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PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON

A First for LA County: MTA, Munis Launch ‘Regional EZPass’

By ED SCANNELL

(Aug. 13, 2002) With the wave of a “magic wand” over a huge tophat, an explosion of confetti and a hearty cheer, MTA and municipal operators today launched the Regional EZpass, Los Angeles County’s first regional transit pass program.

The Gateway Plaza news conference, which drew officials and vehicles from all participating transit agencies, symbolized the significant step the region is taking toward seamless transit service and a Universal Fare System.

Beginning in September, transit riders will have the option of using the monthly Regional EZpass for unlimited travel on the Metro Bus and Metro Rail systems and on the 11 municipal bus systems.

The September Regional EZpass will be available August 25 at most Metro Pass sales outlets and other outlets countywide. Each transit agency, including MTA, also will continue to sell their regular monthly passes.

‘A common currency’

“The Regional EZpass will provide riders using two or more of the 12 participating bus and rail systems with a common ‘currency’ that will simplify their commutes,” MTA Board Chairman Hal Bernson said during the media event.



“Riders of multiple systems no longer will be forced to carry extra cash or purchase additional transit passes and we believe the added simplicity will encourage thousands of other commuters to try public transit,” he said. “The Regional EZpass also will speed boardings and eliminate the need for transfers and tickets.”

The Regional EZpass will be priced at \$58 for a regular monthly pass, \$29 for seniors, and \$29 for the disabled (with appropriate identification including either an MTA Disabled ID card, Medicare card, LACTOA card or DMV

placard).

The Regional EZpass will entitle the pass holder to unlimited local travel on all MTA buses and trains and on the fixed route bus systems of the following municipal transit operators: Culver City Municipal Bus Lines, Foothill Transit, Montebello Bus Lines, Gardena Municipal Bus Lines, Commerce Municipal Bus Lines, Long Beach Transit, Norwalk Transit, Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, Torrance Transit, Santa Clarita Transit and LADOT.



Operators from MTA and 11 municipal transit systems help launch the new regional pass.

PHOTO BY LISA HUYNH

Serves 31,000 bus stops

The 12 transit systems operate a total of 386 bus lines and serve nearly 31,000 bus stops.

The multi-operator task force that developed the Regional EZpass will encourage the future participation of other local transit providers, Metrolink and other counties.

The cost of the program for fiscal year 2003 will be approximately \$2 million, which will be paid from Proposition A and C local transit sales tax funds.

The Regional EZpass represents the first major phase of a universal fare system (UFS). Within three years, MTA will debut an electronic smart card that will be accepted by the 12 transit providers, Metrolink and paratransit service providers.

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