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The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau received this California Counties 2007 Challenge Award for vandalism reduction on the Metro system. Deputies Dianne Moreno and Kyle Ynclan have been involved in more than 20 graffiti and vandalism operations together.

Photo by Ned Racine

Nice to be Noticed: Sheriffs TSB Awarded for Work Reducing Vandalism and Graffiti on the Metro System

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 17, 2008) The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) recently awarded the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department its California Counties 2007 Challenge Award for the TSBs work in reducing and fighting vandalism and graffiti on the Metro system.

Since 2000, graffiti has been a priority for TSB deputies and in 2006 the department arrested more than 150 taggers and solved nearly 800 cases of vandalism.

"Of the guys we arrested, some of the taggers have been assessed restitution and damages in excess of \$25,000," TSB Sgt. Augie Pando said. "One guy is paying \$87,000. That alone is worth at least \$1 million in aggregate damages."

The attention of deputies has reduced the overall cost of graffiti removal and has increased the customer safety index among Metro patrons.

"This has resulted in the savings about \$7 million for clean-up and repair on the bus rail systems each year," he said. "That's money saved because they don't have to clean it up."

CSAC is an organization dedicated to returning more governing power to individual counties. The Challenge Awards are an annual prize that recognizes responsible self-governing on the county level in innovative and effective ways.

Pando and others from the LASD TSB Special Problems Unit can be heard on a special five-part news report about tagging in Los Angeles by KFWB News AM 980 online at www.kfwb.com/Tagging/1490220.

