

Results from First Quarter FY 2000 Show MTA Management Improving

By Bill Heard, Editor

(November 18) The MTA is managing itself "the way good private enterprise organizations do," Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky said Wednesday, during a review of the agency's first quarter FY 2000 results.

In an overview of the July, August and September period, Lipsky said better budget management, quarterly reviews and the requirement for departmental Management Action Plans (MAPs) were important elements in improved management.

Lipsky cited such successes as "a very effective Call for Projects," the development of the Intranet and the "model Internet web site" that includes the new MTA Trip Planner. Action items include completion of capital projects and further improvements to the procurement process.

"Our goal is to stay on budget this year," said Chief Financial Officer Dick Brumbaugh. "We want to hold expenditures to the level approved by the Board last May."

For the first time, the MTA ranked its bus operating divisions based on such factors as actual cost per hour vs. budget costs, on-time pullouts, accident rate and miles between road calls.

First quarter transportation winners and managers were Division 8, Grant Myers; Division 15, Karl Downs; Division 9, Mace Bethel; and Division 5, Dana Coffey. Division maintenance winners and managers were Division 6, Ronald Whitney; Division 7, Mike Bottone; and Division 9, John McBryan.

Tom Conner, Transit Operations executive officer, said the MTA on-time bus pullouts improved during the first quarter to 99.1 percent with 1.6 million revenue service hours. He said 142 new and repowered buses had been placed in service and that training was completed for 213 new operators, 70 operator mentors and 172 mechanics.

In rail operations, Conner said the agency maintained 99.2 percent on-time pullouts in light rail and 99.5 percent in heavy rail.

"They've been able to perform to a higher standard and still meet rollouts," Conner noted. "In the next quarter, we're going to see pullout performance numbers that are the highest and best we've ever achieved at the MTA."

With Jan. 1, 2000, just 43 days away, Administration Executive Officer Frank Cardenas said the Y2K project is "ahead of or on schedule for critical systems." He said the Y2K task force had completed "monumental efforts" to make the Material Management System (MMS) and all five modules of the Vehicle Management System (VMS) Y2K compliant.

"The July, August, September time period was absolutely critical to the success of our Y2K project," Cardenas said.

Another massive project completed on time was the audit of Proposition A and Proposition sales tax revenues required by last year's

voter initiative on subway construction.

"It was a major milestone in establishing the MTA's accountability to the public," said Bill Bernsdorf, managing director, Management Audit Services.

Auditors had to account for some \$5.7 billion in tax revenues over a seven-year period. The effort involved 37 staff members, 4,650 staff hours, 500 boxes of old records and documentation for 845 random financial transactions. Bernsdorf credited Controller Josie Nicasio and her staff, Judith Butler and the Records Management staff, Maritza Torres, Andrew Lee, Harvey Saulter, John McCamy, Dave Champion, Ed Carlos and Pete Cruz.

Other highlights of the quarterly review included:

Administration

- A 21 percent increase in revenues from leases of MTA property.
- The rollout of the "It's getting better on the bus" advertising campaign.

Human Resources

- Completed of sexual harassment training for 736 employees.
- Processed of 6,762 job applications and hiring of 394 new employees, including 236 BDOF bus operators and 25 part-time operators.

Finance

- Processed of 24,917 invoices valued at \$291.6 million.
- Processed 1,284 check requests valued at \$30.6 million.

Risk Management

- Reduced the number of liability claims and associated reserves to a 15-year low, despite an increase in vehicle accidents.

Office of System Safety and Security

- Recorded "zero lost-time accidents" on MTA construction projects for the past five months.
- Completed the third cycle of "cops and ops" meetings at the operating divisions.

Procurement

- Maintained a 98.2 percent annual service rate.
- Reduced the combined backlog of construction contracts by 30 percent.

Construction

- Proceeded with work on the Kaiser entrance at the Metro Red Line Vermont/Sunset station.
- Installed and tested communication cable in new subway tunnels.
- Awarded the LA River Bridge widening contract.

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