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On the scene: Sheriff's Capt. Dan Finkelstein, Chief of Metro Transit Police, at left, and Metro Security Director of Intelligence and Emergency Planning Paul Lennon, (with his back to camera) confer with Sheriff Lee Baca, LAPD Chief William Bratton and other law enforcement officials at the site of the Metrolink tragedy in Glendale.



PHOTOS: LASD LT. MIKE PARKER

January 28, 2005 - Eleven people died and some 180 people were injured when two Metrolink trains collided Jan. 26 after hitting a Jeep Cherokee SUV parked on the tracks just north of the Glendale Metrolink Station.

Meanwhile, police have a man in custody who allegedly triggered the Wednesday crash by driving onto the tracks in a failed suicide attempt.

"This was a tragic event," said Capt. Finkelstein. "Yet, the emergency response was immediate and efficient." Finkelstein attributed the expert response to lessons learned from the continuous and ongoing emergency drills conducted with other agencies.

During the first 8 hours following the accident, more than 175 Sheriff's personnel were involved in the emergency response effort. Sheriff's deputies were tasked with assisting Glendale Police in securing the inner and outer perimeters, said Lt. Mike Parker.

Dozens of Sheriff's deputies assisted in the criminal investigation underway, identifying and interviewing passengers and witnesses. The LASD also staffed and operated a 24-hour command post as part of the multi-agency unified command post. (Since the collision occurred in the City of Glendale, the criminal investigation is being led by the Glendale Police Department.)

Two of the 11 people killed in the tragedy were employees of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department: Manuel D. Alcala, 51, of West Hills, a senior general maintenance worker at the County Jail, and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy James Tutino, a 47-year-old father of four who was on his way to work downtown at the Men's Central Jail.



Rescue teams at the site of the derailed Metrolink train 100.