



# NEWS

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## MTA HONORS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY WEEK

Approximately 500 high school students who participated in a Public Service Announcement competition to increase rail safety awareness were honored today as part of the activities organized to celebrate National Transportation Safety Week (May 15-19).

The contest, known as the Travis Safety Awareness Awards, was sponsored by the MTA, Metrolink, California Operation Lifesaver and the Los Angeles Clippers Basketball team. All high school students along Metrolink corridors were invited to participate in the competition.

Contestants created a television Public Service Announcement specifically designed for their peers. The PSA's message encourages youth to practice safe habits around train tracks. The winning ideas will be broadcast on radio and television as part of MTA and Metrolink's rail safety program.

The awards ceremony was held at 9:30 a.m. at Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles. After the ceremony students boarded the Metro Red Line to the Westlake/MacArthur Park Station to participate in a special rail safety rally and concert sponsored by the LA Clippers Basketball team.

The MTA and its predecessors have been conducting rail safety presentations in schools since 1987.

"Teaching rail safety to our school children is a priority for the MTA," said L.A. County Supervisor Mike Antonovich, MTA Chairman.

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"The number of fatal accidents along the railways nationwide underscores the need for rail safety education," said Franklin White, MTA chief executive officer. "People are not always aware of the potential deadly situations they expose themselves to when playing games along the tracks."

"We hope that this message designed by their peers will be able to generate strong responses and raise awareness among high school students about the dangers of walking along the tracks," White said.

MTA's rail safety programs feature the mascot Travis the Owl, created in 1987 as part of an educational program to address safety along the Metro Blue Line. That initial effort evolved into the Travis the Owl School Safety Program, which targets students in public, private and parochial schools from grades K - 8 along Metro Rail and Metrolink routes.

Approximately 1,000,000 students have been trained by the MTA since the program began in 1987.

MTA also provides rail safety presentations to high school students, teachers and parents. The program, active in 19 L.A. County School Districts and 21 school districts in adjacent counties, is designed to make people aware of new rail projects, caution residents about the risk of accidents if they get too close to construction areas, and emphasize safety and common sense regarding rail operations.

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