


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

- ▶ [Safety](#)
- ▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)
- ▶ [Ask the CEO](#)
- ▶ [CEO Forum](#)
- ▶ [Employee Recognition](#)
- ▶ [Employee Activities](#)
- ▶ [Metro Projects](#)
- ▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

- ▶ [Archives](#)

- ▶ [Events Calendar](#)

- ▶ [Research Center/ Library](#)

- ▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)

- ▶ [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

- ▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)

- ▶ [Policies](#)

- ▶ [Training](#)

- ▶ [Help Desk](#)

- ▶ [Intranet Policy](#)

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The inaugural Metro Liner, bearing Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, CEO Roger Snoble and other elected and community leaders, bursts through an orange banner at the Balboa Station. Photo by Bill Heard



Burst of Orange Opens New Transit Service in the Valley

- 'A new era for the San Fernando Valley,' Mayor says
- 'Wave of the future,' says Yaroslavsky
- Opening ceremonies: [A star is born.](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Oct. 28, 2005) Gathered under a huge white tent at the Balboa station in the heart of the San Fernando Valley, Friday morning, scores of city and county leaders were joined by Metro officials for ceremonies marking the official opening of the Metro Orange Line.

Moments earlier, the inaugural Metro Liner bearing Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, CEO Roger Snoble and other elected and community leaders, burst through an orange banner as confetti filled the air.

TV personality Huell Howser introduced Villaraigosa who called the Orange Line "a downpayment on progress."

"We begin a new era in the San Fernando Valley today," the mayor declared, "one that's been long-awaited and long-deserved."



CEO Roger Snoble, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa lead dignitaries aboard the inaugural Metro Liner bus for ride to Balboa Station. Photo by Juan Ocampo.

Noting that coming years will see such new transit services as the Eastside Extension and the Exposition Line, Villaraigosa received a standing ovation with cheers and whistles when he said, "Yesterday, the experts said...that it is safe to build a subway down Wilshire Boulevard."

The mayor ended his remarks by singling out Yaroslavsky as the driving force behind construction of the Orange Line.

'Slings and arrows'

"We've taken a lot of slings and arrows, fought lawsuits, fought the wettest winter on record since the 1880s," the supervisor said. "Every conceivable jinx has been put in the way of mass transportation in the San Fernando Valley, but we've persevered...."

Calling the Orange Line the "wave of the future," he said, "This is a Los Angeles solution for a Los Angeles problem. We took the best the world had to offer (in transit technology) and we applied it to Los Angeles."

Metro is now planning to build another station and 800-space park & ride lot in Canoga Park within a year to accommodate commuters at the western end of the transitway.

In his remarks, Snoble recognized the efforts of Valley community and business leaders and elected officials, as well as the planners, engineers and other Metro employees who contributed to the project – calling them "miracle workers."

'Great day for the Valley'

"This is a great day for the citizens of the San Fernando Valley who will be able to take advantage of this service for decades to come," Snoble said.

Contractor Shimmick/Obayashi built the current line in two and a half years. Total project costs, including transitway, buses, bicycle/pedestrian paths,

landscaping and future construction of the Canoga Park station and park & ride lot is \$349.6 million.

Among those attending the Friday event was former Metro CEO Julian Burke, who headed the agency during the opening of the Metro Rail North Hollywood extension and in the early stages of Orange Line planning.

"It's just terrific; it's so beautiful," Burke said of the cross-Valley transitway. "The project is much better than I had ever envisioned it. It's just wonderful."

Opening Ceremony: A Star is Born

Kyrsti Chavez, 5, daughter of Julio Chavez, a Metro Rail transportation operations supervisor, sings the National Anthem during the Metro Orange Line opening ceremonies, Friday. A kindergartener at Arcadia Christian School, Kyrsti has been singing since age 3, winning several competitions. Recently, she sang at the OMNI Awards at the Skirball Center.

Photos by Bill Heard



Metro Rail Transportation Operations Supervisor Julio Chavez took a moment with his daughter, Kyrsti, 5, and members of his family – his wife, Josie, and daughter Justine, 19. The family lives in Arcadia.

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)