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View from the Fourth Street bridge shows sprawling "MTA" tag that stretches along the Los Angeles River banks from First Street to the Metro Rail Division 20 train yard. *Photo by Gayle Anderson*

"MTA" crew members to complete the gigantic painting that is easily spotted from buildings east of Metro's Division 20 at Third Street and Santa Fe Avenue.

The crew was so bold as to depict their work on a tagging website, bragging that it took 300 gallons of white paint and 100 gallons of black paint to complete the project, Pando said.

Estimates from the Army Corp of Engineers show it will take about \$3.7 million dollars to clean up.

Sheriff's Deputies Arrest Notorious Ring of Taggers

Gang of seven are accused of painting the giant "MTA" tag along L.A. River bank that abuts the Metro Rail train yard at Division 20.

BY LAURA KLOTH
myMetro.net

(Jan. 29, 2009) A ring of alleged taggers was arrested this week accused of vandalizing a half-mile stretch of city property adjacent to Metro Rail Division 20 train yard, reported Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Sgt. Augie Pando.

Members of the alleged tagging crew known as the "Metro Transit Assassins" or "MTA" were picked up and charged with defacing city property by painting a huge "MTA" sign along the concrete bank of the Los Angeles River.

Officials estimate it took several nights for the



View from the First Street bridge shows the giant tag against the low-rise skyline of Metro Rail Division 20 train yard.

Arrested were the alleged ring leader Cristian Gheorghiu, 32, of East Hollywood, who is known as "Smear" in tagging circles. His alleged tagging crew includes, Shaun Alexander, 27, Sergio Ayala, 25, Eduin Miramontes, 23, Nicholas Rem, 28, Juan Rocha, 22, and Ryan Swenson, 27 all from the Los Angeles area.

During Wednesday's arrest, officials also confiscated marijuana, a handgun and evidence of narcotics trafficking. Four children were taken in by Department of Children and Family Services due to the living conditions officers found.

On Thursday, sheriff's deputies served another warrant at the home of a 17-year old alleged tagger accused of causing an estimated \$150,000 in damages at Metro's Orange Bus Line, Pando said.

Deputies also recovered stolen property at his home. Thursday's arrest does not appear to be related to the earlier one, Pando added.