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Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

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► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Transit Services Bureau reserve Deputy Kasy Maselli and K-9 partner Ieka are trained to detect explosives. *Photo by Ned Racine*

Reserve Deputy's Second Career Goes to the Dogs

By SARAH WINFREY

(July 22, 2008) For Reserve Deputy Kasy Maselli, each day brings new challenges, late Tuesday morning at Gateway Plaza was an example.

First responders to an unattended package on Vignes Street, adjoining the Gateway Tower, Maselli and his partner investigated the package. In this environment, Maselli's Czech-speaking partner, Ieka, shines.

Maselli has worked with the Transit Services Bureau (TSB) for two years. That works out to an income of about \$2.

"I took the test in 1992 because I wanted to go on as full-time [deputy]," says Maselli, describing how he became to be a reserve deputy, "but there was a hiring freeze, and I decided to go into business for myself."

He did well enough to pursue his dream of becoming a deputy sheriff. Now, a 17-year veteran, he volunteers an average of 170 hours each month.

This just in...



A suspicious black bag on Vignes Street, approximately 50 south of Cesar Chavez Avenue, brought out Metro Security, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and the Los Angeles Police Department, late Tuesday

Maselli has achieved the highest rank that a Reserve Deputy Sheriff can reach: Level I Dedicated. This rank allows him to carry his peace officer status even when off duty.

All full-time deputies hold this privilege, but only the reserve deputies with the Level I Dedicated rank have this right.

Maselli underwent the same rigors that other full-time peace officers must undergo. He graduated from the Sheriffs Department Reserve Academy and now completes yearly field tests and training.

"I always wanted to get into K-9 explosives," says Maselli. "It's more challenging and isn't easy. This unit is very difficult to get into."

To work with his partner of two years, Maselli had to learn a new language, Czech. That's because his partner is a Czech-born sable German shepherd canine, Ieka. Maselli is the only reserve deputy to have the privilege of working with a canine partner.

To earn this honor, Maselli underwent five months of special training at the Adlerhorst Police Dog Academy in Riverside.

morning.

No explosive was found in the bag.

According to Jack Eckles, DEO, System Safety & Security, the black canvas bag was chained to a tree adjoining Gateway Plaza. Law enforcement officials closed Vignes Street between the 101 (Hollywood) Freeway and Cesar Chavez Avenue and closed parts of Cesar Chavez Avenue as well.

The closure began at 11:05 a.m. and lasted approximately 45 minutes. The Gateway Child Care Center was evacuated and the northeast corner of the Gateway Plaza was cordoned off.



On alert at Union Station, the crime-fighting duo patrol the premises.
Photo by Sarah Winfrey

Upon graduating, Maselli and Ieka went to work patrolling all Metro rail lines focusing on the Red Line.

There are three categories that canines and their handlers can train in: explosives, narcotics and patrol. Ieka is trained to alert on explosives.

When patrolling, Maselli notices a change of behavior once Ieka picks up a possible explosive scent and will start leading him to the location of the scent. If Ieka alerts to a scent, she is trained to detect, she signals Maselli with a passive response. Ieka's passive response is sitting and staring at Maselli.

"They [the Sheriffs Department] have asked if I want to go on as a full-time officer, but I am happy where I am as a Reserve Deputy," explains Maselli.

At home, Ieka is just like Maselli's two other German shepherds. She goes for hikes, lies in the sun and works out on her treadmill—if Maselli watches her. If he doesn't, she's content to stop and rest.

"When she gets out of the patrol car, she is ready to work," Maselli says. "But, at home she's the boss."

