

# METROLINK MATTERS

METROLINK NEWS AND EVENTS



## METROLINK REMODELING

Metrolink is building a stronger, safety-anchored organization that ultimately will set a new standard for commuter railroads and offer customers a world-class experience.

Passengers have noted some signs of our transformation in progress: inward-facing cameras installed, new collision-absorption-equipped cars being tested, progress on Positive Train Control, and the selection of Amtrak as our train operator.

But what they cannot see are the phenomenal changes occurring at our very core. These changes are designed to improve the customer experience. Let us explain how.

The Metrolink Board hired a new architect with a new vision for Metrolink, CEO John E. Fenton. The Board has embraced his approach and empowered him to construct a better Metrolink from the ground up, by restructuring the organization, directing re-energized staff, employing operational efficiencies, exercising fiscal accountability, and erecting new opportunities.

Our strengthened foundation is a culture of safety. Everything we do at Metrolink rests on this core value, and it is the steel that shapes our renovated structure.

Already, we have benchmarked other successful safety programs, completed a comprehensive safety assessment, conducted safety exercises, held a transition team-building event for employees and contractor co-workers, and created a new Guiding Safety Coalition.

Our structure has been redesigned. We have reviewed all job functions, realigned staffing, and revised our departmental organization. Not only are the changes designed to improve efficiency, but—more importantly—they are centered on both safety and our customers. Communication at all levels, with internal and external audiences, has increased.

Floor by floor, we are building a new Metrolink and are completely invested in making rapid progress.

(continued on page 2)

- 2** • A Word from the CEO
- Fuel-Conservation Policy
- 3** • New Train Cars Continue to Arrive
- Customer Commentaries
- 4** • Flying Out of Burbank a Breeze
- 5** • Metrolink Safety Always Matters
- Ask the CEO
- 6** • Meet the Metrolink Team

800.371.LINK(5465)

A NEW METROLINK

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

WORLD-CLASS EXPERIENCE

COMMUNICATIONS

IS UNDER WAY

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

SAFETY

CULTURE

**Building a New Foundation to Become a World-Class Service**

## A Word from the CEO

Greetings, Metrolink riders.

As Metrolink's appointed architect of change, I can assure you that we have a laser focus on safety and customer service, and are building an edifice designed for stability and long-term success.



Metrolink CEO John E. Fenton

Mahatma Gandhi said, "We must become the change we want to see." We at Metrolink have embraced a new set of values that engage our dedicated team members. You may hear some noisy hammering along the way, but we are all working busily behind the scenes toward solutions to make your experience better every day, on every ride.

One of my commitments to you is to continue to be transparent as we build a new Metrolink. That's why we are explaining some of the steps we have taken in the *Metrolink Matters* cover story in this issue. And that's why we are listening to what you say. I hear you.

Thank you for helping me to keep the conversation going. Feel free to write me at [johnfenton@scrra.com](mailto:johnfenton@scrra.com).

Sincerely,

## Fuel-Conservation Policy: Smart, Green, Cost-Effective

Metrolink's new fuel-conservation program is saving money and enhancing our already green reputation.

Soon after his arrival, CEO John E. Fenton noticed train engines idling between routes and saw dollars floating out with emissions. Shut them down, he suggested. Within two weeks, 93,000 gallons of diesel fuel were saved. Fuel costs have since declined by \$30,000 a week.

Whenever safety and passenger comfort allow, our new policy is to shut down main engines and head-end power for layovers of an hour or more at Los Angeles Union Station, the Central Maintenance Facility in Los Angeles, and other Metrolink layover facilities. We restart power in time to cool or heat passenger compartments to comfortable temperatures.

Significant savings in fuel and emissions are already being recorded. Simply shutting down head-end power for one locomotive saves about thirty-five gallons per hour.

Metrolink locomotives have always been powered by ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel, the cleanest and most efficient fuel available for liquid-fueled locomotives. Our new-generation MotivePower MPXpress locomotives are even more energy-efficient and powerful, and they emit fewer pollutants. They are equipped with electronic fuel injection that provides precise fuel metering, and automatic engine stop-start technology that reduces idle emissions by at least half.



## Building a New Customer Experience (continued from page 1)

Operational efficiency serves as the ground floor of our structure as we build a streamlined, more efficient organization by being better stewards of our resources. Here, we have worked to ensure a seamless transition to Amtrak, are incorporating our customers' experiences in operational decision making, and have initiated a complete review of all schedules and crew and equipment usage to look for growth opportunities.

We are creating new space for customer engagement that includes improved relationships with all of our stakeholders.

To ensure they join us in our remodeled agency, we have engaged our tenants—including employees, contractor co-workers, member agencies, elected officials, regulators, freight partners, and rail labor unions—in discussions about Metrolink's future. We have participated in external presentations with a variety of stakeholders and grassroots organizations, and created new agency task forces and board executive committees.

At every level, these modifications are driven by the aim of providing world-class customer service. Already we have

assessed passenger security, reviewed ticket-machine placement, increased train and lavatory cleanings, and improved customer-service responsiveness through social media and quicker incident handling.

Our mission—to provide an outstanding passenger experience on every ride with safe, dependable, clean, and on-time operations—cannot be fully accomplished until the Metrolink structure is rock solid. This initial renovation and continuous improvement going forward will enable us to achieve greatness.



## New Train Cars Continue to Arrive, Make Test Runs

Metrolink's fleet of cutting-edge collision-absorption-equipped new cars is growing, with new shipments arriving regularly. As they roll in, the fleet is being put through a rigorous testing program designed to ensure that they perform safely and smoothly before being put into service.

Once fully tested and proven passenger-ready, these new cars will replace older equipment currently in service and add capacity to our busiest lines. But it's imperative that we test them extensively before inviting you, our Metrolink community, to get on board.

We perform proof-of-design tests of the new cars while stationary and we take them out on the rails to test them in motion. During nighttime hours at specially selected sites



on the Metrolink system, we test cars in both directions at four different speeds (twenty, forty, sixty, and eighty miles

per hour)—first empty, and then filled with sandbags to simulate a loaded car. We check acceleration, movement, and brake rates. In addition, at station test runs, we open and close the doors to ensure that all automatic announcements play as designed. We also run crucial emergency-braking tests.

Each of the new stainless-steel cars features crumple zones on each end to absorb energy in a collision. Interior safety features include higher seat backs, bolted-in seat cushions, and energy-absorbing tables. They will be the first in the United States to be equipped with all these features.



## Customer Commentaries

Metrolink Matters will share feedback from you on what passengers are talking about out there on the rails. We will reprint quips from your letters and e-mails—and even your Twitter, Facebook, and other social-media comments ... so keep 'em coming!

Every mode of communication matters. This issue, we highlight some of the conversations we're having on Twitter.

July 14, 5:44 p.m., @714snoopy asked @Metrolink:  
**Why aren't all OC train stats sent by MetrolinkIOEC? Isn't 689 an OC train? I have to follow Metrolink & get info 4 all trains!**

July 15, 12:13 a.m., @Metrolink replied directly to @714snoopy:  
**To follow the 600 series trains for status updates, please follow @MetrolinkOC.**

July 14, 5:54 p.m., @714snoopy informed @Metrolink:  
**Scrolling info signs @ Tustin have been broken for over a month. It would help everyone if fixed when there are delays.**

*Metrolink contacted staff immediately, the Operations Department reported the problem, and the signs were fixed.*

July 15, 5:27 p.m., @714snoopy told @Metrolink:  
**Thanks for info on MetrolinkOC and for fixing signage @ Tustin station!**

July 19, 8:31 a.m., @dumblauren reached out to @Metrolink:  
**What if the validator isn't working!!**

July 19, 8:41 a.m., @Metrolink replied directly to @dumblauren:  
**Please let me know which station. Thank you.**

July 19, 8:46 a.m., @dumblauren told @Metrolink:  
**The upland station both validators.**

*Metrolink contacted staff to take care of the validator issue, deployed a field-service representative, and resolved the problem.*

July 19, 10:46 a.m., @Metrolink replied directly to @dumblauren:  
**Thank you. Both validators have been cleared and are now working properly.**

*Thanks, @dumblauren and @714snoopy for your messages. We are all in this together. We appreciate our passengers' taking the time to Tweet what they experience and giving us the opportunity to correct any issues.*

**WAY TO GO, TEAM (passengers, staff, and coworker contractors)!**

## Flying Out of Burbank a Breeze



Traveling via Burbank Bob Hope Airport—already renowned as one of Southern California's most user-friendly airports—is getting even easier. On July 1, the Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport Authority

began offering complimentary SuperShuttle service between Burbank Bob Hope Airport and the Downtown Burbank Metrolink Station. And in late 2012, the airport will open a \$120 million Regional Intermodal Transportation Center (RITC).

The three-story RITC, located across the street from the airport, will house a consolidated rental-car facility, up to fourteen full-size MTA and Amtrak buses, and a moving sidewalk to transport train passengers to and from the airport's passenger terminal. The RITC also will feature solar power, a compressed-natural-gas fueling station open to the public, and large-scale public art.

Rail passengers initially will walk to the RITC across Empire Avenue; a planned addition calls for an enclosed pedestrian bridge. The airport also hopes eventually to expand parking available for Metrolink and Amtrak passengers.

Meanwhile, SuperShuttle can transport hundreds of riders daily, free of charge, between the Downtown Burbank Metrolink Station and Bob Hope Airport.

From the airport, request a SuperShuttle ride to the Downtown Burbank Metrolink Station at the shuttle island in front of the airport at any time during normal airport operating hours of 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Passengers originating from the Downtown Burbank Metrolink Station are advised to make advance

reservations to ensure prompt pickup, but may also use the service without reservations.

To make advance reservations, call (800) 224-7767; for immediate or after-hours service, call (818) 558-3179.



# METROLINK SAFETY

## Heat Restrictions—When Rails Are Hot, Hot, Hot!

When it's really hot, we all slow down—and that sometimes includes Metrolink trains. Excessive heat in July and August, for example, resulted in record-setting outdoor temperatures throughout Southern California that made it necessary to place heat restrictions along sections of Metrolink track. Although they can trigger inconvenient train delays, heat restrictions are imposed solely to protect your safety.

Heat restrictions require engineers to reduce top train speeds while traveling over specific sections of track. These restrictions are put in place when outdoor temperatures exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit for the first time in sixty days, outdoor temperatures exceed 110 degrees, or the actual rail temperature measures above 140 degrees.

### Rail Expands in Heat

Why must some trains slow down in extreme temperatures? It happens where Metrolink trains operate on continuously welded rail (CWR), which is produced in quarter-mile-long lengths. When these quarter-mile rails are laid on ties in the track bed, the lengths are welded together to create continuous rail. This eliminates the “clickety-clack” sound of traditional thirty-nine-foot rails. Welded rail results in a smoother ride and requires less maintenance.

(continued on page 6)



## Ask the CEO

CEO John E. Fenton reads all of your e-mails and will answer some of your questions in Metrolink Matters. He also forwards some e-mails to Passenger Services for immediate resolution. This is part of his promise to provide excellent customer service. Please write him at [johnfenton@scrra.net](mailto:johnfenton@scrra.net).



On July 19, Train 605 from Oceanside to L.A. Union Station was about one minute away from Fullerton Station at 6:58 a.m. The train stopped and five minutes later, the conductor announced that we would be stopped for five more minutes to let an L.A.-bound Riverside train go ahead of our 605 train. We were held just outside Fullerton Station for about thirty-five minutes.

Who made that decision to let the Riverside-L.A. train go ahead of the 605 train by delaying the 605 train thirty-five minutes? What sense does it make to delay 500 more people and other later trains because of a delayed Riverside train? Can someone please explain this logic to me and the rest of the riders from Orange County?

Your organization as a whole needs to understand that people rely on them to get to work and back home ON TIME.

The Metrolink system is dispatched by three separate agencies, with this particular stretch controlled by BNSF Railway. We are working with BNSF to achieve greater coordination, quicker communication, and better dispatching decisions that make sense for passenger and freight trains. I am personally concerned about this issue because it impacts our ability to give riders the service they deserve.

Thanks for today's memo [June 17] explaining [the Union Station signal problem] in L.A. It's nice to know that you care about getting us to and from work. I'm currently sitting in Train 668 out of L.A. and just received your apology. I'd like to take a moment to thank you for taking the time to write about the situation yesterday. It really goes a long way to show that your commitment to good customer service and improved communication is more than just an empty promise. Keep up the good work. The price increase has a lot of people upset and vulnerable, and little details like these go a long way to remind people that there is still a human aspect to the Metrolink organization.

We realize your time is precious. We are working toward making your Metrolink experience better each and every day—from the moment you decide to take the train to when you arrive at your destination. This is all part of our reinvigorated focus on our customers' needs. We are determined to create a continuous communication loop—you talk to us, we talk to you, and Metrolink service benefits.



# ALWAYS MATTERS

(continued from page 5) But steel rails slowly expand and contract as temperatures rise and fall. Before CWR, heat expansion was absorbed by small gaps located every thirty-nine feet between lengths of rail. With CWR, welding closed the gaps. Although other elements of CWR track design work to constrain the natural tendency of steel to expand and contract, the rail may move sideways or kink in high temperatures.



## When Weather Spikes, Metrolink Inspects Track

Track inspectors monitor track conditions when temperatures rise quickly from night to day or when daytime temperatures are extreme and rails could rapidly expand. If potential problems are identified, trains may be required to slow down, or the track may be taken out of service, repaired, and placed back into service. On some Metrolink lines, heat restrictions that lower top train speeds could stretch fifty miles or farther.

Thanks for your patience when scorching Southern California weather forces heat restrictions to be imposed. We at Metrolink work hard to prevent train delays, but your safe travel always comes first.

## Meet the Metrolink Team: Dispatcher Avram Stanton

He served for a decade in the U.S. military, has three young daughters, and is a triathlete. No wonder Metrolink dispatcher Avram Stanton is respected by his coworkers for his discipline, dedication, and quick analytical thinking.

Picture the Metrolink system—numerous trains running on many lines, sharing rails with other railroads that have their own full schedules. An intricate choreography ensures that each train can move where and when it needs to. A small issue on one bit of track or a delay of a single train can disrupt this interconnected system and create a domino effect of delays—or, worse, potential danger. Dispatchers keep everything running safely and efficiently. Think of them as the air-traffic controllers of the railroad system. In fact, Stanton was an air-traffic controller for the U.S. Air Force before he became a train dispatcher.

A dispatcher needs “immaculate attention to detail,” Stanton says, and “the ability to make several successive decisions rapidly and without error.” His job is like “the ultimate SAT question.” You know the one: Train A is traveling west at X speed; Train B is heading northeast at Y speed. When will they pass? Remember that trains don’t travel at constant speeds, but slow for curves and stop at stations. Now multiply all that by the number of trains in the Metrolink system and connected systems.

With a “different challenge every day,” Stanton says, his job of almost four years at the Metrolink Operations Center in Pomona is “never dull.”

Neither is Stanton’s life. On September 19, this Redlands-based father of six-year-old twins and a two-year-old competed in the Long Beach Sprint Triathlon. Now he’s looking forward to a 17-mile trail run. “There’s a cornucopia of things you can subject yourself to in Southern California,” he says, celebrating the abundance of Southland endurance sporting competitions. He plans to approach many of them with the same enthusiasm he brings to his work.



### METROLINK MATTERS

Editor-in-Chief: Claudia Ziebell, Communications Manager  
Contributors: Tracy Berge, Cheryl Downey, Jessica Hoffmann  
Designer: Harlan West/HWDS  
Cover Graphic: Peter Williamson/HWDS  
Director, Communications and Public Relations: Angela M. Starr  
C.E.O.: John E. Fenton  
Send comments or story ideas to  
metrolinkmatters@scrta.net  
or to Metrolink Matters, 700 S. Flower St., Suite 2600,  
Los Angeles, CA 90017.  
Published by Metrolink Communications

HWDS 9/10

Printed on recycled paper with soy ink.