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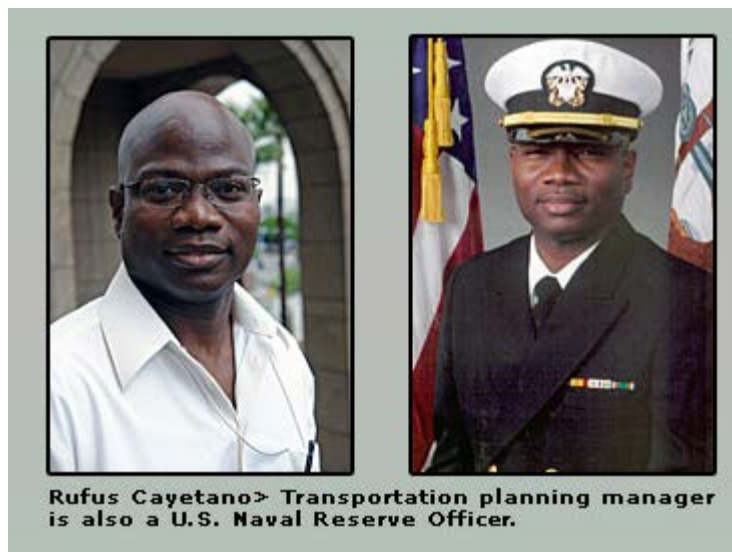
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Photo by Bill Heard



Metro's Rufus Cayetano's Life Has Come 'Up Through the Ranks'

- Native of Belize is now a U.S. Naval Reserve officer

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 25, 2006) Rufus Cayetano has experienced a lot of change and personal growth in his lifetime, starting from a childhood in the Central American nation of Belize to his recent selection as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

Cayetano, 41, now a transportation planning manager in Metro's Local Programming Department, had earned an associate's degree and was working as an English language and geography instructor at a college in Belize when he decided to follow his parents to California.

Not long after arriving in the United States at the age of 22, he enlisted in the Navy and served seven years as an air traffic controller, rising to second class petty officer.

During that time, Cayetano served aboard aircraft carriers with the naval amphibious forces in the Western Pacific and Persian Gulf, participating in both Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991.

Service in the Navy helped Cayetano become a naturalized citizen and also made him eligible for G.I. Bill college funding. He received an undergraduate degree in aviation management from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1995 and, two years later, a masters in public administration from Cal State Long Beach.

Naval Reserve ensign

With those degrees in hand, he was commissioned a Naval Reserve

ensign in mid-1998. After an additional 18 months of correspondence course study and classroom work during three annual training periods, he was designated a Supply Corps officer.

"If it wasn't for the G.I. Bill, I wouldn't be where I am today," he says. "The G.I. Bill allowed me to go to school and get my education."

Cayetano first came to Metro in 1996 as an intern in Operations Planning and then in Capital Planning. After graduate school, he worked for a short time for the San Bernardino County Association of Governments before returning to Metro in 1999.

At Metro, Cayetano is involved in planning programs concerning the region's municipal operators. He also drills on weekends as an administrative contracting officer with Naval Supply Support Battalion 1's Contingency Contracting Command in San Diego.

Cayetano and his wife, Jean, live in Los Angeles with their three daughters, Nelinie, 12; Cherise, 7; and Jeanine, 4.