



# NEWS

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## **GOOD NEWS FOR BUS RIDERS**

### **MAYOR RIORDAN, MTA CEO JULIAN BURKE TO SHOW OFF NEW BUSES, DISCUSS ACTIONS FOR OVERHAULING METRO BUS SYSTEM**

Los Angeles Mayor Richard J. Riordan and MTA CEO Julian Burke today presided over a ceremony to herald the delivery of some of the hundreds of new buses that will be arriving during the next 16 months and discussed other strong steps the MTA is taking to improve Metro Bus service.

Over the next six years, the MTA expects to receive at least 1,313 new buses, substantially reducing the average age of the Metro Bus fleet.

A preview of the new buses was offered this morning across the street from MTA headquarters at the Regional Rebuild Center. On display were 10 new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) coaches, a prototype of the Earl Clark Advanced Technology Transit Bus (ATTB), and a failed alcohol fueled bus that has been converted to clean diesel. More than 300 alcohol fueled buses are being re-powered to diesel at the rate of 15 a month. The new engines run two or three times cleaner than the engines in 18-year-old diesel coaches that have served as replacements and will now be retired.

The purpose of the event was to demonstrate to the public the MTA's commitment to improving Metro Bus service.

"The record shows, bus transportation continues to be the number one means of transportation for 95 percent of the transit riders in Los Angeles," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Board Chairman Richard J. Riordan. "The purchase of these new and re-engineered buses is an important first step in turning things around not just for the MTA, but for the MTA's customers and the people of Los Angeles."

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"We've got the message: it's broke, so fix it," said MTA CEO Julian Burke, a corporate turnaround specialist hired a year ago to stabilize the transit agency and restore its credibility. "We owe it to the 1 million boarding passengers who depend on our buses for basic transportation to make sure their buses are on time, clean and safe. We're starting to deliver on that commitment and revamp a system that had been in decline for the past decade."

Burke cited the following examples of the bus service improvements:

- During the next two years MTA will receive or re-power more than 700 buses. Up to five new Compressed Natural Gas buses arrive weekly. In late August, the MTA will receive 20 new low-floor buses built for Las Vegas Transit.
- Between FY 98 and FY 2004, the MTA will spend more than \$500 million to buy 1,313 new buses and it is moving aggressively to do even more.
- The MTA is re-powering more than 300 alcohol fueled buses. To date, 210 of MTA's alcohol buses are sidelined with engines that fail every 25,000 to 40,000 miles compared to 250,000 miles for a diesel engine.
- By October MTA will have 46 more mechanics assigned to MTA bus divisions to concentrate on preventive maintenance.
- MTA is doubling the number of road supervisors to make sure the buses on the street better adhere to schedules.

"Slowly but surely we're taking the wrinkles out of the Metro Bus System," concluded Burke. "Although the aches and pains will not vanish overnight, our customers are already beginning to feel the difference."

The difference, said Burke, is borne out by the following facts:

- On-time pullout of the buses from the yards continues to improve.
- The miles between mechanical breakdowns is getting better.
- The number of passenger complaints is already decreasing.

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