



**Office of the Mayor
City of Los Angeles**

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 9, 2007**

**Contact: Matt Szabo
(213) 978-0741**

**MAYOR VILLARAIGOSA, CHIEF BRATTON ANNOUNCE MAJOR
PRIVATE FUNDING FOR LAPD RECRUITMENT EFFORTS**

\$1 million donation from Mercury Insurance will cover signing bonuses for new police recruits and help the City move forward on its plan to hire 1,000 new officers

Mayor Villaraigosa also challenges the City Council to keep the City's commitment to expand the LAPD

LOS ANGELES – Continuing his push to put 1,000 new cops on Los Angeles' streets, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa joined LAPD Chief William Bratton, Councilmembers Jack Weiss and Wendy Greuel, and representatives from Mercury Insurance today to announce Mercury's \$1 million donation to the LAPD's appointment bonus program.

The Mayor also challenged the City Council to keep the City's commitment to expand the LAPD, and reiterated his threat to veto any effort to slow or cap police hiring.

"Our ability to recruit and train new officers is the primary reason crime continues to drop in this City, and any attempt to cut police hiring is unacceptable," Mayor Villaraigosa said. "Mercury's generosity will help put more officers on the street at a faster rate and at a time when we need them most."

As part of the Mayor's drive to increase the size of the LAPD to 10,000 officers by 2010, the City has offered signing bonuses to all new recruits and police academy graduates. On October 23, the City Council passed an ordinance authorizing bonuses for 1,332 officers completing their training program between January 2007 and November 2008. The Council measure also called on the LAPD to raise at least \$1 million in private funds for the effort.

- MORE -

Mercury Insurance's contribution to the LAPD will fund the signing bonuses for 381 cops finishing the academy.

"Mercury Insurance was founded in the City of Los Angeles nearly a half a century ago, and from that humble beginning the company has grown to become the state's second largest auto insurer," said Mercury President and CEO Gabriel Tirador. "Much of this success is the result of our commitment to protect and serve our customers, so we are very pleased to be able to join with Mayor Villaraigosa and Chief Bratton to help fund a program that will improve public safety for not only Mercury customers, but all Los Angeles residents."

Upon graduating from the police academy, recruits will receive a \$2,500 bonus. Once they complete their probation period, these officers will receive another \$2,500, bringing their total bonus to \$5,000.

In order to attract more experienced officers from around the state and ensure the LAPD's competitiveness in recruiting the best cops available, the City will provide \$5,000 to lateral officers – those transferring into the LAPD from other agencies – upon their academy graduation. The City will offer lateral transfers another \$5,000 when they complete the probation period.

"Mercury proudly supports the Los Angeles Police Department," said Mercury's Senior Vice President and Chief Claims Officer, Joanna Moore. "These brave men and women have chosen to dedicate themselves to protecting the city and its residents, and Mercury is pleased to support this noble goal with this donation."

Los Angeles has remained the most under-policed big City in America. While other major cities, including New York and Chicago, deploy nearly 40 officers per 10,000 residents, LA has just 25 police officers on the street for every 10,000 Angelenos. This lack of personnel has hindered the LAPD's ability to respond to emergency situations, enhance the police presence in high-crime areas and effectively tackle the challenges of gun and gang violence across the City.

Upon taking office, Mayor Villaraigosa initiated a plan to put 1,000 more cops on the street and increase the size of the LAPD to 10,000 officers for the first time in the department's history. This drive has included an aggressive recruitment effort and new measures to fund the LAPD's expansion.

Following the news conference, the LAPD conducted graduation ceremonies for the latest class of new police recruits. Each of today's graduates is eligible for the signing bonus.

###