



Dejá Vu



All Over Again



The "Red Car" team: from left, Mitch Trivanovich of Sumitomo and the MTA's Bob Ogus, Brian Montalbano, Lee Hetherington and Larry Mosqueda. photos by rick jager

## Pacific Electric 'Red Cars' Will Return for 10th Anniversary of Metro Blue Line

By BILL HEARD, Editor  
(June 13) Patrons of the Metro Blue Line have a surprise in store for them beginning July 14: many will take a step back in time and board what appears for all the world to be a Pacific Electric Red Car.

Dejá vu? No, just a very clever disguise created by an enthusiastic and dedicated crew at Division 11 that has converted two Sumitomo P-865 light rail cars to look very much like the historic trolleys. The cars will be introduced to the public next month during the celebration of the re-introduction of intercity rail service in Los Angeles County.

"There's a lot of nostalgia associated with the Red Cars and we wanted to commemorate that history," says Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner. "This is a 'Thank You' to the people along the corridor who have made the Metro Blue Line such a success and have supported it with

their patronage."

### For use in regular service

The new "Red Cars" will be used frequently in regular service, but also will be displayed at special events starting with the anniversary celebration.

Earlier this year, with the Metro Blue Line cars due for repainting, the Division 11 crew designated cars No. 109 and 148 to be refitted

as Red Cars. The red coat of paint was applied by Sumitomo as part of an agreement to repaint the entire fleet of cars. But MTA employees were responsible for the exterior detail work and interior fittings.

Division 11 employees involved in the project included Michael Enis, service attendant; Lee Hetherington, paint and body specialist; Russell Homan, rail instructor; Brian Montalbano, paint and body specialist; Larry Mosqueda, supervisor; and Bob Ogus, division maintenance manager.

Providing assistance and historical information was John Heller, an architect who designed the paint and decal scheme for the revamped cars. Heller is a member of the Electric Railway Historical Association, which was closely involved in the project.

### **Symbol of the heritage of rail**

"The maintenance crew translated this 'Thank You' to our patrons into a tangible symbol of the heritage of rail in our community and of the service we provide to the public," says Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. "They did a great job, and that's reflected in the quality of the work they did on these Red Cars."

The exterior of the two cars will bear the gold "butterfly wings" and center headlamp of a 1940-style Red Car. On the sides above the windows in gold letters will be the words "Pacific Electric."

The most challenging part of the historical design, according to Ogus, the Division 11 maintenance manager, was making a replica of the 1914 Pacific Electric whistle with its famous E-flat tone - a sound so admired by railroad buffs that it was licensed to Westinghouse for use on trains nationwide.

### **Whistle matches the tone**

"The slightest detail was very important," says Ogus, who notes that the first attempt to replicate the whistle out of stainless steel was a dismal failure - it just didn't have the right tone. "So, we made one of brass cut almost like the pipe of a pipe organ, then rolled it in mud to artificially age it. Now, the whistle matches the sound on old recordings of the Red Cars."

The interiors of the two converted cars also will have a strikingly different appearance. Walls will have a light mint green wainscot with cream above. Seats were changed from light blue to forest green. The Historical Association will provide a set of 24 special posters that will include modern safety information along with

**photos and facts about the Red Cars.**

**And, finally, to maintain the historical perspective, the MTA will issue a series of six special Metro Blue Line timetables designed with covers similar to those on timetables used by Pacific Electric. The redesigned timetables will be rotated in use throughout the year.**

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