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Automated Bidding System

On June 6, 2008, we implemented the Automated Bidding System (ABS) that is being used to manage the semi-annual re-bidding of work schedules for bus and rail operators. This is a collaborative effort between Operations and Information Technology Services (ITS) that automates and streamlines previously manual and tedious clerical processes that were often prone to transcription errors.

Preparation of the bid boards, which is one of the main tasks, was reduced from taking a few days to do to a few hours at most. The system prevents operators from falling out of seniority order and eliminates duplicate assignment errors. The printed receipt of awarded assignments, allocated vacation time, and a description of the training needed for new or revised services was well received by our operators.

Recycled Pencils

A new promotional giveaway is joining our sustainability efforts and it is made from recycled products. The item is a new environmentally friendly pencil made with a variety of recycled products, including a pencil made from denim, which contains 30 percent recycled denim, and a pencil made from recycled newspapers, which contains 95 percent recycled material. There is also a pencil made from money which contains 30 percent “retired” money, and equals approximately \$7 in retired cash, according to a vendor’s website.

Meant to entertain and enlighten, the recycled money pencil states clearly, “Safety begins with me.” It also proudly features a recycled symbol and a simple statement that this pencil is “Made from Recycled Money.”

Media Pursues Different Angles for Gas Stories

This morning, USA Today interviewed Media Relations staff about a possible story involving motorists running out of gas on local freeways. Staff noted that the Metro Freeway Service Patrol has not seen a significant increase in assists for motorists out of gas. Those calls have been running at about 2,000 a month out of 25,000 assists for all types of vehicle breakdowns. Staff told a reporter that there have been some reports by tow truck operators that some people claim they are out of gas, however, if the car starts, they will not receive a gallon of free gas.

Media Relations staff was also interviewed by other media outlets. KCBS/KCAL TV News inquired about gains in our ridership because of rising gas prices. Staff noted that, since April of last year, Metro Rail ridership is up about 4.5 percent and Metro Bus ridership is up slightly. The Daily News inquired if we are struggling with rising fuel costs. Staff noted that thanks to our foresight in hedging on the price of CNG, our fuel costs have not risen significantly. We also receive federal CNG credits, and CNG, in general, is cheaper per mile driven than diesel. There are only about 125 diesel buses left in our fleet of 2,556 buses. The rest are CNG.

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