



Client: Segway

Publication: *Daily News*

Date: September 22, 2005

Circulation: 204,493



Article Last Updated: 9/21/2005 10:40 PM

Bob Hope Airport police taking off on Segway scooters

By Jason Kandel, Staff Writer
LA Daily News

BURBANK - They walk the beat. They drive cars. They patrol on bikes.

And now police at Bob Hope Airport patrol parking lots and terminals on a computerized two-wheeled scooter.

"It's kind of the 21st-century version of the horse," said Airport Police Chief Ed Skvarna. "It's so intuitive. It's so efficient and smooth. And it does allow you to sneak up on people."

Three Segway Human Transporters, self-balancing electric machines capable of 12 mph, were purchased by the department for about \$4,500 each.

Able to run four or five hours on one charge, the scooter carries its rider on a pad suspended horizontally between its two wheels and is steered by an upright handlebar.

Controlled by gyroscopes and an elaborate computer system, the scooters can negotiate curbs, rough pavement and dirt, officials said.

Bob Hope police say the scooters let them navigate through crowds to get to calls quicker. Officers also get a better view - when on one, an officer stands more than a foot off the ground.

"Response times are cut in half," said Officer Josh Hubbard, who scootered to a call Wednesday of a passenger found with a razor blade in his luggage. "It probably took me 45 seconds to about a minute to get there, half the time it would have taken me to get over there on foot."

All of the airport department's 30 officers, including Skvarna, have been trained to ride the Segway.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority already has the machines, which it acquired in 2003 in a pilot program.

Los Angeles International Airport officers use bicycles, spokesman Tom Winfrey said.

"We like our bikes. In-line wheels work very well," Winfrey said.

Jason Kandel, (818) 546-3306

jason.kandel@dailynews.com