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Bright red signage identifies location of emergency assistance panel that houses intercom and fire equipment in the platform area of Metro Red Line stations.



PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON

Metro Launches Accelerated Plan to Vastly Upgrade Security

- Board will be asked to grant emergency authority to spend about \$7 million
- Security technology to be best in U.S. and rival London's

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 24, 2005) Metro is taking the first steps in a highly accelerated plan to vastly upgrade technology and other security measures on Metro Rail lines and at all Metro facilities.

The overall program, expected to cost about \$7 million, is seen as a quantum leap that before this fiscal year is over will push Metro's security technology well past that of any other U.S. transit agency and, in some respects, even beyond that currently in use by the London transport system. (See myMetro.net Report Aug. 4> [Transit Police Chief's London Visit](#) Was an Eye-Opener)

The Board gave the program a go-ahead in July and, at this month's meeting, is expected to give management emergency authority to spend the money required to make the upgrades. Procurement will be fast-tracked to purchase the equipment and services needed to make wide-ranging security improvements.

"We asked the Board for approval to move forward with a system that would be second to none in the United States," says Deputy CEO John Catoe. "We'll have the best technology available today, equipment that meets the needs of the agency, and that provides a higher level of security for our customers and our employees."

All-encompassing effort

As envisioned by management, the program will be an all-encompassing effort that will improve security technology on the four Metro Rail lines, at the Rail Operations Center (ROC) and at all Metro Bus operating divisions. It will include additional security signage at rail stations, a passenger security awareness campaign, and the deployment of additional police dogs.

More than 500 new cameras, capable of tilting, panning and zooming will be installed at Metro Rail stations along with almost 100 automatic digital video recorders, according to Rob Chappell, deputy executive officer for Rail Operations.

Cameras also will be installed on all trains at a cost of about \$2.2 million.

The digital recorders will be linked to intrusion alarms on subway platforms that will activate when someone attempts to enter a secure area. In such an event, nearby cameras will automatically focus on the area.

At the ROC, huge flat-screen LCD (liquid crystal display) monitors capable of a 64-segment, split-screen display, will replace the banks of small, individual TV monitors that show static video of rail platforms. On-duty personnel, called CCTV observers, will use joystick systems to pan, tilt and zoom individual cameras. At least one LCD monitor will be located in the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau station downstairs from the ROC.

The upgrade at the ROC also will mean adding four more CCTV observers, says Catoe, and providing additional training for the entire CCTV staff that will focus on law enforcement-oriented surveillance.

Meanwhile, the agency will use existing funding to speed up plans to install surveillance cameras at the operating divisions to monitor bus and employee parking areas. Security cameras and digital recorders already are in place on most of the Metro Bus fleet.



"I didn't know there was an intercom here," said patron Roberta Benson, a Wilshire area resident who noticed the emergency panel while

Metro patrons involved

Even Metro patrons will be involved in the heightened security program, says Catoe. All rail platforms currently have emergency intercom phones, but most passengers may not know where they're located. New signage is now being developed to mark the phones so passengers can easily find them in an emergency.

Those signs will be one element of an expanded passenger security awareness campaign that will include posters and take-ones.

Finally, some funding will be used to purchase,

waiting for the
Wilshire/Western train at
Union Station.

train and deploy more police dogs in the Metro Rail system, Catoe says. Four dogs are currently on the job and two others – one of which will be assigned to Metro Security – are in training.

“This will be an accelerated process, one that many have not been seen at this agency,” says Catoe, “but from start to finish, this will be a whirlwind process to put in a top-notch security system on our rail lines and stations, and in our operating divisions and other facilities.”