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Deputy Executive Officer Jack Eckles, center, commends Metro Transit Security officers Manuel Salcedo, left, and Richard Nelson, right, at Operations Committee meeting April 19.



### Officers Awarded Commendation for Fire Rescue

By Jori Stern

(April 25, 2007) In recognition for an extreme act of bravery, Deputy Executive Officer for Safety and Security Jack Eckles presented two senior Metro Transit Security officers with Certificates of Recognition at the Operations Committee April 19.

At 1:00 a.m. on March 28, Metro Transit Security Officer Richard Nelson, on route to the Vermont/Santa Monica Red Line Station, noticed gray smoke coming from a structure about one-quarter mile away.

While exiting the freeway, Nelson immediately called his dispatcher and requested Los Angeles Fire Department to assist. Senior Transit Officer Manuel Salcedo then arrived. As they waited for the fire department, they noticed a light upstairs. Nelson commented to Salcedo, "I wonder if there is anyone upstairs?"

Noticing a wrought iron gate, they yanked the gate open. Upon entering the building, "We saw a lady standing in the middle of the room, just surrounded by smoke and flames," said Nelson, who has been with Metro Security since 1993.

After she was pulled from danger, the woman ran back inside the building. The officers were unaware that she did not speak English. She was trying to tell them that there were other people inside.

After pulling her out a second time, the officers entered. Salcedo climbed upstairs to the smoke-filled second floor, attempting to check all the

rooms and alert any other occupants.

He was overcome with smoke. "I just couldn't breathe anymore, and I had to come back out." The two officers, however, had awakened two other occupants of the building. They were rescued.

Asked if the officers ever considered their own safety first, Nelson said, "It's our instinct. We are there to help people; we just saw somebody in need and didn't really think about it."

They don't consider themselves heroes. "I don't think so, just doing our job," Nelson said. "We were just doing what anyone else would have done," said Salcedo, who has been with Metro Security for 10 years.

Before the Operations Committee, Jack Eckles, Deputy Executive Officer for Safety and Security, who joined the Department of Safety and Security Policy in April, said, "It is always a pleasure to recognize professionalism and, in this case, heroism."

"So many people see us at the desk, and they think that's all we do." said Nelson.

"But at night we have maybe six or 12 cars out on patrol."

Whether it is a problem with a person on a bus at 11:30 p.m. or something wrong with one of the trains at 2:00 a.m.; "This is a 24-hour job that never stops," said Nelson.