



A Real 'Yawner'

**Y2K Bug Fails to Hatch at MTA;
All Systems 'Go' for Year 2000**

By Bill Heard, Editor

(Jan. 3) "Quiet" hardly begins to describe New Year's Eve in the MTA's Emergency Operations Center. To say that nothing - nothing Y2K-related, anyway - interrupted a perfectly tranquil evening, pretty much says it all.

"Everything went very smoothly," said Tom Conner, Transit Operations executive officer and Incident Commander for the evening. "It showed that the preparations made during the year were very well done. It was a tribute to the Y2K staff."

EOC activated at 6 p.m.

Conner activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 6 p.m., Dec. 31. During the evening, he supervised a command group of senior Transit Operations, Administration and Safety and Security staff, including LAPD and Sheriff's Department captains, Information Technology Systems managers and a public information officer.

Throughout the evening, Metro Bus and Metro Rail ridership was light, probably due to the rain, cold weather and lack of interest in millennium events. And, aside from a few rain-related fender benders involving Metro Buses, few problems marred a quiet day. A downed cable was reported on the Metro Blue Line, a section of Metro Red Line track between Union Station and Division 20 lost power briefly and some variable message signs showed the wrong date, but none of those problems was believed to be Y2K-related.

The computer screen of TOS Mike Dunn in the Bus Operations Control Center

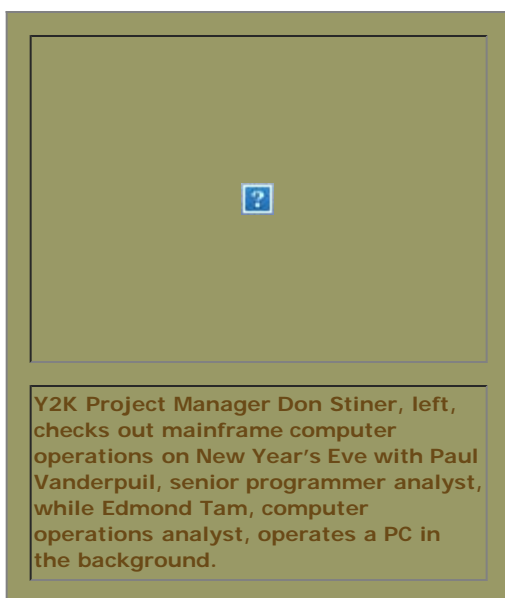


Despite the lack of a crisis, the response team's time wasn't wasted, Conner said. The team tested various emergency systems, including the Mobile Emergency Command Center. ITS personnel repeatedly tested computer-related systems.

A good experience

"It was good experience to activate the EOC staff and to organize under the state's standardized emergency system," said Conner. "It's a requirement if you want to be reimbursed by the state and it was good practice if we had to respond to an earthquake."

"Absolutely nothing of a Y2K nature disrupted service in any way," said Don Stiner, Y2K team manager. He heads a 75-member group that began work on the Y2K problem in May, 1998.



Although the MTA has moved into the year 2000, there's Y2K work that remains to be done to bring all systems up to par. The non-mission critical elements of the TOTS system for operations scheduling and payroll must be upgraded. Metro Rail's SCADA control system, the variable message signs at the rail stations and the Metro Green Line radio system still require work. Changes also are required in Human Resources and Payroll systems.

Resulted in system improvements

Stiner believes the Y2K effort was worthwhile because it focused attention on some of the MTA's aging systems and resulted in necessary improvements. He notes that TOTS now has new hardware and software to replace 15-year-old elements. The Automated Storage and Retrieval System (ASRS) for maintenance parts also was updated.

"We were able to accomplish much-needed upgrades to important systems," Stiner says. "Upgrading these systems to modernized versions will create long-term efficiencies for the MTA."

Just before the EOC disbanded some time after 2 a.m., Jan. 1,

emergency personnel were looking anywhere for some excitement.

"Come here and I'll show you LA's millennium celebration," a police officer reportedly said to another emergency worker. He pointed out the window at the intersection of Cesar Chavez and Vignes. "See, the light just turned from red to green."

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