



NEWS

March 19, 1997

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MTA SHOWS COMMITMENT TO CLEAN ENVIRONMENTAL OPERATIONS AT 7TH ANNUAL ECO EXPO

Long before it became trendy – or statutory – the MTA has been committed to preserving a clean environment.

That commitment will be on display at the seventh Annual ECO EXPO, the Environmental World's Fair being held at the Los Angeles Convention Center March 22-23. This marks the seventh year the MTA has sponsored the event, which is the nation's largest trade show devoted to the sales and marketing of environmental products, services and programs.

The MTA's contribution to the cause of environmental responsibility goes beyond the obvious benefits to air quality that a fleet of alternative fuel buses and zero emission trains provide the Los Angeles basin, and extends to the methods the agency uses to maintain and operate those buses and trains.

"We at MTA are proud of our record on the environment", said MTA Chairman Larry Zarian. "We are the first transit agency in the nation to pledge ourselves to purchase only alternative fuel buses, and our innovations in recycling not only protect the environment, they save us money."

At the ECO EXPO, the MTA will discuss the various programs in place to safely deal with hazardous materials and conserve resources. The MTA booth will have information on a variety of environmentally friendly topics, such as alternative fuel technology and the MTA Bike Station in Long Beach and the MTA funded regional bikeway system. There also will be exhibits on the Freeway Service Patrol, the Metro Call Box program, a Blue Line rail car mock-up, and an antique bus.

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"We list 27 separate hazardous materials for special handling, and the majority of these are either recycled or put to other useful purposes," said Linda Bohlinger, MTA interim CEO. "For example, we recycle more than 50,000 gallons of antifreeze each year. We send it out for reprocessing, it comes back to us, and we use the same antifreeze again."

Since 1992, the MTA has experimented with synthetic transmission fluid in 10 buses from downtown's Division One.

According to Jeff Johnson, MTA's director of equipment engineering, the results have been promising.

"Mineral-based transmission fluid lasts about 18,000 miles before it has to be changed under normal operations," said Johnson. Synthetic fluid costs six times as much as mineral-based fluid, but it lasts for the service life of a transmission, normally 150,000 to 200,000 miles. We save in material costs, maintenance costs, and use less natural resources because synthetic fluid is recyclable. There even are indications that the transmissions will last longer with synthetic fluids."

The test with synthetic transmission fluid will be extended to all 200 buses at Bus Division 10 within the next two months.

Used oil filters, which are eventually melted down to make steel rebar, are first flattened to recapture the oil that had been absorbed in the filter material. All waste oil is re-refined into lubricants and marine bunker fuel.

Coupons offering a \$2 per person discount for admission to the ECO EXPO are available on Metro buses and trains. Several MTA bus lines serve the Los Angeles Convention Center, as does the Pico Station of the Metro Blue Line.

Show hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

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