

## TOPANGA AREA HISTORY

The newest Division in the Los Angeles Police Department is Topanga Division. Founded in 2009, Topanga Area adopted areas that were traditionally policed by West Valley Division from since its founding in 1957. The word Topanga, named after the nearby town in the Santa Monica Mountains and major boulevard running through the Division is of Native American origin meaning “where the mountain meets the sea.”

A large attraction in Topanga Division is the Westfield Topanga and The Village Shopping Centers, which take up nearly two entire Reporting Districts which officers are assigned to patrol based on their size. Additionally, there are nearby hiking trails and parks which include “El Escorpion Park” and the entrance to the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve. The Valley Communications Dispatch Center (VCDC) is also located within the boundaries of Topanga Area. This facility is one of two that receive “9-1-1” calls and dispatches emergency services for the entire City of Los Angeles.

The Woolsey Fire of 2018 sparked near the boundary line of Topanga Area on November 8<sup>th</sup> of that year. The fire lasted until November 21<sup>st</sup> and burned over 90,000 acres. The fire also claimed the lives of 3 people. Due to the large amount of threatened residences from the fire, officers from all over Los Angeles and neighboring cities joined in unified command with Topanga Area officers to safeguard the lives and property of community members through evacuations and extra patrol of unoccupied neighborhoods.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Officer Randy Simmons became the first Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Officer killed in the line of duty in what was then West Valley Area. After Topanga Area opened, the location became a part of its area of responsibility. A memorial sign is installed in his memory on the north side of Vanowen Street, between Oakdale Street and Hatillo Street.