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## Metro San Fernando Valley to Host Grand Opening for New Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau Facility

By Lisa Huynh

(March 25, 2004) Twelve Sheriff's deputies and three sergeants are calling the new Sheriff's facility in the San Fernando Valley home.

The San Fernando Valley Service Sector will host a grand opening beginning at 10 a.m., Saturday, March 27, to welcome the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau. The facility is located next door to the sector office at 9760 Topanga Canyon Boulevard in Chatsworth.

The celebration, which is free and open to employees and the public, will include a Transit Safety Fair. The grand opening will be held at noon. Lt. Pat Jordan is in charge of the 3,000-square foot facility.

"This is a huge impact, not only to the community, but to our bus operators because it's increasing our safety force," says Community Relations Manager Marta Maestas-Mack.

"The purpose of the "satellite" facility is to allow our Valley bus units to deploy closer to their patrol area," says Capt. Dan Finkelstein. "This could not have been accomplished without the support and guidance of David Armijo and John Roberts."

## Fully equipped building

The facility, a 70-by-42 foot modular building, will be shared by the Sheriff's deputies and Metro's Vehicle Operations. It has computer workstations, a report/briefing area, men's and women's shower and locker rooms, a kitchen and offices.

Derrick Ballentine, who has been a Sheriff's deputy for 15 years, loves

PHOTOS BY LISA HUYNH



Sheriff's Deputy Derrick Ballentine and Division 15 Maintenance Manager John Robert.



From left, Sgt. Mike Ballai and deputies Derrick Ballentine and Mike Baker.



The 3,000-square foot Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau facility is located next door to the San Fernando Valley Sector offices.

being at the new facility. "It used to take us a long time to get from downtown to the Valley. Now that we're here, it has decreased my travel time and in turn has increased my patrol time."

The San Fernando Valley sector is the second sector to have its own branch office of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau. The San Gabriel Valley sector was the first.

"Working out of a joint facility like this will maximize the efficiency of both operations, says Division 15 Maintenance Manager John Roberts. "There will be more of an exchange and interaction of issues and problems concerning the community."

#### Transit Safety Fair

The Los Angeles Unified School District, Red Cross, Los Angeles Fire Department and the Sheriff's search and rescue team are expected to participate in Saturday's Transit Safety Fair.

The Sheriff's "Mounted Posse," the "Metro Experience" mobile theater and a 15-piece jazz band will provide entertainment. The Sheriff's Department will recruit reserve Sheriff's deputies during the fair.

To promote the event, the sector staff distributed 10,000 flyers to nearby residents, libraries and schools. They also mailed invitations to elected officials.

"If this safety fair goes well, I can see us doing it on an annual basis," says Maestas-Mack. "I don't think the community can learn too much about safety."