additional buses and "wanted" bulletins of transit crime suspects posted in the neighborhoods of Metro Bus routes.

"I would like to have an open relationship with the people of MTA so they feel like they can ask me for anything they want," she says. "My office is open to them for any questions they may have."

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