

Editor's Note: A retirement party for Battalion Chief Bob Aaron is planned for 11:30 a.m., Wednesday, Oct. 6, at the Los Angeles Athletic Club. For information, contact Verita Dixon, 922-7271; Donna Finn, 922-4296; or Mike Littleton, 922-7269.

Battalion Chief Bob Aaron Retires after 37 Years with City Fire Dept., 12 with MTA



Retiring LA City Fire Battalion Chief Bob Aaron, left, and his successor, Battalion Chief Mike Littleton.

By Bill Heard, Editor

(September 27) In the 12 years he has been assigned to the MTA, LA City Fire Battalion Chief Bob Aaron, 57, has seen the county's Metro Rail system grow from an idea to a reality.

When Aaron - who retires this month with 37 years on the job - began working with the SCRTD back in 1987, the Metro Red Line was still in the planning stage. In the ensuing years, he helped prepare for and witnessed the opening of Metro Red Line Segments 1 and 2, along with the opening of the Metro Blue Line and the Metro Green Line.

Aaron has served as a member of the MTA's Fire-Life Safety Committee, a group that includes representatives from the County Fire Department and the MTA. The Committee ensures compliance with rail safety codes and standards. Battalion Chief Mike Littleton will replace Aaron as City Fire Department representative to the MTA and on the committee.

During his years with the MTA, Aaron has seen fires and sinkholes, but he's also helped initiate safety improvements that have made the MTA a national leader in fire and life safety on the rails. These improvements have included sprinklers in the stations and water standpipes, fire alarm systems, ventilation systems and emergency lighting and exiting corridors.

He also was instrumental in persuading the National Fire Protection Association to adopt fire and life safety standards developed by the MTA.

In an interview with *MTA Report*, Aaron recalled the July, 1990, tunnel fire beneath the Hollywood Freeway.

"No one was hurt and the fire caused a minimal delay," Aaron said. "And there were benefits from that fire. The HDPE tunnel liner was changed from black to white so flaws could be seen prior to installation. Construction began exclusively using concrete sets instead of rings with wooden lagging and the fire department was able to use some specialized equipment in fighting the fire."

Even the Hollywood sinkhole of 1995 resulted in safety improvements, Aaron said, including the fine-tuning of emergency procedures, improved communications among responding agencies, as well as the experience gained in deploying firefighters and emergency personnel in a dangerous situation.

"But the major highlight I've seen during my career with the MTA is the opportunity over the years to build and work with a team with the RTD and now the MTA," he said. "It's the people you work with and the accomplishments of the group that make the difference."

Aaron's replacement, Battalion Chief Littleton, has been a firefighter 31 years and a battalion chief 11 years. He previously had assignments in the San Fernando Valley and was in charge of building fire stations for the department.

Littleton will continue Aaron's work in helping finish MOS-3 and will provide fire safety input to the Pasadena Metro Blue Line. He also expects to be heavily involved in training MTA personnel in fire and life safety.

Aaron, meanwhile, expects to spend his retirement years traveling with his wife, Viki, to visit with family. The Aarons have two grown children and four grandchildren.

[Back to MTA Report](#)