



NEWS

May 16, 1996

CONTACT: MARY ANN MASKERY/
JIM SMART
MTA MEDIA RELATIONS
(213) 922-2736/922-2700
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA PARTICIPATES IN FIRST M.A.G.I.C. ANTI-GRAFFITI CONFERENCE FRIDAY, MAY 17TH, 8 A.M.- 4 P.M.

MTA and 12 other government agencies will discuss ways to combat graffiti with interested community groups at the first annual Anti-Graffiti Conference of the Multi-Agency Anti-Graffiti Intervention Committee (M.A.G.I.C.).

The conference will run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on May 17th at the L.A. County Department of Public Works, 900 S. Fremont Ave., Alhambra.

The government agencies are all members of M.A.G.I.C., a group that is dedicated to eradicating graffiti through law enforcement, prevention, and education, in addition to the speedy removal of graffiti markings.

The conference will include panel discussions on such themes as building community support, promoting volunteerism, developing public awareness and prevention techniques, starting up neighborhood watch programs, and dealing with law enforcement and legal issues.

"MTA's Zero Tolerance on Graffiti experience can serve as an example of how to eliminate blight in our community," said Larry Zarian, MTA Chairman. "We are happy to share our knowledge with the community, because the graffiti problem plagues all aspects of society and it takes full-community support to eliminate it."

MTA's anti-graffiti efforts cover a broad spectrum, from community outreach efforts, to educational programs in the schools, as well as a court restitution program.

(MORE)

ANTI-GRAFFITI CONFERENCE, page two

MTA's community outreach relies on 175 employees who volunteer more than six thousand hours a year to work with young people and community groups to communicate to them the importance of a safe and clean transportation system, and to help them organize graffiti cleanup efforts.

MTA volunteers oversee a continuing program in the school system to teach young people about the negative consequences of graffiti. So far, over 1000 schools and one million students have taken part in the "Take Pride Stop Tag" program that MTA developed for the school curriculum.

In addition, MTA is the first transit agency in Southern California to provide an in-house court restitution program. The Mediation and Restitution Services (MARS) program allows the Los Angeles County courts to refer juvenile and adult offenders to the MTA to fulfill community service as required for an alternative sentence. The youth and adult referrals work on cleanup teams to remove graffiti from buses and bus stops, and to weed and remove trash around bus stops.

"MTA will continue to develop innovative ideas, such as our Zero Tolerance program, to combat graffiti," said Joseph Drew, MTA Chief Executive Officer. "We will work with the public to eliminate this scourge, and the negative environment associated with it, from the community."

###