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## Division 8 Operator John Engels Moonlights as LAPD Officer



Part-time Division 8 Operator John Engels moonlights as a reserve LAPD officer, working mostly out of Hollywood. Engels says a lot of the skills used in driving safely for Metro are the same skills he uses during night patrols for LAPD.

By JIMMY STROUP

(Feb. 24, 2006) A relative newcomer to the Metro family, Chatsworth Division 8 Operator John Engels has an interesting side job: He spends his nights on the Hollywood streets patrolling as an LAPD reserve officer.

Working part-time on morning shifts for Metro, Engels, 50, attended training at the Police Academy on nights and weekends.

"In the reserves, you can schedule the hours that you want to work and you can work out of the division you want to work at," he says. "It's pretty much like the National Guard or the Army Reserve. You do everything the regular guys do. You just do it on hours that fit your schedule."

An early career — and early retirement — as chief financial officer in a publicly traded company left Engels burned out on the world of high finance.

"I got bored looking at stock quotes on the computer all day. I thought, 'What can I do that's different?'" he says. "I didn't want to get back into corporate America. So I says, 'I wonder what this [police department] thing's all about?'"

### Quite a task

He decided on the reserves after some advice from a retired LAPD detective friend, and went about testing into the department — which turned out to be quite a task.

"Getting in is really hard: background investigations, polygraphs, physicals, psychological evaluations. And anything can blow you out," he says. "I got through all that, and it was when the city ran out of money, and there were just no classes going on at the academy. And I was bored."

His boredom led him to take a job in December 2003 as an operator for Metro, another career field that had always had him wondering. Until coming to Metro, though, Engels had no idea of the scope of the agency's operations.

"It's been a fascinating experience because it gives you insight into

how things work,” he says. “Now I understand those things a lot better, and it’s the same with the police.”

When most people are relaxing at home, or out to dinner or a club, Engels spends his Friday and Saturday nights in a black and white LAPD patrol car cruising the streets of Hollywood. His experience driving for Metro has trained him to be totally conscious of his surroundings — something vital on a police patrol.

**‘Communicate with BOC’**

“One of the things I try to do when I’m working out there is to communicate with Bus Operations Control, so they know what’s going on as things are happening,” he says, citing a sudden street closure or a detour as something he’d call in to Metro while on patrol.

Though not what most people seek out as a part-time job, Engels is happy with both his jobs as a way to “interface” with the people in the San Fernando Valley, where he works and makes his home.

Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds only glowing things to say about Engels, and even attended his graduation from the Police Academy last year to show her support.

“John is a wonderful asset to Division 8 and to Metro,” she says. “We’re very proud of him — the job he does for us and the job that he does for the people of Los Angeles.”