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Editor's Note: The young man arrested in the Metro bus tagging incident issued an apology, Wednesday, in a letter read over the Santee high school public address system, according to the Associated Press. School Principal Vince Carbino said the youth apologized to his parents, to Mayor Villaraigosa, to the school principal, the bus operator, and to the students and reporters on the bus.

TSB Detectives Arrest Juvenile in Bus-Tagging Incident

- Investigation may link 'Zoner' to series of graffiti incidents

(Feb. 28, 2007) Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau detectives late Tuesday arrested the juvenile pictured on the front page of Tuesday's Los Angeles *Times* tagging a bus carrying Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and other VIPs during a media event.

The arrest came after detectives staked out the 15-year-old Santee Education Complex sophomore's home in the 5100 block of San Pedro Street, according to a TSB news release. The juvenile's name, which is not being released, was provided to detectives by school authorities.

The youth was booked, fingerprinted and cited for vandalism, according to Sheriff's Detective Michael Shaw, the arresting officer. He then was released to his parents. The case will be filed in juvenile court next week.

The TSB investigation is expected to link the boy – who goes by the tagger moniker "Zoner" – to a series of graffiti vandalism incidents in the central city on a number of north/south streets between Washington Boulevard and Slauson Avenue.

Juveniles convicted of transit-related vandalism often are assigned by the courts to perform community service with Metro.

That service can involve cleaning up Metro-owned property and rail rights-of-way, as well as bus stops in safe areas, according to Facilities Maintenance Manager Pete Serdenis, who runs the Metro Clean program. Juveniles aren't assigned to clean graffiti off buses.

The tagging incident occurred Monday morning as the mayor, LAUSD officials and Metro representatives were inaugurating a new bus stop at Santee. Metro Line 48 was recently re-routed to help students avoid gang-infested areas near the school.

The bus transporting the VIP group and local media was pausing to make a turn at an intersection near Santee, which is located south of Washington Boulevard between Los Angeles Street and Maple Avenue, when graffiti was marked on a side window.

