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San Gabriel Valley Service Sector General Manager Jack Gabig, left, led a groundbreaking ceremony, Feb. 3, for a new Metro bus operations building in El Monte. Joining him, from left, were Metro Bus Operator Debra Simental, Deputy CEO John Catoe and employees of San Gabriel Valley Division 9. Photo by Bill Heard



Ground Broken for Division 9, SGV Sector Transportation Building

BY JIMMY STROUP

(Feb. 7, 2006) Seventy-five San Gabriel Valley Metro operators, maintainers, administrative staff and management turned out, Feb. 3, to watch the first scoops of dirt removed from the parking lot that will soon be the site of a new building to house Division 9 transportation and sector offices.

Sector General Manager Jack Gabig was there to help do some of the heavy lifting and to enjoy the beginning of the end of a project he's been working on for several years. The mayor-elect of El Monte and members of the sector Governance Council were also there to join him in the celebratory groundbreaking.

"Over the last three and a half years, a lot of people at Metro have been focused on some great improvements here at El Monte," Gabig said. "This will be the first major improvement at an operating division in over 20 years, so it's quite a milestone for the agency and it's been a long time coming."

He thanked the project team – led by Deputy Executive Officer of Facilities-Operations Denise Longley – for all their effort in getting the project rolling, saying that the new building was needed to

accommodate the future growth of the agency in the San Gabriel Valley.

"This will be a three-story, 45,000 square foot, contemporary building. It will allow for a 50 percent growth in our operations here at Division 9. That's 50 percent more buses, 50 percent more people and 50 percent more activity into the future," Gabig said.

'Thinking long-term'

"We don't expect that we're going to grow to that capacity in the immediate future," he said. "But we're planning and thinking long-term, and this building is the centerpiece of that expansion hope."

Deputy CEO John Catoe was also there to celebrate the groundbreaking. He said the new building was just the beginning of an agency-wide push to improve the facilities in other divisions.

"We plan for modifications and upgrades to all our operator areas in the various divisions throughout the system, as well as upgrades to the maintenance divisions over the next two years," Catoe said.

Gabig said the \$11.8 million structure is being designed and built with environmentally-conscious materials, making it a model of efficiency as well as an architectural beauty.

"This modern glass architecture will be, we believe, a real enhancement to not only this specific facility, but to the city of El Monte and to any future development," he said. "We think this will complement future redevelopment of the entire complex here, as well as adjoining properties."