



NEWS

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MTA RETURNS THE SPRIT OF THE "RED CAR" TO CELEBRATE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF METRO RAIL IN LOS ANGELES

In celebration of the return of rail service in Los Angeles marked by the 10th anniversary of the Metro Blue Line, MTA joined local elected officials today to unveil the return of the Pacific Electric "Red Car" that once traveled throughout the region nearly 40 years ago.

The Pacific Electric Red Cars, to be put into service this weekend, are actually a clever disguise of existing Metro Blue Line rail cars, created by an enthusiastic and dedicated MTA maintenance crew that converted two Sumitomo P-865 light rail cars to look very much like the old historic trolleys.

"Ten years ago today, the Long Beach to downtown Los Angeles Metro Blue Line opened to the public and brought the return of rail back to the region," said Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. "Since that time, more than 135 million boarding passengers have traveled on the Metro Blue Line, making it the nation's most successful light rail line."

Rail patrons using the Metro Blue Line this weekend will have a surprise in store for them, many of which will take a step back in time and board what appears to be a Pacific Electric Red Car, last seen in service in 1961.

"There's a lot of nostalgia associated with the Red Cars and we wanted to commemorate 10 years of rail service in the region with this history," said Thomas Conner, MTA executive officer of transit operations. "This is our way of saying 'thank you' to the people along the corridor who have made the Metro Blue Line such a success and have supported it with their patronage."

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Due to the success of the Metro Blue Line, it is presently undergoing a \$9.7 million face-lift with a project that will increase the line's capacity. Construction has already begun to lengthen 19 Metro Blue Line station platforms to accommodate three-car trains.

At present, the Metro Blue Line can operate only two-car trains on the 22-mile route between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach. As a result, many of the peak service trains operate at capacity which has necessitated the lengthening of station platforms to accommodate an additional car. Work began in May and is expected to be completed by late summer 2001.

Ridership on the Metro Blue Line has reached 63,000 average weekday boardings, a five percent increase since the June 24 opening of the North Hollywood extension of the Metro Red Line subway in the San Fernando Valley. The Metro Red Line connects with the Metro Blue Line in downtown Los Angeles.

The Metro Rail system is comprised of the Metro Blue Line, the Metro Green Line from Norwalk to El Segundo and the Metro Red Line subway from Union Station through Hollywood to Universal City and North Hollywood in the San Fernando Valley.

Overall ridership on the 59.4 mile Metro Rail System has increase to 211,015 daily boardings, up 42 percent compared to May figures of 149,050 daily boardings.

"The people of Los Angeles truly have a viable alternative to the automobile and can use the Metro Rail system to get them where they need to go," said Supervisor Burke. "In celebrating 10 years of rail service here in the region, we encourage people to continue to ride the rails, and for those who haven't tried it yet, we ask that they climb on board."

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