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Metro Rail officials and a law enforcement team of 40 officers fanned out to delivered a safety message along busy intersections of the Metro Blue Line.



Law Enforcement Team Brings Safety Message to Blue Line Area

- Distributed 3,000 safety tip flyers to motorists, pedestrians

(May 18, 2007) With safety along the tracks a continuing concern, a law enforcement team of 40 officers fanned out to cover some of the busiest intersections along the Metro Blue Line, Thursday, to talk to local residents about rail safety and hand out literature.

The team – which included 30 Transit Services Bureau deputies, five LAPD officers, deputies from the Compton station and Long Beach police officers – distributed more than 3,000 Metro Rail safety flyers to motorists and pedestrians who cross the tracks at intersections along the 22-mile line.

During the three and a half-hour operation, the team concentrated on 10 locations in three “zones” that covered the northern, central and southern areas of the rail line between downtown LA and Long Beach, according to Sheriff’s Lt. Jenny Bethune, who coordinated the effort. The event drew extensive coverage from local TV news teams.

“We were emphasizing the ‘3 Es’ of engineering, education and enforcement,” said Bethune, who noted that TSB deputies began working with the staff of Metro’s Transit Education Program following an August

2006 rail accident in which a youngster was killed.

She said some of the main causes of accidents along the Blue Line are red-light violations by motorists making illegal left turns and running red lights, and distracted pedestrians who try to cross the tracks while the gates are coming down and warning lights are flashing.

‘Extremely positive’ reception

The reception by people to the officer’s safety efforts was “extremely positive,” Bethune said. “They were glad we were out there...passing out information. Many of them didn’t know there are fines from \$100 to \$300 for violating the laws.”

But, the officers involved in Thursday’s safety event were not so much interested in issuing citations for violations. “We agree with Metro,” she said. “Safety has to be the number one priority.”

Future safety events may be held on a quarterly basis, she said, although they’re likely to be smaller efforts that target grade crossings that have high incidents of unsafe behavior.

School presentations also will be part of the safety outreach, she said, “We’ve identified schools along the Blue Line and we’ll be going out and making presentations, hand-in-hand, law enforcement with Metro’s Transit Education team.”