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| **Wednesday, July 25, 2012 120725-1**  **In this Issue:**   * **Metro ExpressLanes Customer Center Press Event** * **Art Leahy on The Patt Morrison Show (KPCC Radio)** * **Bus Riders Union Rally** |
| **Metro ExpressLanes Customer Center Press Event**  This morning, I joined Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Mark Ridley-Thomas, Metro Board members John Fasana and Pam O’Connor, Assemblymember Steven Bradford, City of Inglewood Councilmember Ralph Franklin, City of Gardena Councilmembers Rachel Johnson and Dan Medina, City of Hawthorne Councilmember Angie English, City of Palos Verdes Estates Mayor Pro Tem Jim Goodhart, CTC Commissioners Yvonne Burke and Fran Inman, Caltrans District 7 Director Mike Miles, and other community leaders to announce the opening of a new Metro ExpressLanes walk-in Customer Center in Gardena and the availability of Metro ExpressLanes FasTrak® Transponders for use on the new toll lanes set to debut along the 110 Harbor Freeway this Fall and along the 10 San Bernardino Freeway in early 2013. Leaders detailed multiple ways to open an account and get an ExpressLanes FasTrak® transponder. News media attending the event included the Los Angeles Times, KABC-TV and Ch 22. Stories are expected to air later today and tomorrow. Please click [here](http://www.metro.net/news/simple_pr/expressLane-FasTrak-Transponders-for-Fall-Debut-i1/) to view the news release issued by Media Relations. For information please visit [www.metroexpresslanes.net](http://www.metroexpresslanes.net/).  **Art Leahy on The Patt Morrison Show (KPCC Radio)**  This afternoon, I participated in the Patt Morrison Show on KPCC radio. Topics discussed included progress being made on the I-405 freeway construction project and the upcoming Carmageddon II, Measure R transit projects, Measure R Extension on the November Ballot, the success of the new Expo Line and increase in rail ridership, improving service quality for Metro patrons, High Speed Rail and benefits to Los Angeles County as well as a status of the Crenshaw/LAX line, Foothill Extension to Azusa, Westside subway extension, Regional Connector, the Metro ExpressLanes program and getting Metro to serve LAX.  **Bus Riders Union Rally**  The Bus Riders Union held a rally this morning at Los Angeles City Hall calling on President Obama to restore one million hours of bus service in Los Angeles County. Several news outlets contacted Media Relations for a response and were told that 1) The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) found no civil rights violations. They did fault us on process issues, which we are rectifying. 2) The FTA is focusing on major bus service changes implemented since 2009 and that’s an estimated 300,000 to 350,000 reduced service hours. We are awaiting FTA approval of new methodology and then will do an equity analysis to determine if there were disparate impacts. If so, we may have to restore some service or mitigate. That process should be complete by the end of this year. Metro remains committed to providing the best integrated bus and rail system for all its transit customers. Recent bus improvements include new Silver Line Buses and the opening of the Orange line Extension busway in the Valley, and hundreds of new buses are being procured. Reporters also were told Metro has one of the most affordable transit fares in the country but our farebox revenue covers less than 30 percent of the cost of operations. Metro cannot afford to compete with its own transit services within Los Angeles County nor duplicate service provided by other operators. As the rail system expands, bus service needs to be integrated. Stories are expected to run today and tomorrow in the Los Angeles Times, Telemundo and other outlets. | |
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