

# CEO REPORT

**Joseph E. Drew**  
**MTA Chief Executive Officer**

**November 11, 1996**

The MTA Board and staff have some very tough choices to make in the next few months as we wrestle with how to stretch fewer dollars to meet the need for increased bus and rail service in Los Angeles County. As you may have read in the media, there's a significant shortfall in anticipated revenues that could affect our Long Range Transportation Plan. The LRTP is the blueprint for developing and operating the county's transit services over the next 22 years.

**B**etween now and next March, the Board must evaluate a lengthy set of options, including transit services, programs and construction projects, that may have to be cut or delayed in order to develop a new LRTP. The staff has the task of analyzing the impact of dwindling funds,

thinking through the various options, and making recommendations to the Board.

Some of the reasons our funding comes up short include fewer federal dollars for construction, a \$400 million drop-off in projected sales tax revenues through the year 2010, paying back \$85 million in borrowings

for operating expenses, continuation of the Bus System Improvement Plan at a cost of \$146 million, and implementing the fare lawsuit settlement at a cost of some \$480 million over the next 13 years.

At this point, our projections indicate there won't be enough money to fund all our existing services and continue our rail construction commitments without some major revisions to our financial plans or possibly shifting project schedules. I'll keep you informed of all developments along those lines. In the meantime, let's forge ahead with the many important projects we're working on. Our customers are depending on us.

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## **Director Raul Perez Dies**

MTA Director Raul Perez died Oct. 26 following a lengthy bout with cancer. He was 54. On behalf of the agency, I expressed our condolences to his family. He was a true friend of the MTA and we will miss him.

Director Perez was elected by the League of Cities in 1993 as an alternate to the MTA Board. In 1994, he was elected a full member. He served as chairman of the Board's Construction Committee and as vice chair of the Real Estate and Asset Development Committee.

The family requests that donations in memory of Director Perez be given either to the American Cancer Society or to the Raul Perez Benefit Fund, Cerritos Valley Bank, 3508 Florence Ave., Huntington Park, CA 90255.

## **Levine Realigns Regions**

In one of her first major actions, Transit Operations Executive Officer Ellen Levine has realigned the Metro Bus regions from four to three. She also has named Tony Chavira as Acting Deputy Executive Officer, Service Quality.

In realigning the regions, Ellen established the Central Region to stand with the Northern and Southern regions. The new region, under Acting Regional Manager Rick Hittinger, will oversee the activities of Divisions 1, 7, 10 and Terminal 6. The Northern Region, under Jon Hillmer, has Divisions 3, 8, 9 and 15; while the Southern Region, under Ralph Wilson, has Divisions 2, 5, 12 and 18.

The Service Quality section, under Tony Chavira, will integrate and focus a variety of service quality functions, including operations service quality, maintenance quality assurance and the Zero Tolerance Program. It also will assist operating divisions and other line operating units in developing and implementing new service quality improvement programs.

## **Employees of the Month**

Congratulations to the October Employees of the Month! These seven were selected by their co-workers as among the top performers in their units and within the MTA.

**Louis Burns, Fare Media, Revenue.** A Finance Division employee, Louis helped simplify the layout and requirements of disabled pass applications. He developed and implemented a standard pass-holder computerized database, and helped eliminate processes that did not add value in issuing pass media.

**James Grimes, Senior Transit Police Officer.** James, who represents the Executive Office and Transit Police, recently graduated with honors from an 80-hour basic detective course run by the LAPD, tying for first place. He also completed some 300 hours' training in criminal investigations and other police subjects.

**Irma Licea, Senior Administrative Analyst.** Irma's efforts in the Communications Division have helped the agency serve its external customers better. She developed messages on hold and a division cross-training program that helps Communications employees increase their skills and gain experience in other positions within the division.

**Albert Luna, Stock Clerk, Material Logistics.** Fellow workers at the Regional Rebuild Center recognize this Administration Division employee as a great motivator. Albert takes the initiative in completing assignments and encourages co-workers to accomplish even the hardest tasks quickly and accurately.

**Georgia Miller, Multi-Modal Planning.** A Regional Transportation Planning and Development employee, Georgia is known as an "expert juggler" for her ability to handle many work assignments simultaneously. One accomplishment: revising her department's floor plan to accommodate additional staff.

**Richard Reams, Equipment Maintenance Supervisor.** A Transit Operations employee at Division 15, Richard kept a cool head back in August when a CNG fuel cylinder ruptured. He shut down the fuel system and ensured evacuation of the area. His actions allowed work to resume quickly. Full service was restored the next day.

**James Stubblefield, Construction Quality Assurance.** James, who represents Metro Construction, interacts effectively with other departments. Recently, his contacts with Configuration Management and Control resulted in major improvements in how design changes are tracked and controlled.

### CEO HotLine Activity

*I'm concerned about improving communications between Headquarters and our outlying divisions. When will they be hooked up to e-mail?*

Good question! Information Technology Services is working with Transit Operations to obtain an estimated \$6 million for this project. Currently, each division has one e-mail address that is used for both broadcast messages and for limited personal use. One RRC office is on e-mail now and more should be on the system when cabling is completed within the next several months.

*Many MTA employees drive agency vehicles. Why aren't MTA executives, from the CEO down, randomly drug-tested like bus operators?*

The MTA's drug and alcohol testing policy is more stringent than regulations mandated by the DOT and FTA, which require testing only for workers who perform "safety-sensitive functions." This includes bus operators. All MTA employees, regardless of their jobs, are drug- and alcohol-tested if they have an accident in an MTA vehicle or when there is "reasonable suspicion" that such testing is required.

*We were told the winners in the "100 Ways to Improve Bus Service" contest would be released in October. Here it is November and no word yet. Who won?*

Determining winners from all the great suggestions submitted by employees was harder than the 100 Ways committee anticipated, and that's caused a delay in releasing names. Some 260 employees made a total of 379 suggestions, many of which had to be researched to make sure they were practical and could be implemented. The big winners will be listed in the November issue of Metro Family. An awards luncheon for those making the top 100 suggestions is scheduled Dec. 3, and posters with the winning suggestions will be placed in all worksites this month.

### Welcome Aboard

Although he's been working with us for some time now, let's formally welcome Marc Littman, who officially joins the MTA in mid-November as Director of Public Relations.

Marc currently is Public Affairs Manager at the Community Redevelopment Agency in Los Angeles. At the MTA, he will be responsible for Media Relations, Internal Communications and Metro Art. His background includes 23 years' experience working with the media, including six years in the RTD News Bureau.

A former newspaper reporter, Marc has won a number of state and national awards for writing. He earned a BA in journalism and political science from Cal State Northridge.

### Holiday Magic Dinner Dance

I hope you've purchased your tickets for the Holiday Magic Dinner Dance, sponsored by Employee Activities on Saturday, Dec. 7. The black tie event will be held at the Omni Hotel, at 7th Street and Figueroa in downtown Los Angeles. The cocktail hour begins at 6:30 p.m., with dinner at 8 p.m. and dancing until 1 a.m. Tickets are \$35 per person; parking is \$6. For more information, contact Employee Activities at 922-4740.

Here's a correction: The hours for the Employee Store in the Headquarters Building are 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Check out the holiday gift section!

### Open Enrollment Package

Non-represented employees should receive at home next week open enrollment forms allowing you to custom design your benefits package. This will include medical and dental benefits, life and long-term disability insurance, and Flexible Spending Accounts. Changes must be submitted to Benefits Administration by December 16.

Non-represented employees also should be sure to attend one of the open enrollment meetings set for December 3 and 10 at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the MTA Boardroom.

### Closing Thoughts

This month, we'll be reporting that complaints from our bus riders increased significantly in FY 96 over FY 95 from a monthly average of 1,041 to 1,365 - 31 percent. Figures show a 22.8 percent increase in pass-ups, a 20.1 percent increase in operator discourtesy complaints, and an 11.5 percent increase in unsafe operation complaints. Obviously, our customers want their buses to be on time, pleasant and safe.

However, in comparison with other major transit properties, the MTA fares very well with a rate of only 4.94 complaints per 100,000 passengers. New York's MTA has 39.50; Tri County in Oregon, 25.00; Chicago and Denver, 15.00 each; Orange County OCTA, 10.00; AC Transit in the Bay Area, 7.99. Only SEPTA in Philadelphia rates below us at 2.98.

Despite our good ranking, there's still plenty of room for improvement. Let's all think "Customer First!" and keep up the good work.



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