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Metro Board Chairman and Mayor of Los Angeles Antonio Villaraigosa, alongside CEO Roger Snoble and Board Member Bonnie Lowenthal, leads ceremonies Oct. 3 to officially launch Metro Freeway Service Patrol Big Rig Tow Service for the I-710 Freeway.



Photos by Luis Inzunza

Metro Freeway Service Patrol Big Row Tow Service in Gear on the 710

By RICK JAGER

(Oct 3, 2005) In an effort to quickly reduce traffic congestion resulting from breakdowns of big rig trucks traveling along the Long Beach Freeway, Metro today introduced the Metro Freeway Service Patrol Big Rig Tow Service.

"This is a natural for the busy I-710 Freeway with the volumes of big rig trucks that travel along this congested corridor," said Los Angeles Mayor and Metro Board Chairman Antonio Villaraigosa. "Getting help to big rig truck drivers and getting them out of the way of freeway traffic should go a long way in helping to reduce congestion on this freeway."

Two-year demonstration project

The Metro Freeway Service Patrol Big Rig Tow Service is a two year demonstration project and will use two Metro-owned heavy-duty tow trucks that will operate from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday exclusively along the I-710 (Long Beach Freeway) from Pacific Coast Highway in Long Beach to just north of the I-5 (Santa Ana Freeway) in East Los Angeles, for a total of 18 miles.



Mayor Villaraigosa climbs aboard one of two heavy-duty tow trucks now deployed by the Metro Freeway Service Patrol.

“This demonstration project will be the first of its kind in the nation focused on freeway congestion caused by freight and goods movement along the I-710 freeway,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Don Knabe. “We are excited about this project and hope it truly relieves congestion along this important transportation corridor.”

Sized for big rigs

The I-710 Big Rig program will operate much like the current successful Metro Freeway Service Patrol program, with the goal of assisting heavy-duty vehicles requiring short-term mechanical assistance, when feasible, or providing a tow to a designated drop location off of the freeway that will allow disabled heavy-duty truck operators to seek longer-term assistance from a provider of their choice.

“Studies show that a disabled heavy-duty type vehicle can significantly increase congestion which negatively impacts air quality as well as travel time,” said Long Beach City Councilwoman and Metro Board Member Bonnie Lowenthal. “The congested Long Beach Freeway is a great place to add this type of assistance to improve the flow of traffic along the freeway.”

Metro, in partnership with the California Highway Patrol and Caltrans, will work with UC Berkeley in evaluating the demonstration project and offer recommendations on the feasibility of instituting similar heavy-duty tow truck towing services on other heavily traveled truck routes within Los Angeles County.

Cost of the program is not to exceed \$2.5 million for the two-year demonstration project (including an optional third year) and is funded by a one dollar DMV vehicle registration fee for support of the freeway Call Box Program and the Metro Freeway Service Patrol administered through Los Angeles Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LASAFE).

