

CEO Report

Linda Bohlinger, Chief Executive Officer
March 24, 1997

I'm sensing a growing excitement among our staff as we continue into 1997. I believe we're making measurable progress in such important areas as customer service, leadership training and solving merger issues. There's also increased cooperation among departments as we work toward improving regional mobility.

With this in mind, I've set three immediate goals as your CEO. (1) We'll work closely with Board members and our Congressional delegation to obtain federal funding to meet our transportation objectives. (2) We'll continue our emphasis on improving bus service by adding more buses to the fleet and by refurbishing older coaches. (3) We'll also work to achieve fair and equitable agreements with our labor unions.

Each goal has many difficult elements and achieving them will require hard work and persistence by all employees.

Last month, I told you we were in agreement with the City of Los Angeles on all but four issues regarding the merger of the Transit Police into the LAPD. Two involved the transfer of personnel, one concerned accrued benefits and the fourth involved whether LAPD would provide security services.

"Achieving (these goals) will require hard work and persistence by all employees."

I'm happy to report that we now have reached agreement on all Transit Police merger issues. We should conclude negotiations in April and I expect the merger to take place July 1, 1997.

Congratulations to our Career Development and Training Center and to all employees who volunteered as mentors or who staffed exhibits during last week's Career Day. Almost 400 students from four area high schools spent the day at Headquarters learning about transportation careers. I was impressed by the caliber of the young people who are involved in the program. I think we'll see them in years to come as leaders in the industry.

\$70 Million Holdup

Once again, federal funding of MTA programs may be in jeopardy because of a dispute between Congress and the City of Los Angeles. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced last week that \$70 million in MTA funding will be withheld until the City releases funds it transferred into its coffers from Los Angeles International Airport. FTA is following the Congressional directive passed last year along with the federal appropriations bill. The MTA is not a party to this dispute, and we have no say one way or another over its final resolution.

The City is expected to return the funds this week, but any significant delay in releasing MTA funds could slow work on the Segment 3 Metro Rail construction project. The Bus Service Improvement Program will not be affected. If there's no action soon, we'll ask the Board in April for permission to borrow funds to keep our projects going. Such borrowing, however, could cost the agency \$3 million annually in interest payments.

We can only hope the City and Congress can come to an agreement, soon, and that MTA funding will be released so we can meet our obligations to our customers.

Happy Birthday, MTA

April 1 marks the fourth anniversary of the MTA. Although all details aren't nailed down yet, we're planning an agency-wide celebration. The anniversary theme, "Honoring our past, embracing our future," acknowledges the important role former agencies played in building a public transportation system in Los Angeles.

A committee representing a cross-section of the MTA is planning the celebration. Activities will be held at Headquarters and at each division. Among them will be a tree-planting ceremony on Patsaouras Plaza. The tree will serve as a symbol of the living, growing MTA.

MOCA Bus Ride

The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) opened a new exhibit, March 15, that includes a series of nine short plays staged aboard a Metro bus. The premier play, entitled *Token, Alien*, seemed to be the most popular element of the show for the opening-night crowd of 1,000 or more. Ten MTA employees were picked to participate in the plays.

The Series 1800 coach, provided by Division 10, is on loan to the museum through July 6, when the play series ends. The exhibit, at MOCA's Geffen Contemporary at 152 North Central Avenue near Little Tokyo, is free to MTA employees and their guests. The plays are performed on Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays. You can call 213-626-6222 for information and times.

Employees of the Month

Congratulations to the Employees of the Month for February. Beginning this month, we'll honor an employee from the Transit Police Department along with employees from the agency's seven major divisions. Previously, Transit Police employees had been included within the Executive Office.

The eight Employees of the Month for February are:

James Allen, Capital Planning. An RTP&D employee, James assumed responsibility for administering and updating the Benefit Assessment Program's data base and tape generation when two key positions in his department were eliminated. He also trained RTP&D staff on the Financial Information System.

Senior Officer Ronald Brown, Transit Police. Officer Brown developed a new high-risk bus and rail tactics procedure police officers use when stopping a bus or train. The procedure was certified by the State of California. He has trained more than 300 officers of the MTA and other agencies in the tactics.

Eugene Cooper, Audit. An Executive Office employee, Eugene's leadership of the Performance Audit Group has produced a marked improvement in productivity. He provides positive, constructive guidance and direction to the audit staff. He is credited with major improvements in how audit projects are monitored and controlled.

Jessica Gil, Human Resources. An Administration employee, Jessica is responsible for the MTA's drug and alcohol testing program. She handles an immense work load, while maintaining accurate and timely reports. She also serves as backup for Medical Desk personnel and for the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator.

John McBryan, Service Operations Manager, Division 8. A Transit Operations employee, John is credited with improving morale among the maintenance employees he supervises. Several innovations were developed under his leadership, including new safety-related procedures to service the Neoplan 4500 CNG bus.

John McCamy, Metro Rail Construction. John is responsible for cost engineering of the Metro Red Line Wilshire and Vermont/Hollywood Corridor project. He played a critical role in converting the project to the new Financial Information System. This helped the MTA honor its commitment to pay contractors fairly and on time.

Stephen Sawyer, Public Affairs. A Communications employee, Steve motivates others by his tenacity and productivity in construction public affairs. He responded to complaints about noise at a Hollywood construction site by installing noise-testing equipment and offering help to neighbors on an around-the-clock basis.

Johnnie Smith, Revenue Department. A Finance employee, Johnnie operates the MTA's "lost and found" department. A true advocate of friendly customer service, she works closely with the operating divisions to return lost articles to their owners. Since early 1996, she has helped 1,600 customers recover their belongings.

Board Business

The Board will consider several items at this month's meeting that I want to bring to your attention:

The Board will be asked to approve a proposal for development of an entertainment, retail and restaurant complex at the Metro Red Line Hollywood/Highland station and surrounding area. Located near the station site are Mann's Chinese Theater, the Hollywood Museum, the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel and other businesses.

The Board will consider leasing part of the MTA's Terminal 31 property to Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol for construction of the Los Angeles Regional Metro Transportation Management Center. The facility will enable Caltrans and CHP to more effectively manage local highway and freeway traffic. Terminal 31 is located on Cesar Chavez just west of the Regional Rebuild Center.

The Board also will be asked to authorize sale of the former RTD Division 13 bus terminal in Riverside. Until service was discontinued there in 1990, the 2.57-acre terminal served as a satellite of Division 16 in Pomona.

Finally, the Board is expected to adopt a plan for installation of up to 350 call boxes on roads in unincorporated areas of LA County. More than 4,400 call boxes have been installed on local freeways and expressways. The program is funded by an annual \$1 surcharge on every vehicle registered in the county.

Closing Thoughts

I was invited recently to visit the headquarters of our two largest employee unions. General Chairman James Williams and the officers of the UTU were very gracious and we had a pleasant and useful meeting. I also had an enjoyable visit with President Neil Silver and the officers of the ATU, who introduced me to Jim LaSala, ATU International President.

It's rare that a CEO of the MTA has an opportunity to meet these union leaders on their own turf. I want to thank the union officers for their hospitality.

Have an issue or concern?
Call the CEO HotLine at 922-6282.
Give your name and location if you
want a personal reply.



Linda Bohlinger

A publication of MTA CEO's Office

Editor:	Bill Heard
Designer:	José Rodriguez
Executive Officer, Communications:	Rae James
Director, Public Relations:	Marc Littman
Asst. Director, Internal Communications:	Phyllis Tucker
Manager, Printing Services:	Al Moore

