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San Diego – The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and law enforcement officials from five agencies today announced a new joint task force to enhance safety and security for San Diego's transit system. The task force is made possible by a \$1 million grant from the federal Transportation Security Grant Program through the Department of Homeland Security.

Working alongside MTS security personnel will be officers from the Sheriff's Department, and police departments from San Diego, Chula Vista, El Cajon and La Mesa. The task force will operate as a mix of plain clothes and uniformed officers using unmarked and marked vehicles. Task force members will conduct fare inspections, look for suspicious activity and help ensure a safe environment for passengers. The goals of the security task force are:

- Enhance protection at densely populated facilities such as multi-modal transit centers
- Further integrate law enforcement officers into MTS security and enforcements efforts
- Improve information sharing among local law enforcement agencies and MTS security personnel
- Provide directed patrols to enhance homeland security on public transportation

"This task force is the next step in the ongoing efforts at MTS to improve the security of passengers and employees," said MTS Chief Executive Officer Paul Jablonski. "Our efforts have created one of the safest transit systems. It's a record we are proud of and one we will always try to improve."

Recent security upgrades MTS has implemented include:

- Enhance video systems on all Trolleys and most transit stations
- Body cameras for code enforcement officers
- A canine unit to patrol trains and respond to reports of suspicious packages and bomb threats
- "Eagle Team" – a special unit to patrol late night trains on the Orange and Blue Lines
- Implementing the "See something, say something" phone and text messaging system for passengers to report suspicious activity
- Joint security training exercises with partner transit and law enforcement agencies

"Having highly visible law enforcement officers will be a strong deterrent to inappropriate conduct, as well as criminal activity," said MTS Chief of Police Bill Burke. "We've developed great partnerships in the communities where MTS operates and this task force will take it one step further."

MTS secured funding for the task force through a \$1 million competitive grant from the federal Department of Homeland Security. Task force operations will be conducted in conjunction with

200 MTS security personnel. MTS directly employs 35 code compliance officers and contracts with Transit Systems Security, which allocates 165 officers throughout the MTS system.

MTS operates 95 bus routes and three Trolley lines on 53 miles of double-tracked railway. Every weekday more than 300,000 passenger trips are taken on MTS bus and Trolley services. For more information on how you can use public transportation and save money, go to www.sdmts.com.

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