



NEWS

September 26, 2001

CONTACT: GARY WOSK/MARC LITTMAN
MTA MEDIA RELATIONS
(213) 922-2712/922-2700
WWW.MTA.NET/PRESSROOM
E-MAIL: mediarelations@mta.net

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, IMPROVED TRAINING HELP MTA SERVE TELEPHONE CUSTOMERS FASTER

One of the simplest ways to get advice on bus and rail travel is to call the Metro System's toll free customer service number, 1-800-COMMUTE. But in an age of instant information, most callers have limited patience for being placed "on hold." Fortunately, the average wait time for customers seeking transit information from 99 fulltime and nine part-time Customer Information Agents has dropped by 30% in the last year alone, so MTA's customers are getting through to Metro Information agents faster than ever.

On an average weekday, Metro Information handles as many as 7,000 telephone calls from bus and rail riders. Highly trained and experienced Customer Information Agents give them personalized, detailed instructions on how to reach their destinations via Metro Bus and Metro Rail. The phone lines are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. weekdays and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends.

As little as three years ago, customers seeking help in this manner often had to wait an average of 12 minutes or more for an available agent. To remedy the situation, Metro Information embarked on a program of improved training and supervision for its information agents and improved forecasting of call volumes. In addition, it replaced antiquated computer equipment at 100 workstations, upgrading to state-of-the-art

MORE...

Page 2 of 2 Telephone Customers

networked computers capable of responding to customer requests at lightning speed.

As a result, most calls now can be handled faster and more efficiently, and the time customers must wait for an available agent has been dramatically reduced. Today, the average wait time is often under three minutes, with the majority of calls being answered in less time than that.

The improvements have been remarkable, but there's still more to come. Metro Information is continuing to explore options such as automated voice response and on-line maps that could enable its agents to assist customers even faster in the future.

###

MTA-130