

Editor's Note: The articles archived on this page appeared previously on the Metro Report page during June, 1999.

Division 11 Salutes 20 Metro Blue Line Pioneers at Retirement Celebration



(June 29)--Metro Blue Line Manager Duane Martin heads the celebration table at Division 11 retirement bash for 20 top operators.

Deputy Executive Officer Ralph de la Cruz saluted 20 top rail operators for careers in transportation at a festive retirement celebration at Division 11, June 25. "You've helped to establish light rail in Los Angeles," Delacruz said.

With collective years of service tallying more than 500 years, the 20 operators are the largest group of employees to retire in the 10 years of Metro Rail Operations. Recalling the old Pacific Electric Railway, Delacruz said today's rail operators are modern-day pioneers. "Rail is leading the way for the new MTA," he said.

Operator George Wheaton topped the retirement roster with 30 years. Also clocking in were Narciso Polanco, Edward Bartley, Frank Contreras, Lester Hollins, Francis James, Ricardo Miranda, Gilbert Ramos, Ernest Edwards, Lafayette Patrick, William Dawson, Abdul Saafir, Lamar Collier, Henry Garcia, Freddie Marlowe, Wesley Price, Walter Tice, Joe Polina, Joseph Johns, Germain Williams. Handing out the honors were Manager Duane Martin, Rail TOS Robert Johnson, UTU President James Williams and UTU Vice President Victor Robertson.

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Times Story on Subway's Impact Never Mentioned Hollywood

Los Angeles Times
June 22, 1999

To the Editor:

It's bizarre that the *Times'* in-depth look at the potential economic impact of the subway in North Hollywood failed to mention the positive experience in Hollywood where the Metro Red Line just extended service June 12.

The Hollywood Chamber of Commerce and other business groups, elected officials and top economists all agree that the subway is spurring the revitalization of Hollywood. A prime example is a joint development project valued at more than \$400 million under construction surrounding the Hollywood/Highland Metro Rail station.

An even bigger development project is planned next to the North Hollywood Metro Rail station which opens next spring. The *Times* does mention this project but it's buried in one of the articles.

The *Times* is right in reporting that many Valley commuters will ride Metro Rail to downtown because it will take less than half an hour to travel there on the subway rain or shine, no matter how clogged the freeways are. However, with new stations opening next year at Universal City and the NoHo Arts District, many people who live in other parts of the county as well as tourists will visit the San Fernando Valley via Metro Rail.

Rather than taking a "wait-and-see attitude," local merchants and real estate brokers should now start marketing the advantages of their convenient location.

Marc Littman, Director
Media Relations

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Times Story Failed to Credit MTA as World Leader in Alternative Fuel Buses

Los Angeles Times
June 18, 1999

To the Editor:

Unfortunately, *Los Angeles Times* readers don't always get all the relevant facts when they read stories about the MTA. A prime example is a *Times* story that ran June 18 about a lawsuit filed against the MTA and the firm that handles its bus advertising to force MTA to display anti-diesel bus ads.

The reporters claim the plaintiffs want to "bring public pressure to bear on the MTA to buy buses that rely on cleaner-burning fuels."

Buried in the story, the reporters briefly note MTA is buying compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. What they don't report is that MTA already operates the world's largest alternative fuel bus fleet. They fail to note that by the end of the year MTA will operate 970 CNG buses and soon half its massive fleet will run on alternative fuels. Likewise, they fail to note that **all** the new buses MTA is buying – including 437 that will be delivered in the next fiscal year – are CNG buses.

MTA has been a world leader in pioneering the use of clean-burning fuels for the public transit industry. Instead of crediting MTA for its environmental record, the *Times* omitted relevant facts that may have given readers a more positive perspective of the MTA.

Marc Littman, Director
MTA Media Relations

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No One Wins When It's Bus Vs. Rail

LA Times, June 11, 1999

Comment by Richard Stanger

Transit Consultant and former
Executive Director, Metrolink
(Edited for length)

Over the past several years, the Bus Riders Union and others have worked hard to improve the MTA's bus services. Unfortunately, to bolster their case, bus advocates have felt compelled to disparage the rail component of our transit system, the demise of which they see as the only solution to their bus problem. Many of their contentions, however, are simply wrong. Let's look at five of them:

Rail riders account for only 9% of total transit riders and therefore the rail program has been a waste. By comparison, only 10% to 20% of all auto trips use freeways. Yet, no one is calling the freeway system a failure. What makes the freeway system so important is that it carries 52% of all vehicle miles traveled within the county. So, too, rail carries a lot of transit users many, many miles – 22% of the MTA's total passenger miles of travel.

The rail system has been built for suburban whites at the expense of the urban minorities. Minority riders make up 89% of the riders on the Blue Line, 86% on the Green Line and 75% on the Red Line. MTA bus ridership is 88% minority. Metrolink...ridership is 40% minority....

The rail services are poorly used and do not justify their investment. Each day, more than 142,000 people travel by train in Los Angeles County to get to work, school or pleasure. The Blue Line, with a ridership of 54,000 trips per day...has more riders than any other single light rail line in the United States. The Red Line, until Saturday (6/12/99), (carried) 38,000 daily riders. The Green Line, with 25,000 daily riders, has ridership comparable to the much-praised Portland and St. Louis light rail systems. And Metrolink trains add another 27,000 daily rail trips.

The rail system is unfairly using most of the MTA's transit capital dollars. Does MTA have a choice? Proposition A, passed by the county's voters in 1980, requires 35% of the revenues collected be used for rail construction. Proposition C, passed in 1990, requires 25% of its revenues be used for rail construction. Much of the rest is used for buses either by the MTA or local bus operators.

Rail passengers are more subsidized than bus riders. The MTA each year budgets approximately \$100 million for rail operations and \$650 million for bus operations. The subsidy per passenger boarding is higher on rail, but rail trips are longer than bus trips on average. Excluding the Red Line, subsidies for rail passengers are equal to or less than for bus passengers calculated by miles traveled.

The bus and rail systems both serve different but needed roles: Rail serves longer distance, higher speed trips while the bus system provides local access. Behind the needless smoke screen of the bus-versus-rail battle, the Los Angeles rail system is already having more of an impact than we give it credit for.

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Daily News Took 'Blind Potshot' at Metro Red Line, MTA Declares

June 13, 1999

Los Angeles Daily News
To the Editor:

The *Daily News* couldn't resist taking just one more blind potshot at Metro Rail June 13 the weekend MTA opened a new extension to Hollywood.

This time the subway is dismissed as nothing more than a tourist ride shuttling between Hollywood and downtown Los Angeles in 15 minutes. Of course, the *Daily News* ignores the fact that these happen to be two of the largest employment centers in Southern California. There was no mention of major medical centers such as Children's Hospital and Kaiser that now are served by the subway. Likewise, there's no mention of Braille Institute, Los Angeles City College, theaters, museums and all the other major destinations within steps of the new subway stations.

The "subway to nowhere" also doesn't operate in a vacuum. It links up with light rail lines that crisscross the county and connects with the Metrolink commuter rail network to outlying counties and AMTRAK at Union Station downtown.

What about the more than \$1 billion of economic development that has been built, is under construction or planned around Metro Red Line subway stations including a massive entertainment complex planned next to the new subway station in North Hollywood that opens next May?

If *Daily News* editors would just take their thumbs out of their eyes, they'd see and, hopefully, report a clearer and more balanced perspective of Metro Rail.

Marc Littman
Media Relations Director

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Division 7 Retirements:

Four Metro Bus operators have retired at Divisions 7. They are Ron Eadie, 23 years service; Robert Solomon, 24 years' service; James McDuffie, 23 years' service; and Douglas Carter, 23 years' service. (June 29)

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Systems Analyst:

I hate to complain, but as an employee of the MTA I would have enjoyed bringing my children to the Grand Opening on Friday to enjoy meeting the cast of the "Wizard of Oz."

But I heard the VIP Grand Opening was by invitation only, with a limited guest list. But I see from the photo on the Intranet that a hand-picked selection of MTA staff's children were allowed to attend. This type segregation needs to stop. I thought we were trying to work out our morale problem not add to it. (June 22)

(Editor's Note: Thanks for sending along your What's Up? comment. According to one of the managers who planned the Grand Opening event, space was very tight with room for only 300 people. In fact, Fire Department officials turned away people when the mezzanine became too crowded. Late in the planning for the event, the MTA learned that some characters from the "Wizard of Oz" would be available to provide entertainment at the ceremony. A plan was made to include eight "honorary munchkins" and to invite five children from Los Feliz Elementary School – kids who had experienced all the inconvenience of the subway construction. The other three "munchkins" were the children of MTA employees who had volunteered long hours outside their normal duties to plan and work at the event, according to the manager, who points out that those connected with the planning and execution of the event are very proud of it. It was a positive event for everyone involved.)

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Transportation Careers Academy's 1999 Recognition Reception

TCAP PEOPLE.jpg (67097 bytes)



Presenters and award winners join the winner's circle at the Transportation Careers Academy Program's 1999 Recognition Reception.

(June 30) -- From left, Human Resources Executive Officer **Ray Inge** and **Elda Rodriguez**, who accepted the "Life Time Achievement Award" for her husband, now deceased. Jose Rodriguez was a Transportation Occupations Program instructor who was commended for his extraordinary volunteer commitment teaching graphic arts and drafting skills to high school students. MTA Program Manager **Art Gomez**; MTA Human Resources Director **Naomi Nightingale**, and MTA Project Manager **Steve Brye**, whose work with Locke and Garfield high school students restoring 1894 trolley cars earned him the Academy's "Best Volunteer Award."

The Academy program, entering its sixth summer, brings MTA and 16 business partners together with students eager to learn skills in transportation careers. The program, which began with 15 mentors at three high schools, has grown to 200 mentors who help train more than 600 students at six local high schools.

#

Update

Prize Patrol Surprises 'Angel Mechanic' Who Surprises Wife With \$10,000 Check



"Wait 'till I tell my wife!"



Mike Stange with the Prize Patrol

(Update, July 1) "I don't believe you," Mike Stange's wife, Tawny, gasped into the phone. "You're kidding me." The "Angel Mechanic" had some difficulty convincing his wife that his good works also had brought him good fortune in the form of a \$10,000 check from Publishers Clearing House.

The Stanges will donate some of the "Good as Gold" award money to their church. The rest will

remain in the bank while they decide how to use it.

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(June 29) – The Prize Patrol swooped down on the MTA, today, bringing with it a \$10,000 check for the "Angel Mechanic" – Quality Assurance Superintendent Mike Stange – whose volunteer work helping church members and single mothers with auto repairs earned him a 1999 Publishers Clearing House "Good as Gold" award.

Led by a troupe of TV cameras, the Prize Patrol surprised Stange hard at work in his office. Dave Sayer, whose arrival at the door of multi-million dollar winners is a standard Super Bowl feature, presented the check, an award plaque and a dozen roses to Stange as reporters and cameras crowded into the small room. Curious co-workers peeked through the door and applauded when they realized what was happening.

"This is unbelievable," said an astonished Stange. "I'm very, very appreciative of this. It's been my pleasure to work with the women." A 24-year MTA veteran, he is one of 10 persons, nationwide, who will receive "Good as Gold" awards this year. He was nominated for the honor by the Los Angeles *Times*.

Robin B. Smith, chairman and CEO of Publishers Clearing House, says, "We created the Good as Gold awards to acknowledge the unsung heroes, the caring persons who render community service that is 'good as gold.'"

Stange's good works first were reported in the July-August, 1997, issue of the *Metro Family* employee magazine which dubbed him the "Angel Mechanic." The story later was picked up by the *Times*, *People Magazine* and other media. Stange also was interviewed on a segment of "Oprah."

Working in the parking lot behind his church, Vineyard Christian Church of La Habra, for the past three years, Stange provides car repair and maintenance services for the Single Mothers Auto Care Program, as well as for other church members who need auto maintenance advice and assistance. He charges nothing for oil or anti-freeze and parts are provided free of charge, if he has them on hand.

Stange finds time to help callers who phone him at home for assistance. For urgent car problems, he calls area shops for the best deal and sets an appointment for the client. He also trains those he helps on how to inspect auto fluid levels and monitor the basic functions of a car's engine.

In her *Metro Family* story, Deborah L. Craney wrote, "The women are extremely grateful for Stange's generosity, especially when he diagnoses a mechanical problem and estimates the cost of repairs. Many had been told by unscrupulous auto shops that repairs would be more extensive and costly."

Other "As Good as Gold Award" recipients in recent years included a 13-year-old Maryland girl whose "Happy Helpers for the Homeless" program feeds more than 400 needy people each week, a San Bernardino man who created an "Adopt-a-Bike" program for disadvantaged kids and a Pennsylvania woman who created a program to teach life skills and give hope to former gang members.

Stange and his wife, Tawny, live in Hacienda Heights. They have a son, Jason, 26, a service attendant at Division 10.

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Marc Littman
Media Relations Director

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Supervisor Burke Takes Helm of Board to Replace Mayor Riordan

(June 25) – Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke will assume the chair of the MTA Board of Directors, July 1, replacing Mayor Richard Riordan, who has led the Board since July, 1997.

Burke, who has served on the Board since a merger created the MTA, has been first vice-chair and chair of the Operations Committee. Riordan, who has chaired the Executive Management Committee, was named second vice-chair at the June 24 meeting. Director James Cragin of Gardena serves as first vice-chair.



Burke first served as a county supervisor from 1979 to 1980 when she represented the fourth district. She was elected supervisor representing the second district in 1992 and continues to serve that district. She was the first African American woman to serve as chair of the Board of Supervisors in 1993-94.

Burke formerly served as a U.S. Congressional Representative from 1972 to 1978 – the first African American woman ever elected to the House from California. From 1966 to 1972, she served as a member of the California Assembly.

A native of Los Angeles, Burke earned a BA in political science from UCLA and a law degree from USC's school of law. She also was named a Fellow of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and of Yale University. She is married to William A. Burke, a Los Angeles businessman, and has a daughter, Autumn, and a step-daughter, Christine Burke.

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Board OKs Automated Public Toilets; First Could be Installed by Mid-2000

(June 25) -- The first of up to 10 Automated Public Toilets could be installed at Metro Bus and Metro Rail locations for use by passengers, MTA operators and the general public by mid-2000 as a result of MTA Board action, June 24.

APTs will have a sink, mirror and coat hooks. They will be automatically washed, disinfected and dried after each use. Electronic sensors, alarms and voice links with a monitoring station will ensure users' safety. The MTA will require the APT contractor to inspect the toilets daily to ensure they are clean and graffiti-free. APTs currently are in use in San Francisco, as well as in Paris, London, Rome and other European cities.

The 10 proposed locations for the public toilets are Metro Red Line stations at 5th and Hill, Wilshire/Vermont, Wilshire/Western and Hollywood/Vine. The Metro Blue Line station at Imperial/Wilmington is being considered as a location, along with Metro Green Line stations at Aviation, Norwalk and the Harbor Freeway. Toilets could be placed at the LAX Bus terminal and at the new Pico/Rimpau Loop bus terminal.

Other potential sites for APTs are at the Metrolink stations at Northridge, Symar/San Fernando. Also at Bus Terminals 26 and 45, at the Metro Red Line Hollywood/Western station, the Artesia Transit Center and at the Harbor Beach Park & Ride Lot.

The contract that now must be negotiated with the vendor, OMNI/STI, also will include the installation, operation and maintenance of up to 54 outdoor advertising structures at MTA-owned properties. The advertising sites will provide a source of revenue to finance the cost of the installation, operation and maintenance of the APTs, as well as an ongoing source of revenue to the MTA.

The installation of APTs was first proposed in April, 1997. The agreement with OMNI/STI will call for an initial contract period of 10 years with an option for another 10 years and possible installation of 10 more APTs.

#

Y2K Team Starts Project in July to Ready 3,000 PCs for the Millenium

(June 25) – The MTA currently has some 3,000 personal computers in use and most are probably Y2K compliant, says Don Stiner, Y2K project manager. Only five percent have been tested, however, and those that weren't Y2K-ready were repaired.

But, on the chance that some of the other 95 percent might not be ready for the millenium, the Y2K team will begin a three-to-four-month PC testing and upgrade program July 10. That means that Information Service Department (ISD) programmers, working with ITS technicians will check each individual computer and, if one isn't Y2K compliant, it will undergo two or three hours of repairs.

All PCs with Windows 95 will be fitted with two "service patches." One will correct the Y2K date problem and the other will correct potential Y2K problems with Microsoft Office, Stiner explains. Programmers also will check the microchip that controls date-sensitive devices – the clock that tells a PC the date and time.

Most of the work will be done at night and on weekends, Stiner says, so that disruptions to day-to-day operations will be minimized. Programmers have volunteered to do this work after hours.

Reflecting on the massive Y2K-related work completed to date, Stiner says, "The ISD programmers are very conscientious, talented and dedicated to the MTA, to the department and to what they're doing. Morale is high and the spirit of teamwork is outstanding. I'm proud of them; they're doing a great job!"

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10 Y2K Team Members Receive Service Awards

(June 25) – Ten members of the Information Services Department – the Y2K Team – have received awards for their service to the department and to the MTA.

Mila Asuncion received the Distinguished Service Award for FY 1999 for demonstrating "true commitment to excellence and quality in all aspects of work...."

Rita Winston earned two awards: the FY 1999 Technical Excellence Award and the first quarter FY 1999 Award of Excellence for work related to Y2K issues with the Automatic Storage and Retrieval System and the Material Maintenance System.

Kambiz Pourmansour received the Outstanding Performance Award for the first quarter of FY 1999.

Receiving awards for their work in FY 1999 were:

- Joseph Vicente, the Innovation Award,
- Vincent Tee, the Outstanding Service Award,
- Robert Lapin, the Team Player Award, and
- Lynn Ong, Tess Fitzpatrick, Maria Howison and Steven LeDuff, who shared the Exceptional Service Award.

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MTA Closes \$1.4 Mill. Deal in Fiber Optics Agreement



Real Estate Director Velma Marshall (L) and Administration Executive Officer Frank Cardenas, joined by Senior Deputy County Counsel Joyce Chang, present a \$1.4 million check to Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky. The payment gives Qwest Communications of Denver, a long-distance telecommunications company, the right to run fiber optic cabling along an unused Metro Rail right-of-way between El Segundo and Los Angeles. The MTA also will have access to the cable for future communications use. The \$1.4 million deal was negotiated by Marshall, Chang and Real Estate Officer Greg Angelo. (June 24)

#

MTA Board to Hold Public Hearing on Possible Increase in Bus, Rail Fares

By Ed Scannell

(June 24) -- The Board has scheduled a public hearing to discuss a possible increase in Metro Bus and Metro Rail fares. The hearing will be held at 10 a.m., Saturday, July 10, in the Board Room.

The Board will consider raising the cash fare to \$1.45 and the price of tokens from 90 cents to 95 cents. Monthly passes would rise \$3 to \$45, while the cost of other passes also would increase by small amounts.

No change is proposed in the price of transfers, freeway express charges, discount cash fares for seniors and the disabled, or the late-night discount fare offered between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m.

If approved by the Board, fare adjustments would go into effect Nov. 1, 1999.

#

MTA Tests Touch-Screen Ticket Vending Machines

VENDING MACHINE.jpg (94913 bytes)



Revenue Director Agapito Diaz (R) and Administrative Analyst Tim Mengle try out a touch-screen ticket vending machine (TVM) similar to a model being considered for use at Metro Rail stations in mid-2000. Some 1,500 of these machines, which accept coins, bills or credit cards, are being installed beginning this month in New York Metro Rail stations. The TVM was on display for several days at MTA Headquarters for evaluation by employees and patrons. Diaz says the agency wants to develop specifications for a TVM that will be user-friendly and accessible to the disabled. (June 24)

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Q. Why has the MTA blocked access to some Internet web sites? I need the information that's on these web sites to do my job. How do you get permission to use them?

A. The HotLine has received several similar inquiries. According to Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett, the MTA has contracted an outside firm that provides an Internet web site "blocking" service. The MTA provides a set of criteria to the firm and the firm then blocks access to web sites considered to be non-MTA business-related. However, if you need access to certain web sites to do your job, she suggests sending a memo to her department explaining your need. Others who have done this have been given access to such web sites. Thanks for your question.

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Q. I understand that the MTA is going to have an outside company handle our paychecks from now on. We're supposed to get them through the U.S. Mail now, instead of having them handed out to us on pay day. What's the story?

A. According to Chief Financial Officer Richard Brumbaugh, the MTA is not outsourcing the entire payroll function, only the preparation and distribution of checks and direct deposit notifications to the banks, garnishment processing and related tax reporting. This will begin in July, but employee contact will continue to be with the MTA Payroll department. The contractor will be using state-of-the-art technology that can't be provided by the existing system. Brumbaugh says a final decision hasn't been made on how paychecks will be distributed or about direct deposit notifications, but his office is working with union leadership and with the Morale Team on the best way to distribute the paychecks. An analysis shows the MTA can save money by using the U.S. Mail, but he says this won't be forced on employees if they don't want it.

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Q. When bus operators are running the bus lines serving the race tracks, the MTA's policy says they're supposed to be in service as a local bus. But, some operators either won't serve all the bus stops or they'll tell passengers, "This bus is race track only!" This isn't right.

A. You're correct, it's not right. Bus Operations is advising supervisory and window personnel that all race track buses are to operate local service both to and from the various race tracks. Field supervisors also should check the headways of buses on the race track lines to ensure compliance. Thanks for your call.

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Increased Police Patrols on Bus and Rail Resulted in More Arrests, Citations in May

(June 23) – LAPD officers and Sheriff's deputies made more arrests and issued more citations on Metro Bus lines in May as law enforcement bus boardings increased. More citations also were issued to passengers on all three Metro Rail Lines.

Sheriff's deputies boarded 3,687 buses in May, a 27 percent increase over April boardings. LAPD bus boardings also were up 5 percent to 4,269 in May.

During the same period, LAPD officers assigned to the Transit Bus Division recorded 160 arrests, steady from April, but issued 696 citations, an 18.6 percent increase. Sheriff's deputies assigned to the Transit Services Bureau recorded 96 arrests, a 48 percent increase, while citations remained steady at 353.

Arrests by both law enforcement agencies remained steady on all three Metro Rail lines – a total of 295. However, the LAPD saw a 58.5 percent increase in citations on the Metro Red Line to 642 for May, while the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau recorded a 12 percent decline in citations on the Metro Blue Line -- at 2,027 -- and a 14 percent decline on the Metro Green Line, at 334.

The number of sworn officers assigned to the MTA by the LAPD and Sheriff's Department is growing and is expected to reach 400 by October, according to Paul Lennon, managing director MTA Safety and Security. Together, the agencies are seeking a total of \$48.7 million in funding from the MTA for FY 2000 – a 12 percent increase over the current contracts. The contracts will come before the Board for approval at its Thursday, June 24, meeting. ([Click here for related story.](#))

#

House Approves Transportation Bill With \$64.8 Million Earmarked for MTA

(June 23) – The U.S. House of Representatives today approved the FY 2000 transportation spending bill by a margin of 429 to 3. The House bill includes \$64.8 million for Metro Rail and bus projects.

The U.S. Senate, whose version of the bill contains no MTA earmarked funds, has not yet scheduled a vote on the bill. The Senate Appropriations Committee earlier voted to cap funding for California and New York – the nation's two largest transit users – at 12.5 percent of the transportation appropriation.

Once the Senate votes, the measure must go to a House-Senate conference committee. Observers say that could happen as early as July, but probably won't occur until September. Congress will be in recess from July 3 to July 11.

The House version of the transportation spending bill includes \$50 million for completion of the Metro Red Line to North Hollywood, \$5 million for Mid-Cities/East Side rail construction planning, \$7 million for spending on buses and bus-related facilities, \$1.8 million for Intelligent Transportation Systems and \$1 million for an Access to Jobs program.

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New Transit Map Takes Riders 'All Over the Place' in LA County

Mvc-005l.jpg (64232 bytes)



Efrain Romo (L) shows the MTA's new transit map to Marketing Director Warren Morse. Romo managed the map project.

By Gayle Anderson

(June 22) – An oversized, fold-out map of Metro Bus and Metro Rail routes, co-sponsored by Carl's Jr. fast-food restaurants, will help transit riders determine how to "get all over the place" in LA County.

The maps are being distributed free to customers at some 200 Carl's Jr. restaurants, whose ad campaign promotes its juicy hamburgers with the "get all over the place" slogan. The public transit maps, featuring two Carl's Jr. ads, also will be available at MTA Customer Service Centers beginning July 6.

The map may be the first and largest complete public transit map in Los Angeles. The 3-foot by 5 foot map, which folds to a convenient 9 ½ by 12-inch format, details all transportation systems, including freeways, light rail and municipal bus lines that link to Metro routes in the county's 88 communities.

Some 50,000 copies of the map were printed for distribution in LA County. The MTA also printed 50,000 "take-one" cards, with a \$1.99 Carl's Jr. coupon, to promote the map. The take-ones are being placed on Metro Buses.

The four-color map includes insets showing downtown Los Angeles and north Los Angeles County. It also provides a complete numerical listing of Metro and municipal bus lines.

The MTA updated the popular bus route map produced in 1990 with current bus, subway, freeway and light rail routes. The new map includes locations of Carl's Jr. restaurants along the way. Carl Karcher Enterprises, Inc., a strong proponent of public transportation, collaborated with MTA Marketing on the project.

#

Updated

Six Items to Watch at Board's June Meeting

(June 24) – Outsourcing MTA operations and management was one of a number of items on the Board's agenda today along with public toilets, the ATTB and other items to watch. Here's an update on six of the items:

Item 8. (Approved) The motion, by Director John Fasana, directs the CEO to provide within 30 days "findings on contracting out Operations and management along with a plan on how to solicit those services."

The motion also asks the CEO to provide an analysis within 90 days "...of contracting out...existing MTA services and functions across all MTA operating and administrative departments." The CEO also is to "develop aggressive bus operations cost reduction strategies" and a plan to lower bus service hour costs from the \$106 projected for FY 2000 to \$102 and to \$90 by the end of FY 2001.

Item 6. (Approved) The Board will be asked to authorize the CEO to sign a license agreement with a vendor who has proposed installing up to 10 Automated Public Toilets at MTA locations. The agreement, approved by the Operations Committee, also would give the vendor permission to install up to 54 outdoor advertising structures at MTA locations.

Item 38. (Carried Over) The Board has proposed that the Advanced Technology Transit Bus (ATTB) program would be transferred from MTA to the Fuel Cell Buyers Consortium, a group formed several years ago by the MTA. The Consortium is expected to use one of the six ATTB prototypes as a platform for testing a fuel cell propulsion system. The Federal Transit Administration and the MTA financed a \$51.27 million ATTB research and development program.

Item 40. (Approved) Item 40 gives the MTA the go-ahead to negotiate an agreement for construction of a new Bus Terminal 40 at Pico and San Vicente. The developer is to relocate the terminal to the western end of the site to make way for a 300,000 square foot commercial center and 1,300-car parking lot.

The new terminal, which will be shared by the MTA and Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines, will include bus shelters, an Automated Public Toilet and a landscaped plaza. Patrons would have easy access to nearby shops, restaurants and stores.

Item 23. (Approved) Annual contracts totaling \$48.7 million with the LAPD and Sheriff's Department are before the Board for approval. The FY 1999 contract amounted to \$43.8 million, although the MTA estimates it will spend only \$40.7 million on policing services this fiscal year.

The FY 2000 contracts would provide \$20.087 million for the Sheriff's Department and \$28.58 million for the LAPD. Both departments are currently expanding the number of officers assigned to bus and rail patrols. The total force should reach 400 officers this fall. ([Click here for related story.](#))

Item 42. (Approved) The Board will be asked to commit \$162 million to the Alameda Corridor East program – a maximum of 17 percent of the project's \$950 million total cost. MTA funds would be contributed each year to match the project's annual budget. The MTA would not participate in any cost increases or project cost overruns.

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Communications Technician:

Great American companies didn't become noteworthy by outsourcing their operations. General Motors, Bank of America, IBM, Ralph's Supermarkets and others, didn't reach success by making decisions to destroy their operations.

A Board member's motion to outsource MTA operations is typical of the MTA's current culture of management. There is no interest in redefining or improving mass public transportation.

MTA spends millions of tax dollars on private law firms and consultants and hundreds of millions toward low-bid projects which milk the system through change orders. It's unfortunate that taxpayers, patrons and employees of mass public transportation have been betrayed. We need to develop aggressive strategies to regain and redevelop reliable public transportation.

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MTA Director:

The emergency supply cabinets on each floor should indicate who the floor warden and alternate are and/or who should be contacted in the case of an emergency. We would not want there to be an emergency and no one has access to the supplies, or knows who does. What if that person is not at work that day, who is the alternate and where is the key to the cabinet kept? Who is responsible for ensuring this information is communicated and when will it be? (June 15)

--- 0 ---

MTA Manager:

I was one of the volunteers who worked this weekend. Unfortunately for me, I didn't work both days. It was a great experience, and I felt we all did a real service to the public. Everyone I came in contact with was truly appreciative of our assistance and loved the Metro. Although my legs and feet were killing me by the end of the day, I am looking forward to the opening of the last segment next year. I only wish our Board of Directors and the LA Times could have been on the platform with us, to hear all the positive comments! (June 15)

--- 0 ---

A Non-Smoker:

Somebody complained about smokers blocking all the entrances to the USG building. I have never experienced this. Smokers for the most part stay respectfully to the side of the entrances, where the ashtrays are. They certainly do not *block* anything, and there are never any smokers by the revolving door. The person who complained about the smokers would benefit from using the revolving door. I can see where we don't want to make things too comfortable for smokers, but hounding them is cruel and senseless. They have enough problems. (June 15)

--- 0 ---

Chief Administrative Analyst:

I'd like to suggest that the Direct Deposit disbursement form be included in the forms employees can download from the Intranet. (June 15)

(Editor's Note: Thanks for your suggestion. Payroll thought it was "terrific" and ITS will be posting the form as quickly as possible on both the Intranet and the computer W-Drive.)

**Trust Fund Established for
Freeway Service Driver Who Died**

(June 21) – A trust fund has been established for Ricardo Hernandez, 24, a Freeway Service Patrol tow truck driver, who died Thursday of injuries suffered when he was struck by a car while assisting a disabled motorist, June 7.

Officials of the MTA, California Highway Patrol and CalTrans all expressed their deepest sympathy to the Hernandez family for their loss. The agencies, which fund and operate the Freeway Service Patrol, also expressed appreciation to all FSP drivers for their great dedication and service to California motorists.

A trust fund has been established to assist the Hernandez family: Ricardo Hernandez Trust Fund, 905 Westminster Ave., Alhambra, CA 91803 or call (626) 289-7277.

#

**Board Asks for Study on Outsourcing of
Administrative, Operations Management**

(June 16) – The Board's Operations Committee wants MTA management to study possible outsourcing of bus and rail management and management of the agency.

The committee asked the CEO to analyze the feasibility of contracting out MTA services and functions "across all MTA operating and administrative departments." A report is due in 30 days.

The motion by Director John Fasana called for developing "aggressive bus operations cost reduction strategies"...to reduce bus revenue service hour costs from the \$106 per hour projected for FY 2000

to at least \$102 in FY 2000 and to \$90 by the end of FY 2001.

Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky told the committee that CEO Julian Burke had investigated outsourcing bus and rail operations management not long after he joined the MTA, but had found it impractical because of the scope of the issues and staffing levels necessary. The committee also was told that agency workout teams had achieved \$21.5 million in cost savings or added revenue and expects to raise that to \$23.5 million in the next fiscal year.

In other action, the committee learned that more than 70 new or repowered buses are expected to join the fleet in June. In late July or early August, the first of the New Flyer bus order will begin arriving at the MTA. In November, a month ahead of schedule, the agency should receive the first low-floor buses ordered from NABI.

Transit Operations Executive Officer Tom Conner told the committee that on-time performance of bus service has improved. Consent decree load factor compliance was 98.4 percent in April, up from 98.1 percent, and is continuing an upward trend. However, his department is studying an increase in bus accidents.

#

New

'Monroe' and 'Chaplin' Among First to Board New Hollywood DASH Bus

Mvc-012l.jpg (77907 bytes)



The MTA's Jess Diaz (C) takes a DASH ride with "Marilyn Monroe," "Charlie Chaplin" and LADOT's James Okazaki.

(June 16) – "Marilyn Monroe" and "Charlie Chaplin" were among the first to board the MTA-funded DASH bus linking the Metro Red Line Hollywood/Vine station with La Brea Avenue.

The movie star "lookalikes" were joined by MTA and LADOT officials at a Wednesday morning event to launch the new service.

The shuttles will travel along Hollywood Boulevard every 10 minutes, providing service to eight stops at Cahuenga, Whitley, Las Palmas, Highland, Orange, Mann's Chinese Theater, Sycamore and La Brea.

Hours of operation are 7 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays. The fare is free to passengers who show Metro Rail, Metrolink or LADOT tickets or passes. Cash fare is 25 cents.

#

61,000 Ride Metro Red Line Second Day of Regular Service

(June 16) -- Ridership estimates from Tuesday indicate that 61,000 passengers boarded the Metro Red Line as ridership continued its upward trend for the second day since service opened to Hollywood.

Preliminary estimates show that 60,000 passengers boarded the Metro Red Line on the first day of regular service following the Vermont/Hollywood opening. The subway had averaged 38,000 daily boardings prior to the opening event.

According to Transit Operations, Monday's ridership indicated a 69 percent increase in average daily ridership on the first day, alone. The MTA has projected the Metro Red Line will reach 80,000 daily boarding passengers with the new Hollywood segment.

#

Nightingale Named to New Position as Director of Human Resources

(June 15) -- Naomi Nightingale, who has served for the past five years as manager, Development and Training, has been named to the new position of Director of Human Resources.

She will oversee the activities of five HR departments: Pension and Benefits, Recruitment and Selection, Development and Training, Special Programs and Personnel Services. She will report directly to Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources.

Nightingale earned a BA with a concentration on adult education from Antioch University and holds a California Teaching Credential in Business Education. She earned a master's degree in Public Administration from Cal State, Long Beach, and recently completed the Society of Human Resource Management professional certification series at UCLA. She also was selected to participate in the Community and Economic Development Forum at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Nightingale, who joined the MTA in 1985, has more than 20 years of experience in training and development. She also has worked in such MTA departments as Public Affairs, Construction, RTP&D and Human Resources.

#

Q. Why can't a percentage of the money represented employees contribute to the MTA Retirement Plan be allocated to another fund, such as a mutual fund or stock fund, that would earn more interest and extra income for the employee? It would be better for employees, especially if they leave the agency before they complete 23 years' service.

A. Good question. According to Human Resources, contributions made to the MTA Retirement Plan are the employees' share of the cost of the Plan. The amount of interest paid (4.5%) is a result of collective bargaining with your union, and can only be changed through that process. The Plan is credited with earnings, not an individual Plan participant. Excess earnings are used to lower the required employee contribution rate. If these earnings weren't used to offset future employee contributions, the required employee contribution rate would be significantly higher. The bulk of the employee contribution is used to support the 23-and-out benefit for represented employees. And as negotiated through bargaining, represented employees must pay the full cost of the 23-and-out benefit.

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Lipsky Takes Issue with Times Editorial on MTA's Request for Judicial Review

June 8, 1999

Los Angeles Times

To the Editor:

For the second time this spring the Times has urged MTA not to appeal an order by a federal court Special Master who demands MTA spend \$463 million more to buy and operate hundreds of new buses on top of the 2,095 new buses MTA already is buying and the nearly \$1 billion it spends each year to operate Metro buses and subsidize municipal bus operators in Los Angeles County.

Fortunately, MTA hasn't heeded the *Times'* advice. The Special Master recently acknowledged his original order was too much and modified his ruling which will save taxpayers \$40 million. However, the current order is still excessive and that's why MTA is now appealing to the federal judge who appointed the master.

Neither the Special Master nor the *Times* gets the full story. Our bus riders are now getting everything they wanted out of the 1996 federal Consent Decree to improve Metro Bus service. Shortly after CEO Julian Burke was hired 21 months ago, the MTA Board suspended new rail construction so MTA could focus its resources on bus improvements. The MTA is ordering 2,095 new buses with new buses arriving weekly. Bus service already has been significantly expanded, and this year MTA will deploy 130 additional peak hour buses. Hundreds of new operators and mechanics are being hired.

These efforts are paying off. Overcrowding is being eased. Metro Bus service is improving daily. But just as MTA and our bus riders together get ready to cross the goal line, the goal posts have been pushed back 50 yards. If MTA now must comply with the Special Master's order, it risks breaching the public trust because the MTA has many statutory and financial obligations beyond running buses.

The *Times* casts this issue as strictly a bus versus rail debate. It ignores the fact that if MTA must comply with the Special Master's order, it will seriously impact the many street and highway programs funded by MTA that ensure mobility for 6 million motorists in the county. There are very real economic and environmental consequences that must be considered.

The *Times* should have given MTA a pat on the back for standing up for taxpayers and everyone who drives a car or truck in Los Angeles County as well as the transit dependent. Instead, MTA got a kick in the pants because the *Times* prefers to ignore the full story.

Allan Lipsky
MTA Chief Operating Officer

--- 0 ---

Q. What's the possibility of getting lids for the garbage cans in the kitchens at Headquarters? Covering these cans will prevent rodent problems and any aromas.

A. Thanks for contacting the HotLine. As a result, General Services has placed an order for lids for the kitchen garbage cans. They are expected by mid-June and will be installed as soon as they are received. (June 3)

###

Q. Is there any way to have the smokers stay on one side of the Plaza level entrances to the Headquarters building? It seems as if the smokers are blocking all entrances to the building.

A. General Services is taking another look at the MTA's smoking policy. The department will investigate options available to reduce or eliminate exposure of employees and visitors entering or exiting the front of the building. One option may be to eliminate smoking at the Plaza level east entrance. Thanks for contacting the HotLine. (June 3)

###

Q. The MTA's bereavement policy doesn't include aunts and uncles, but does include domestic partners and foster parents. Why would blood relatives be excluded and non-blood relatives be included? I would think my father's sister or brother would qualify as immediate family.

A. According to Human Resources, aunts and uncles are not generally considered to be immediate

family. Nor are they generally considered to be as "significant" as domestic partners (in lieu of spouses) or foster parents (in lieu of parents). However, HR thinks your idea may have merit and will be brought up at a meeting of the MTA's Policies and Procedures Task Force. Thanks for contacting the CEO HotLine.

###

Q. Now that the Intranet is up and running, it should include an Itinerary Planner and bus schedules to help us find our way around without having to call Customer Information. Is this being planned?

A. Thanks for asking about this important tool. MTA Marketing and ITS are currently testing a Trip Planner and expect to bring it on-line within the next couple of months. Currently, the MTA has a link to the SCRRRA trip planner, but when it is complete, the MTA's version should be more accurate.

###

Transportation Project Planner:

What is the point of presenting the findings and recommendations of the Morale Team when you haven't even released the report to rank and file staff. Most of us have no idea of what is in there let alone agreeing with it. The executive management should have first circulated the report to get feedback from rank and file staff and then incorporated the feedback into the report. The Planning Department has to do this for Environmental Studies and Plans; shouldn't this also be true for a morale report that is supposed to represent the input and feelings of rank and file staff? (June 10)

(Editor's Note: Thank you for your comment. It's important to note that the Morale Issues Team solicited and received comments about MTA morale from hundreds of employees prior to developing its report and recommendations. Each of those comments is included in the background materials turned over by the Team to CEO Julian Burke and to the executive officers. The CEO has said that the report, the comments, the 90-plus recommendations and the implementation plan will be made available to employees as soon as possible. After hearing the Morale Team's presentation, June 8, the executive officers met, June 9 and will meet again June 14, to work on drafting an implementation plan. They must present their plan to the CEO later this month.)

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Bus Operator Job Fair:

The MTA needs more than 300 bus operators and is filling other positions in the agency. To accomplish this, the agency is sponsoring a Job Fair this weekend in partnership with the California Employment Development Department (EDD). The Job Fair will be held Saturday, June 19, from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. at the EDD Office, 10404 E. Valley Blvd., El Monte. Radio station Power 106 will be there giving away freebies and advertising our Job Fair. For information, call (626) 350-6505. (June 15)

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Eva Hines Retirement Luncheon: A retirement luncheon for Eva Hines of the Operations Department is scheduled for Friday, June 25, 1999 at Shilla Seafood Restaurant, 674 S. Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles. Cost for the luncheon is \$17.75 per person, which includes meal, soft drinks, gratuity and gift. Please R.S.V.P. and send your payment to Lynda Reed, Mail Stop 99-11-2, no later than Friday, June 18. For further information, call Lynda at (213) 922-4422. (June 9)

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New

Division 1 to Honor 18 Retiring Employees: A retirement celebration is planned Friday, June 18, for 18 Division 1 employees. They are Lonnie Anders, Barbara Barr, Manuel Bracamontes, Manuel Chaves, Marco Delgadillo, George Dozal, Etta Dubose, Emile Foley, Anna Foster, Rafael Garcia, Steven Haas, Mike Harris, Eldon Jamison, Connie Johnson, Cleifton Krauft, Mike Pacheco, Ricardo Perez and Nat Thomas.

There'll be food, dancing and DJ music. Tickets are \$15 per person. For information, please contact the Division 1 stenographer, operators Sandra McGhee and Patty Sanders or mechanics Michael

Burke and Pearl Ridgeway. (May 28)

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RETIREMENT PARTY FOR 30 AT DIVISION 1:

Division 1 will honor 30 employees who have retired in this fiscal year with a celebration Friday from 6 p.m. to midnight. The \$15 per person includes a prime rib or chicken dinner with all the fixin's, music and dancing. Special guests include Transit Operations Executive Officer Tom Conner, Deputy Executive Officer Dan Ibarra, Human Resources Executive Officer Ray Inge and UTU Chairman James Williams. For information, call Emily Beckett, Sue Harvey or Jesse Castorena at 922-6251. The honorees are:

Lonnie Anders, Connie Johnson, Clifton Kraut, Anna Foster, Steven Haas, Miguel Cano, Emile Foley, Mike Harris, Charles Cousin, Joe Coleman, Rafael Garcia, Leon Hill, George Dozal, LeRoy Balag, Charles Scott, Pete Segura, Etta DuBose, Manuel Chavez, Manuel Bracamontes, Nat Thomas, Marco Delgadillo, Ricardo Perez, Gabriel Munoz, Karl Hermann, Barbara Barr, Miguel Zamorano, Eldon Jamison, Miguel Pacheco, Efrain Perez and Raul Serrano. (June 15)

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11 RETIREES TO BE HONORED AT DIVISION 5:

The Arthur Winston division plans a Retirement Celebration, Saturday, June 19, for 11 retirees. The event is scheduled from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. Division Manager Dana Coffee will introduce special entertainment, including 93-year-old Arthur Winston who will do his famous "shuffle dance." UTU Chairman James Williams and other union representatives are scheduled to attend.

Honorees are: Alvin Barber, Thedles Cannon, Theresa Sharp, Veradean Harper, Alice Stewart, Ronald Robinson, John Felder, Hazel Brooks, Theophilus Houston, Jerry Hightower and Gregory Cook. (June 15)

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VIPs Dedicate Vermont/Hollywood Segment; Praise Men, Women Who Built, Operate Subway

Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, MTA Board vice chair, speaks at Grand Opening of Metro Red Line's Vermont/Hollywood Segment.



By Marc Littman and Bill Heard

(June 11) -- The new Metro Red Line subway extension to the Vermont corridor and Hollywood was officially dedicated today by local, state and federal officials headed by Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Board Chairman Richard Riordan along with an array of celebrities and other VIP guests.

[\(Click here to read the rest of this story and more Grand Opening news.\)](#)

#

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Are these kids having fun...or what?

**Metro Red Line Fans tour New Stations
During Public Opening of Metro Red Line**

(June 12) – Dora Marin and her three kids went out for milk Saturday morning, but were attracted instead to the festivities at the Metro Red Line's Vermont/Santa Monica station near her home.
([Click here to read the rest of this story and for more Grand Opening news.](#))

#

**Kudos for the MTA: Proclamations from
City, County of Los Angeles for Hollywood Line**

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Proclamations from the City and County of Los Angeles commending the MTA for the opening of the Hollywood segment are displayed here by (L-R) Charles Stark, executive officer Metro Construction; Allan Lipsky, MTA chief operating officer; and Alfonso Rodriguez, deputy executive officer, Metro Construction and Segment 2 project manager.

#

Procurement's 'Pinnacle Award' Presented to Simpson, Partridge

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Dennis Partridge and Louisa Simpson received the Procurement Department's "Pinnacle Award" from Deputy Executive Officer Rick Carron.

(June 10) – Two members of Metro Rail Construction – Louisa Simpson and Dennis Partridge – today received the Procurement Department's "Pinnacle Award," a rare honor given employees whose outstanding performance has assisted the Procurement in achieving its overall program goals.

Rick Carron, deputy executive officer, Rail Contract Administration, told a gathering of Procurement employees that Simpson and Partridge "have indeed had an important, positive impact on our professional lives...(and) have never failed to meet any of our impossible deadlines, no matter how late they have had to stay here to get the job done. We feel they have always put us first."

Simpson, director of Configuration Systems, and Partridge, manager of Configuration Management, have developed many aspects of the Change Control System used in managing rail construction contracts, designed reporting procedures and conducted staff training. Currently, there are more than 7,000 change files in the system.

The Pinnacle Award was presented on Simpson's last day of work at the MTA. She has been associated with the Metro Rail construction project since 1984, first as a consultant and then as an MTA employee. Her immediate plans on leaving the agency are to relax and take a cruise.

#

Hayden, Murray Bill Would Limit MTA Spending to Bus Purchases, Street Repairs

(June 10) – State Senators Tom Hayden and Kevin Murray, in an apparent attempt to force the MTA to comply with the Consent Decree, are seeking legislation to restrict agency spending to bus purchases and street repairs.

The MTA issued a statement strongly opposing the measure, Senate Bill 1276, noting that such

legislation would "paralyze Metro operations because it may not permit MTA to spend money to run Metro Bus or Metro Rail service or subsidize the 16 sub-regional bus operators in the county, fund the Freeway Service Patrol and other vital programs."

At a news conference this afternoon on Patsaouras Plaza, the senators said their legislation would limit MTA spending to bus purchases and street repairs until the Special Master agrees there's sufficient funding to meet the Consent Decree requirements. The bill also would require a fiscal analysis of options for purchasing 532 buses and hiring operators and maintenance personnel and an audit by the State Auditor. ([Click here for related story.](#))

In its statement, the MTA said the bill "is flawed with serious policy, legal and technical problems. On the policy side, the Legislature is being asked to interfere with federal court processes...The MTA believes the court is the proper forum for resolving MTA's issues with the Special Master's order."

SB 1276 hasn't been scheduled for a hearing by the Senate Transportation Committee, but because the senators received approval to insert an urgency amendment, the bill is not bound by legislative deadlines.

#

Non-Represented Pay Raise: Questions and Answers

(June 10) – The 4 percent pay raise for non-represented MTA employees goes into effect July 1, with the paychecks of July 16 reflecting the raise.

Here are the most [frequently asked questions](#) about the pay raise with the answers provided by Human Resources:

Is the raise across-the-board for non-represented employees?

Answer: The 4 percent pay increase will be added to the base salary of all non-represented employees. The non-represented employees would have to be in a regular or temporary position.

Will those employees who recently voted for representation by AFSCME receive the raise?

Answer: No. The National Labor Relations Act requires that any increase in wages or benefits must be negotiated with represented employees' unions.

Will employees who have reached the top of their salary band receive the raise?

Answer: Yes. Employees who have reached the maximum of their salary range will receive the increase this year.

What about employees who have exceeded their salary band?

Answer: These employees also will receive the pay increase.

Will employees who have recently been promoted receive the increase?

Answer: Yes. Employees who were recently promoted, between January and June, will receive the 4 percent increase effective July 1. Employees serving the initial probation are defined by Human Resources as *new hires*.

([Click here to read related story.](#))

#

April 30, 1999

To: Patt Morrison, Columnist, Los Angeles Times

In advance of your interview with MTA CEO Julian Burke on "Life & Times" next week (Wednesday, May 6, 1999), I feel it's necessary to correct some of the fact errors in your L.A. Times column today and perhaps I can broaden your perspective a bit.

No one at MTA will argue with you that buses are the backbone of public transit in Los Angeles. We agree the Metro Bus system was allowed to deteriorate for many years. No excuses. It must and is being improved but it will not turn around overnight. However, new buses are arriving weekly (we're buying 2,095 -- 437 of those new buses will arrive in the next fiscal year), we're hiring

hundreds of more bus operators and mechanics and we're putting more road supervisors on the street. Better fleet reliability and supervision will go a long way toward relieving overcrowding.

That's not rhetoric. Yes, we're spending \$1 billion to buy new buses and expand service over the next several years. But we're doing more than that. If you look at Mr. Burke's proposed budget for FY 2000 you'll see that more than one third of the budget, more than \$900 million out of a \$2.5 billion budget, will go to run the bus system next year, buy new buses and fund bus-related facilities. That's the biggest slice of the budget pie. (we spend additional monies subsidizing 16 sub-regional bus operators in the county) That compares with \$286 million for rail construction next year.

But, Patt, the MTA is not just a bus company. Nor are we just a rail builder. You may be surprised to learn that we fund myriad street and highway programs from freeway carpool lanes and sound walls to street widening, traffic signalization, street and highway gap closures, grade separations at railroad crossings, etc. There are 6.1 million cars and trucks in the county including the cabs you take and MTA is the agency that is bound by law to help fund projects that will ease traffic and ensure mobility for the 3 million more people who are coming here in the next 20 years with their cars, trucks and SUVs. In fact, 97 percent of all the trips in L.A. County are not made by public transit.

I'm not discounting the priority of improving Metro Bus service but your column ignores MTA's other responsibilities.

Other concerns: it did not cost \$300 million per mile to build the subway (about \$262 million, but half that cost is paid by the federal government and would not be available for buses, it would just go to other cities for their rail programs).

No, we don't have \$7 billion in debt. No, it's not gobbling a third of our operating budget. Debt service in FY 2000 will be \$327 million out of a \$2.5 billion proposed budget. You do the math. An independent state auditor's report also concluded MTA's debt service is quite manageable.

Yes, Metro Rail doesn't serve Dodger Stadium and the Metro Green Line stops short of LAX (future LAX expansion plans call for extending Metro Rail to the airport), however, you ignore the fact that -- with the Metro Red Line Hollywood extension opening in June and North Hollywood next spring -- the transit dependent and others will have quick and easy access to major job centers, hospitals (4 in Hollywood, alone, including Children's Hospital), colleges, shopping, culture, sports, and entertainment venues from Long Beach and the South Bay to downtown, Hollywood, Universal City and North Hollywood.

By the end of calendar year 2000, we're estimating Metro Rail ridership will double to 200,000 boardings. Two thirds of our Metro Rail riders are minorities. I suggest you ride the Metro Blue Line from downtown to Long Beach and see for yourself. Those trains, too, are packed. We're extending station platforms next year to accommodate longer trains.

I could go on and on. My concern is that your thinking is narrowly focused on bus versus rail. You are right that the Metro Bus system must be overhauled. It is being. Mr. Burke can explain how on "Life & Times." I would urge you to call me before you interview him so you can get a better understanding of MTA's mandate. Also, please doublecheck your statistics.

Thanks,

Marc Littman
Public Relations Director

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MTA Engineer:

Thank you for affording us the opportunity of commenting on bus and rail security. My concern is continued vandalism in buses.

Past campaigns have been remarkably effective in addressing and curtailing this problem. However, many buses are still severely defaced, with most windows scratched -from the inside- paneling damaged, and seats painted. This could not have happened at the maintenance divisions, due to the tight security on these sites. Most damage must have happened during revenue service.

And some of the damage is so elaborate and laborious that it is impossible for the drivers not to have noticed when it was performed.

Drivers do not have the power to confront vandals, but they can summon immediate help on the radio. If word goes around that vandals are caught on the spot and arrested, there will be less damage as a consequence. There will always be the more creative vandals and buses will still be defaced, but we will soon notice a sharp decline in vandal activity.

It all starts with increased security, and driver training on how to spot taggers and summon immediate help. Prompt action is the key. As buses are cleaned up and vandalism abated, passengers will feel an increased sense of security. (June 8)

(Editor's Note: Thanks for your comment. You'll be pleased to know that more LAPD officers and Sheriff's deputies are being added to the Metro Bus operation. The force soon will reach 400 officers. According to Paul Lennon, managing director, Safety and Security, this will mean more undercover officers on buses and quicker response to operator alerts. Metro Buses also are being equipped with surveillance cameras that will catch graffiti vandals and other criminals in the act. The photos then will be used to identify the suspects.)

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Admin. Analyst:

If it's not already standard practice, I suggest that all MTA business cards include fax number, mail stop, and e-mail address. (June 7)

(Editor's Note: According to General Services, this information is now standard on MTA business cards.)

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3 Retirements at Division 8: A retirement celebration will be held, Friday, at Division 8 for three employees. Retiring with 23 years' service each are Ronald Pedregon, Walter Roby and Steven Churchill. The celebration is planned for 11 a.m. Cake and refreshments will be served. (June 8)

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**Executive Officers Start Work
on Morale Recommendations**

(June 8) – Following a presentation by the Morale Issues Team, Tuesday morning, the MTA's executive officers felt compelled to commence work immediately on reviewing the feasibility of the recommendations and to lay the groundwork for an implementation plan to be presented to the CEO.

"This is a powerful report with very strong recommendations," Allan Lipsky, chief operating officer, told the executive officers before the presentation. "Julian Burke is committed to addressing these issues."

Lipsky, who will lead the effort to develop a plan, said executive officer support is key to the success of its implementation. Burke has asked for a draft plan by the end of June. He expects to release the Team's recommendations when the implementation plan is complete.

Although many of the 90-plus recommendations can be accomplished quickly, the CEO has noted that some could be costly and that this could delay their implementation or rule them out entirely. Others may be subject to labor negotiations.

#

It's Twins for Kathy Lau! MTA Travel Coordinator Kathy Lau and her husband, Marvin, are the proud parents of twins. Candice and Brice were born May 23 at Kaiser Hospital in Baldwin Park. Brice weighed in at 6 lbs., 4 oz. and 21 inches; Candice delivered at 5 lbs., 13 oz. and 19 inches. These are the couple's first children. Mother and twins are doing fine, but Marvin is said to be a "wreck." The Laus make their home in San Gabriel. (May 25)

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For Sale: 1974 VW Superbeetle. Tan, painted in 1994. Very clean, excellent condition. Runs well. Will sell for \$1500 OBO. Call Mary Reyna at 922-2521.

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Project Engineer:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity of commenting on the Morale Team Report. It would help if we could read it. I recommend that it be posted on the Intranet for everybody's information. *Then* we will be able to comment on it. (June 4)

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Real Estate Officer:

I'm wondering what criteria is used by Marketing in determining what ads are put on the sides of our buses. Historically this space has been used as a venue for advertisements for new-release feature films and television shows. Lately, I've seen an ad for "Atomic Train" which apparently runs amok and blows up a city (I'm sure Metrolink appreciated that) and borderline R-rated photos for shows about "Cleopatra" and "Sex and the City" (are these family shows?). What are we thinking?? I am personally seriously embarrassed whenever I've seen these latter two ads, especially because I understand that MTA is shuttling these photos of minimally covered women all around the City and, of course, promoting these types of messages, with all their attendant implications. (June 4)

Warren Morse, Deputy Executive Officer, Marketing, responds:

MTA does not sell advertising directly. We generate guaranteed revenue of about \$13 million a year by giving an outside vendor the right to sell and post advertising on our fleet. The vendor reviews all ads prior to posting according to set criteria, which cover items such as pornography, profanity, and negative ethnic content. We recently added to the criteria a prohibition of concepts that denigrate public transportation. Ads for alcohol and tobacco products are not accepted.

While MTA reserves the right to (and does) reject advertising, that right must be exercised with great caution in order to avoid charges of censorship. If surveyed, many people might find much of what the advertising, television and movie industries produce to be of questionable taste. But that remains subjective; so beyond the criteria mentioned above, it is inappropriate for MTA to appoint itself as the arbiter of good taste in advertising. Complaints about the implications of any given ad will be most effective if registered with its source: the advertiser. (June 4)

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Update

Transportation Commission Approves MOU for Pasadena Blue Line Construction Group

UPDATE (June 8) -- The California Transportation Commission (CTC) today approved a three-party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MTA and the Pasadena Metro Blue Line Construction Authority (PMBLCA) -- a significant step toward the start of construction of the light-rail line to Pasadena.

The vote clears the way for the PMBLCA to continue project development and pursue state funding already committed to the project. On Monday, the MTA Board voted to transfer an initial \$10 million to the PMBLCA, with at least another \$58.7 million to follow in October, 1999. The state has some \$278 million available for the construction project.

0 0 0

(June 7) – The MTA Board, meeting in special session today, authorized CEO Julian Burke to execute a Morandum of Understanding with the PMBLCA and the California Transportation Commission.

The motion was amended to prevent any local funds from being spent on public relations or lobbying. Professional services and consultant contracts must be engineering- or construction-related.

The Board also gave a boost to the concept of a Universal fare System (UFS) by approving a contract to prepare specifications for fareboxes, ticket vending machines and electronic fare collection systems that will be UFS-compatible.

The motion would require the MTA to explore the possibility of a "cash-less" bus and to provide within 60 days a schedule and scope for an MTA comprehensive fare structure, fare policy and fare administration study. This item was carried over from the May Board meeting.

The Pasadena Metro Blue Line MOU would spell out conditions for transferring funds to the PMBLCA. It also requires the MTA to submit a full-funding plan and quarterly reports on the Consent Decree.

The motion included a funding agreement, a property trust agreement and a master cooperative agreement between the MTA and the PMBLCA. The item was carried over from the May Board meeting.

#

66 Buses Added to Peak Hour Service;
Other Service to Match New Subway Line

By Ed Scannell

(June 7) – The MTA is adding 66 buses into peak hour service on its 20 busiest lines. The addition is part of a service expansion inaugurated last fall to further reduce the number of standees on Metro buses.

The MTA added 30 buses into peak hour service in December, 1998, and will increase peak hour service by another 64 buses in December, 1999.

The expansion is made possible through the introduction into the Metro Bus fleet of both new buses and alcohol-fueled buses repowered to operate on diesel fuel. Last month alone, MTA Equipment Engineering turned over 57 new and repowered buses to Transit Operations, the most buses delivered to the MTA in one month at any time during the 1990s. (Please see next story.)

Effective Sunday, June 13, the MTA also will initiate a series of Metro Bus service changes to complement the extension of the Metro Red Line subway to Hollywood and to eliminate service duplications.

The lines affected are Line 1 (Hollywood Boulevard), Line 217 (Hollywood Boulevard/Fairfax Avenue); Line 420 (LACC/Panorama City); and Line 429 (Sunset Boulevard/Westwood).

#

Advertising, Entertainment To Draw
Crowds To Hollywood Opening

By Warren Morse

(June 7) -- You may have noticed the ads posted on 600 Metro Buses for the past two months announcing the opening of Metro Rail's new stations in Hollywood. But that's just the anchor to an advertising blitz MTA's Marketing Department is using to draw people out to the Grand Opening weekend, June 12-13.

Ads detailing the festivities began appearing in more than 30 newspapers on June 1 and will continue through June 12. Publications being used range from the majors (such as the LA Times, Daily News and La Opinion) to community weeklies in Armenian, Korean and Chinese. Then on June 9, a "marriage mail" piece in 4 languages (English, Spanish, Armenian and Korean) will be delivered to 368,000 households surrounding all Metro Red Line and Blues Line stations. The brochure includes a map of the entire Metro Rail system.

Similar brochures were placed on Metro Buses over the Memorial Day weekend, while slides announcing the opening have been screened between shows at 63 Hollywood-area movie theaters -- many of which are showing the new *Star Wars* film -- since mid-May. There'll be several billboards, too. And to top things off, TV spots promoting the event will appear on KCOP-Ch. 13 during the final week before the opening.

But that's not all. Working together with the Media Relations department, both the LA Times and La

Opinion will publish special sections about Metro Rail on June 9, including details of the Hollywood opening.

Among the entertainers being promoted in all of these materials are the well-known musical groups Bloodstone and El Chicano, both of whom will be performing at the Vermont/Santa Monica/LA City College station, and the Viver Brasil Dance Troupe, which will be performing at the Hollywood/Vine station.

In addition, all who attend the Grand Opening celebration will receive a coupon book offering discounts at more than 70 restaurants and merchants in the Hollywood area. The coupon book doubles as a "Destination Hollywood Passport," and those who visit all 5 stations during opening weekend can redeem their passport for a special gift: a pair of sunglasses with the Metro Rail Hollywood icon on each lens.

#

[MTA Safety Officials Escort
Media on Metro Red Line Tour](#)

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Seven local TV stations were among a group of media who gathered at the Metro Red Line Vermont/Santa Monica station for a safety tour. Here, MTA Safety and Security Director Paul Lennon and LAPD Cmdr. Garrett Zimmon answer media questions. (More photos following story below.)

(June 3) – In preparation for the grand opening, June 12-13, of the Metro Red Line's Vermont/Hollywood extension, MTA safety officials today escorted area media on a tour of the system.

In a presentation at the Vermont/Santa Monica station, Paul Lennon, managing director, Safety and Security, said a recent review of the subway by American Public Transit Association (APTA) officials from Chicago, Atlanta and New Jersey found that the MTA's operating methods "are very safe, procedures are effective and our operating team professional."

"Passengers will be entering the safest and most secure subway system ever built," Lennon added. LAPD and LA City Fire Department officials demonstrated safety and emergency equipment for the media.

Seven local TV stations – KNBC, KTLA, KABC, KCAL, KTTV, KCOP and Korean TV -- covered the event, along with the LA Times, radio stations KNX and KLON, the Hollywood Independent and the

Chinese Daily News.

Noting that the system features the latest in state-of-the-art technology, Lennon also pointed out that, "Working behind the scenes is a fine group of men and women who have been trained to ensure that all systems are operating as designed and...that safety and security are never compromised."

Since it opened in 1993, the Metro Red Line has sustained no damage from earthquakes or fire, nor has it become a refuge for criminals. Factors preventing this include methods of construction, high-tech communications and control systems, and a strong police presence.

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The MTA's Jess Diaz explains subway control panel to local media during tour of Vermont/Santa Monica Station.

Dr. Geoffrey Martin of the MTA's Tunnel Advisory Panel discusses subway tunnel strength.

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LAPD Cmdr. Garrett Zimmon discusses security aboard the Metro Red Line with media attending the

The MTA's Marilyn Morton, ADA compliance officer, explains the yellow directional tiles positioned on sub-

safety tour on Thursday.

**way platforms to help visually im-
paired passengers.**

#

New

FTA's Linton Featured Guest
at Vermont/Hollywood Opening

(June 8) – Gordon Linton, administrator of the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) will be the featured guest at Friday's official opening of the Metro Red Line's new five-station Vermont/Hollywood segment.

Honorary Hollywood Mayor Johnny Grant will serve as master of ceremonies. Mayor Richard Riordan, MTA Board chairman, will lead the MTA delegation.

Also expected to participate in the ceremony at the Hollywood/Vine station are:

California Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa,
County Supervisor and Board Vice Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke,
County Supervisor and Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky,
City Council Member Jackie Goldberg,
Cast members from the play "Wizard of Oz" and other
MTA Board members.

Following the ceremony, the VIPs and media will take an inaugural ride to the Vermont/Sunset station. The public opening is scheduled for June 12-13.

#

4% Pay Hike for Non-Represented Scheduled for July 16 Paychecks

(June 4) – The 4 percent pay increase for non-represented employees will go into effect July 1 and will be reflected in the July 16 paychecks, CEO Julian Burke announced today.

All regular and temporary regular employees in active service, including those who have reached or exceeded the top of their pay grades, will receive the pay hike, according to Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources.

Employees serving initial probation and who were hired between Jan. 1, 1999, and June 30, 1999, will not receive the increase until they have successfully completed the probation period. The increase will be effective the first day after successful completion of their probation.

Employees represented by unions are not eligible for the increase. The National Labor Relations Act requires that any increase in wages or benefits must be negotiated with their unions. ([Click here for related story.](#))

For more information about the pay raise, contact Amy Vander Breggan, Human Resources, at 922-5223.

#

Equipment Engineering Hits Record in Turnovers of New, Repowered Buses

(June 4) – Equipment Engineering turned over 57 new and repowered buses to Transit Operations in May, the most buses delivered to the MTA in one month at any time during the 1990s, according to John Drayton, acting director of the department.

"In the last 45 days, we've turned over 10 to 15 buses a week to Bus Operations for revenue service. Current delivery schedules dictate that we'll sustain this pace through the end of the year,"

Drayton said. "Over the past five years, our typical delivery rate has been no more than five buses a week."

In May, his department turned over 30 new Neoplan coaches and 27 buses converted from ethanol to clean diesel. To date, 140 of the original 324 ethanol buses have been converted to clean diesel.

Bus Operations Needs 100 Buses to Meet Commitments

Mike Singer, the equipment maintenance manager responsible for fleet management, said Bus Operations needs a total of 100 new or repowered buses to meet its commitment for the mid-year shakeup, June 6.

Drayton's department will provide a total of about 70 of the buses required. The remaining buses will come, temporarily, from the 20 percent spare ratio, but Singer expects the continued flow of new or repowered buses could reach the required 100 within the next week or so.

Drayton credited his 40-member staff with achieving the high bus turnover rate while working three separate new bus contracts.

"We have staff on site at the New Flyer plant in Winnipeg, at the NABI plant in Alabama and at the Neoplan factory in Lamar, Colorado," said Drayton. "We're also working at Valley Detroit Diesel in Industry City to get the bus conversions out."

With these buses coming in, Singer said Bus Maintenance will be able to pull the oldest buses out of service while fulfilling the MTA's service requirements. A total of 1,829 buses is needed to meet peak demand.

"This has truly been a team effort," Drayton added. "The staff deserves a huge amount of credit for their dedication and professionalism. They're making this work."

#

MTA Seeks Court Review of Special Master's Ruling

By Ed Scannell

(June 4) -- The MTA filed a motion in federal court Thursday seeking review of the Special Master's order that MTA purchase an additional 481 buses to relieve overcrowding on Metro buses. ([Click here for related story.](#))

The motion cites the MTA's "remarkable progress" at achieving the "targets" outlined in the Consent Decree and asks U.S. District Judge Terry Hatter to "reject entirely the (Special Master's) recommendations...(of)...March 6, 1999 and May 14, 1999...." The motion also asks Hatter to..."hold an evidentiary hearing on the factual issues disputed by the parties and (to) reform the Consent Decree to accurately reflect the intent of the parties."

Attorneys for the MTA argued in the filing that the recommendations of Special Master Donald Bliss are beyond his powers or even the powers of a district court and that such courts are required to allow public agencies to manage their own affairs.

The motion also contends that the Special Master's ruling, if enforced, would seriously hamper the MTA's ability to carry out its other responsibilities, which include developing a balanced multi-modal transportation system.

Bliss was appointed to resolve certain disputes arising between the parties to the Consent Decree, which was approved by Hatter in 1996.

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**Division 7 Operators Ricardo Garcia (front) and German Aguilar
listen to a "Cops and Ops" presentation.**

**More Officers Coming to Bus Ops,
Operators Told During Meeting**

(June 2) -- The LAPD and Sheriff's Department are deploying "a significant number" of officers to Metro Bus operations as the law enforcement units approach a total strength of 400, the head of MTA security told operators gathered for a lunch-time presentation last week at Division 7. (See photos above and below story.)

"This is a 'first' for our industry and for the MTA," said Paul Lennon, managing director, Security and Safety. "Buses are now receiving an equal priority for our law enforcement resources. It's not that buses haven't been important, it's simply that rail operations are easier to police.

"In other cities where rail ridership is frequently dense law enforcement focus on rail is justified," Lennon said, noting that the shift in officer assignments will be completed this fall. "We're trying to put an operator-responsive security operation in place for bus operations, as well as for rail."

The "Cops and Ops" meeting at Division 7 was one of a weekly series conducted at the operating divisions since August, 1998, by Security and Safety. The sessions include talks by Lennon's group, the LAPD and LASD, Bus Operations and other speakers. Every session ends with questions and

answers.

MTA Outfitting Buses with Digital Cameras

During his presentation, LAPD Capt. Vance Proctor noted that the MTA is outfitting some 300 buses with digital security cameras. Another 100 camera-equipped buses are coming and nearly 1,000 will be brought on line over the next two to three years. The cameras continuously record digital photos of activity on a bus.

"We're setting up new procedures that will allow us to use the photos taken by these cameras as evidence if a crime is committed," Proctor said. He urged any operator reporting a crime to alert responding officers to the security photos.

"Reported crime on transit is very low" Proctor said. "Most of it is unruly behavior."

During the Q and A, Division 7 operators raised concerns about radios, dispatcher response, graffiti, condition of buses, police coverage and bus seats.

The MTA is continuing its effort to develop a standard ergonomic operators seat suitable for use on all buses by all operators, Tom Jasmin, manager, Bus Operations Control Center, told the group. The agency "went back to the drawing board," he said, when new seats purchased from a vendor were found to be difficult to adjust and deteriorated too quickly.

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**Transit Operations Executive Officer Tom Conner takes notes
during the "Cops and Ops" presentation at Division 7.**

#

MTA Auditor:

Re: Your story headlined, "LAPD Officers Arrest Tagger Charged with Graffiti Vandalism." I don't believe your 16 point program will work unless you involve the very people you want to criminalize and punish.

Hire some of these young people (make a deal with the youth in custody) and find out what is the reason they paint/spray graffiti on buses/trains. You're spending \$15 Million anyway, why not devise a program to help the community and the youth in it. California is far too eager to punish but punishment and the criminalization of the community will not stop the graffiti. I can assure you your approach will not solve the problem. While the MTA is right to adopt "Zero Tolerance" for graffiti-marred buses, fear of apprehension and punishment will not stop the graffiti (the youth is already on probation for burglary and vandalism, where's the fear of apprehension and punishment?).

There are other factors in play here. To treat graffiti vandalism as a crime, putting youth at more risk for living a life in the prison community, helps no one unless you're a politician, a prison guard, or a prison contractor.

You need to think your new-found policy out. You're very good at awarding sizeable contracts to initiate studies. Award a contract to the residents of Ramona Gardens to study why graffiti is sprayed/painted on buses, and how to stop the graffiti. (June 2)

(Editor's Note: Thanks for your suggestion. You'll be interested to know that the MTA operates an anti-graffiti program called "Metro Clean" (formerly JAWS) that deploys teams of adult and juvenile offenders to clean bus stops, inactive rail rights-of-way and bus layover zones, and also to clean graffiti off Metro Buses. Some 1,100 offenders currently are enrolled in the program, according to Granville Houston, an equipment service supervisor who oversees the program. About 30 to 40 adult offenders report to the RRC each weekday for work assignments and 60 to 80 juveniles report on the weekends. The Metro Clean teams also work in community beautification programs and will clean up before and after other community events. The program is managed by Pete Serdienis of Stops and Zone. He can be reached at Ext. 25190.)

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Administrative Analyst:

In a recent What's Up? article, someone had complained about being blocked from various sites on the InterNet, and the response was that all they had to do was send a memo to the ITS staff requesting access.

Right after that issue, I was blocked from various sites that were necessary for me to research for my job, and I then sent an E-mail to ITS and I also submitted a Site Access Request form, signed by my supervisor, requesting access to those sites. It's been about THREE WEEKS now, and I still haven't gotten a response. (June 1)

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Metro Construction Engineer:

I think that a series of pages that depict the MTA Org Charts of the top level and the departments of the EOs & DEOs would be extremely helpful. Typically an Org Chart is obsolete within a month of publication due to retirements & appointments. Using metro.NET the Org Chart on the intranet can be updated at the same time that an announcement of a new appointment is made. Perhaps the boxes on the charts can be linked to individual department pages if they exist. (June 1)

Fund-Raiser for Elsie Baldemor

The Filipino-American Employees of MTA is sponsoring a golf tournament at the Diamond Bar Golf Course, June 4, to raise funds for Elsie Baldemor of Accounting Department who has been sick since last August. Proceeds from the \$70 tournament entry fee will help Elsie continue her medical coverage. For more information, please contact: Pete Cruz at (213) 922-3095; Sonny Cabrales at (213) 922-5406; or Willie Atienza at (213) 922-4100.

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Farewell Party for Louisa Simpson: A farewell party for Louisa Simpson of Metro Construction is scheduled Tuesday, June 8, at La Golondrina on Olvera Street. The \$10 contribution covers appetizers, soft drinks and a gift. For information, please contact Carole Nakano, 922-6338. (June 1)

Patron Praises Metro Bus, Rail Operators in Daily Breeze Letter

(May 18) To the Editor:

I just wanted to take a moment to send out appreciation to all the South Bay municipal bus drivers for their dedicated service to the public. But more importantly, I feel a much deeper and greater appreciation to the Metropolitan Transit Authority bus drivers.

I can't begin to express how their knowledge, patience and great public service attitude has helped me in my transition from private to public transportation. I have had Metro bus drivers go out of their way to assist me in my travels, consisting of four hours (round trip) to school and back home over the past year.

There were the drivers who delivered me right to my door on their way to the yard at the end of their day to keep me from walking 20 minutes in the dark. There were drivers who waited for me when I had to wait for signal to cross a street and catch the bus. Then there were the comedians who lifted my spirits when I was so tired and feeling down.

Why, there were even drivers who offered to pray for me when I was troubled.

This county really owes a great big "Thank you" to the men and women of MTA who keep L.A. in motion every day of the year! In fact, if I had my way, there would be a National Bus Driver Appreciation Day that would rank right up there next to our secretaries. Thank you, MTA bus and rail drivers, for driving that extra mile to get your customers where they need to be. I love them all!

--Shellea Ann Hirschag, Torrance

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African American Employee Association: A membership drive mixer is scheduled for Friday, June 4, from 4:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. at the Brotherhood Crusade Headquarters, 200 East Slauson Ave. For information, call Jerry Kiper at 922-7323 or Alonzo Neal at 323-846-1663. (June 3)

Burke Asks Staff to Develop Morale Implementation Plan

(June 1) – CEO Julian Burke today directed his senior staff to begin work on a plan to implement recommendations in the Morale Issues Team report presented May 28.

"I found the Morale Team's report challenging, well-researched and important to us," Burke told executive officers during their weekly meeting. "I believe many of these recommendations can be accomplished quickly."

Burke asked the executive officers to devise implementation plans for their separate departments. Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky will take the lead in developing an overall MTA plan by the end of June from the combined department drafts.

Each executive officer was given a copy of the Morale Team's study last week. The Team will give its hour-long presentation to the senior staff at a meeting within the next week.

"The most important step for this organization to get hold of its morale issues is for executive officers to understand them and implement them," Burke said. He noted that one of the Morale Team's most important recommendations was to give executive officers greater responsibility and accountability for operating their departments.

Burke said that the recommendations and implementation plan will be made available to employees as soon as possible. Although many of the 90-plus recommendations can be put in place quickly, he said some come with a high price tag that may delay their implementation or rule them out altogether. Still others may be subject to labor negotiations.

#

Special Board Meeting to Consider

Pasadena Blue Line, Universal Fares

(June 4) – The Pasadena Metro Blue Line and the proposed Universal Fare System will be among 17 items scheduled to be considered at a special MTA Board meeting on Monday, June 7.

The Board will be asked to authorize the CEO to execute a Memorandum or Understanding (MOU) between the MTA, the Pasadena Metro Blue Line Construction Authority (PMBLCA) and the California Transportation Commission (CTC).

The MOU would spell out conditions for transferring funds to the PMBLCA. It also requires the MTA to submit a full-funding plan and quarterly reports on the Consent Decree.

The motion includes a funding agreement, a property trust agreement and a master cooperative agreement between the MTA and the PMBLCA. The item was carried over from the May Board meeting.

The Board also will be asked to approve a contract to prepare specifications for fareboxes, ticket vending machines and electronic fare collection systems that will be compatible with a Universal Fare System (UFS).

The motion would require the MTA to explore the possibility of a "cash-less" bus and to provide within 60 days a schedule and scope for an MTA comprehensive fare structure, fare policy and fare administration study. This item also was carried over from the May Board meeting.

#

Administrative Aide:

I, too, am a non-smoker, but I believe the issue here is not "hounding" smokers but, rather, doing all that is necessary to ensure that MTA employees have a smoke-free work environment. No one should be subjected to the second-hand smoke that is emitted from the cigarettes of those smoking at the entrance and exit to our workplace. To suggest that "the person who complained about the smokers would benefit from using the revolving door" is ludicrous. When entering or leaving the building, employees should not have to avoid a certain door because there are smokers in the vicinity. The simple solution is to prohibit smoking in front of the building and at all entrances and exits that employees use, including the parking structure entrances, P1, P2 & P3. How long will it take before General Services acts on this matter? (June 30)

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Quality Manager:

The Carl's Jr/MTA transit map is a good idea, but how long will it stay current? Are there provisions for updating the map as routes change and even when Carl's Jr restaurants change or add/delete locations? Someone is going to complain as soon as it gets out of date. This also seems like a perfect Internet application, possibly using Snap! Maps, US Gazeteer or some other GIS utility. Also, did Metrolink get included? From the picture on the Intranet, it is not clear. (June 25)

(Editor's Note: According to MTA Marketing, the 1999 Metro Bus and Metro Rail System Map includes Metrolink and all the municipal bus lines in the county as well as those operated by MTA. All printed information runs the risk of containing inaccuracies as things change over time. That concern is usually outweighed if the majority of information contained in the piece can be expected to remain correct. The intention is to update and reprint the system map annually.

This year's printing was sponsored by Carl's Jr. Along with the printing, they are distributing the map at all their LA County locations. Depending on how strong a response they receive, Carl's may be interested in participating next year.

In terms of the Internet, MTA Marketing is investigating the feasibility of presenting something as large as the system map on our site, but thinks people will be better served on the Internet by the interactive "Metro Trip Planner" that the MTA is preparing to launch this summer.)

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Project Engineer:

The Board has proposed to study the outsourcing of administration and operations management. We don't need a study to conclude that this is a bad idea. The automotive industry, to cite an example,

which outsources just about everything, does not outsource its management. It does outsource its board of directors.

So, let's outsource the MTA Board. The current structure is not working. Political appointees are too sensitive to their respective electorates and impose decisions that are not conducive to a sound, integrated, multi-mode transportation system. The mid-cities extension is a sterling example of localized interests winning over sound engineering and overall ultimate public interest. The Little Tokyo "180" is another.

The Board should be constituted by planning, engineering and business experts with proven trajectory in public transportation. They would be paid a stipend, and would need to apply for their positions. No more than five board members would be needed, to ensure diversity without chaos.

The MTA Board has been the target of savaging by most area publications. Much of it was undeserved, but the relentless attack points out that there may be something to it. The Board would do well in doing some soul searching and pulling together to strengthen and improve the MTA. Personal and political interest is not the way. (June 23)

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Equipment Engineering Supervisor:

Just read Marc Littman's letter to the Times. It is absurd that we haven't tooted our horn more. Remember that in June 15th, 1989, we unveiled the largest fleet of alternative fuel buses in the nation and we haven't looked back. We operate more alternative fuel buses than the rest of the national non-attainment areas put together, and to think that soon one of every two daily boardings will be on a clean fuel bus is absolutely amazing. It appears even our Board members are oblivious to that remarkable statistic. And about the Times, these buses are expensive to operate and do they recall that they reneged on a deal to buy our NOx trading credits years ago? This would have been a pioneering deal but they backed out at the last minute. Curiously enough, the deal was far enough along that the AQMD transferred the credits to them and we hadn't received payment. It took 5 years to straighten that out. (June 22)