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April 20, 2010

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SUPERVISOR RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS FOR TRANSFER OF UNUSED PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDS TO MAINTAIN DEPUTY PATROLS IN COUNTY'S UNINCORPORATED AREAS

LOS ANGELES – Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Michael Antonovich today urged the Board to consider the transfer of \$2.6 million in one-time funding from the Sheriff Department's Countywide Electronic Monitoring Program (EMP) to fund much-needed deputy patrols in unincorporated areas of the County.

The Sheriff's EMP was initially designed to allow low-level offenders awaiting sentencing to be monitored electronically and intended to help reduce the County's jail population, resulting in savings for the department.

"At this time, the Sheriff has other critical unmet needs with more immediate and significant impacts to the department and the residents of the unincorporated areas of the County," Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

"The services provided in the unincorporated areas are especially critical during these difficult economic times, in which residents may already be experiencing a great deal of uncertainty and insecurity."

For example: From 2008-09, the unincorporated areas of Century Station experienced a decrease in Part 1 reported incidents (includes homicides, rapes, robberies, aggregated assaults, burglaries, thefts and arson) from 4,917 to 3,731. The Lennox Station also experienced a reduction of reported crimes from 2,753 in 2008 to 2,514 in 2009.

“We have worked hard to achieve the goals of lowering crime in these communities and we want to maintain the needed levels of patrol to continue this downward trend, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

In 2008-09, the Board set-aside \$2.6 in on-going funds to allow the Sheriff’s Department to expand the EMP and achieve the anticipated savings. The department has since reported that in order to increase the number of inmates on the EMP, legislative changes are required and state law would have to be amended to allow un-sentenced, low-level offenders to participate in the EMP.

With approval of Supervisor Ridley-Thomas and Antonovich’s request, the Board today instructed the County’s Chief Executive Officer to work with the Sheriff to report back in June during the Board’s final consideration of the 2010-11 budget. The information will include information on how the \$2.6 million would be allocated for patrols among unincorporated communities.

“While the Sheriff continues to work with the County’s legislative advocates to enact this change, the funds that were set-aside for the EMP are not being utilized, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas said.

“It is imperative and pragmatic that those underutilized funds be used mitigate curtailments for the most critically needed services.”

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