

'Today isn't Friday. It's WOW day!'

—Doug Duplisea, Kiewit/Washington, Metro Gold Line contractor

> Metro Gold Line contractor Doug Duplisea hands over the keys to the Metro Gold Line to MTA CEO Roger Snoble at Friday's dedication ceremony.



PHOTO BY RICHARD CORNUBERT

VIPs, Pyrotechnics Welcome Opening of Metro Gold Line

(July 25, 2003) The future arrived at Union Station in a burst of pyrotechnics, Friday morning, when a gleaming white train burst through a large "Discover Gold" banner to the applause of several hundred officials, MTA staff and guests.



PHOTO BY LAURA WOODWARD

The opening of the Metro Gold Line marks the first time in almost 50 years that downtown Los Angeles and communities along the way to Pasadena have been connected by light-rail service. Coming up in the near future: construction of a rail line extension into East Los Angeles.

The VIPs were still clapping as Operator Ruben Ramirez eased the inaugural train to a stop alongside the Track Two platform. They peered through the windows, trying to see who already was aboard.

PHOTO BY LAURA WOODWARD

Ramirez opened the doors and out stepped the very symbols of American achievement: six Olympic gold medal winners.

Greeting the waiting crowd were swimmers John Naber, a

four-time medallist at the 1976 Olympics, and Bruce Furniss, winner of two medals at the '76 Olympics. They were joined by track and field medallists Bob Seagren, Inger Miller, Jeanette Bolden and Danny Everett.



Olympian Gold Medallist Bob Seagren greets the Gold Line's first passengers.

With welcoming ceremonies concluded, the VIPs and guests began boarding the inaugural train for a ride to Memorial Park station in Pasadena where they were greeted by city officials. Backup trains carried the overflow crowd.

PHOTO BY LAURA WOODWARD



Flanked by City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, left, and County Supervisor Gloria Molina, right, Mayor Jim Hahn cuts the official ribbon. Below, MTA Board Members John Fasana and Frank Roberts, with Rail TOS Ricardo Perez, signal victory as they board the inaugural train.

CEO Roger Snoble, accompanied by his wife, Kit, found it "absolutely indescribable" to be aboard the inaugural train. "This is the next step toward the future. The next step in expanding the system to be able to handle greater numbers of people, to be able to offer faster and safer service."



General Manager Gerald Francis, celebrating his first opening since taking the reins of Metro Rail a year and a half ago, said, "Everybody in this agency has worked so hard to make this happen. I'm proud to be a part of it and I appreciate my Metro Rail team – they've done a lot of work."

Melvin Clark, director, Rail Transportation, was excited about the inaugural events, but said he

is looking forward to the opening of regular service on Monday.

"I want to take care of our bread and butter and that's our everyday passengers," he said. "We really have to shine. I think Monday is going to be more exciting for me."

Remarks by VIPs during the opening ceremonies at Union Station included these comments:

County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, as master of ceremonies, welcomed guests by noting that, "Today marks a day that we can really feel that...(we are)...developing a transportation system that serves the region. We will never solve the traffic problem, but what we can do is offer people who sit in traffic all day long an alternative."

Mayor James Hahn, who recalled riding the last Red Car 40 years ago with his father, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, and his sister, Janet, now an LA City Council member, got into the spirit of the moment.

PHOTO BY RICHARD CORNUBERT



Remarks on stage accompanied awards and congratulatory commendations. Here Los Angeles City Councilman Ed Reyes presents the official "Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Gold Line" resolution signed by Mayor James Hahn and the entire City Council.

"For Los Angeles, for Pasadena, for the San Gabriel Valley, for all of Southern California, I just want to say: All Aboard!"

"This is a great day," the mayor continued, "because we have a rail network that will connect people to their jobs, their schools, and give them an opportunity to visit landmarks and attractions all over the city."

County Supervisor Gloria Molino paid tribute to the people in the neighborhoods where construction took place. "Today, we can celebrate this wonderful Gold Line that will go through our neighborhoods and will facilitate transportation for everyone in our community...."

PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

County Supervisor Mike Antonovich drew a historical reference. "Just as the Gold Rush opened the door to California's future, this Gold Line opens to the door to a future cost-effective regional transit system for Los Angeles County."

LA City Councilman Ed Reyes, chairman of the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority and a member of the Metro Gold Line Transition Committee, described the diverse people who live in communities along the rail line.



All Aboard: County Supervisor and MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky, center, shows his set of Gold Line keys to, from left, Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, Mayor Jim Hahn, City Councilman Ed Reyes and County Supervisor Mike Antonovich on the inaugural ride to Pasadena.

"These communities represent the world," he said. "You have people who speak...many dialects and languages and they'll be getting together once or twice a day to share an experience, a ride on the Gold Line. I believe that is the future of the city."

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