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### Transit Services Bureau Wins Merit Award for Vandalism Program

(Nov. 14, 2007) The Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau has been named a Challenge Awards Merit recipient by the California State Association of Counties (CASC) for its successful vandalism reduction program.

The program was one of 10 Merit award winners among California counties with populations over 700,000. Other Merit winners included a literacy program in Alameda County, a health services program in Kern County, a drug treatment and education program in Riverside County and a tutoring program for foster youth in San Diego County.

The Merit award citation for the Transit Services Bureau described "a graffiti plague" on Metro vehicles, noting that graffiti damage costs the agency \$12 million a year and generates "a public perception that the Metro transit system was unsafe."

"In December 2000," the citation says, "the Bureau implemented a highly effective Vandalism Reduction Program led by the special problems unit. In 2006, teams arrested 156 "taggers" and solved 770 vandalism cases worth more than \$1 in damage to Metro property. Several taggers were ordered to pay restitution and court costs in excess of \$25,000 per person. Savings to Metro...increased to more than \$7 million per year for cleanup and repair of buses and rail lines. A recent survey reported 88 percent of transit patrons now felt safe on Metro systems."

The selection of winning programs was based on demonstrated leadership, innovation, collaboration, creativity, resourcefulness and effectiveness, as well as the potential for elements of the program to be used as models for other counties' programs. The award was announced Tuesday at CASC's annual meeting in Alameda County.

CSAC represents the state's 58 counties before the public, the Legislature, administrative agencies and the federal government, fostering vital public programs and services.