

Metro Report Archives

February 2000

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Offers Quick, Easy Service (Feb. 3) Now there's a quicker, easier way to order your business cards. It's the Business Card Hotline, a new service offered by MTA Graphics.

MTA's [Internet Web Site](#) Gets A Crisp New Look (Feb. 3) Beginning Friday, Feb. 4, Internet users will see a brand new look when they call up the MTA's homepage.

MTA Unveils [Proposed Transit Alternatives](#) For Mid-City/Westside, Eastside, SF Valley Corridors

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[Hollywood/Vine Station](#) Selected for Arts Council's 1999

'Charlie' Award (Feb. 4) The Hollywood Arts Council has honored the Metro Red Line's Hollywood/Vine station with a coveted "Charlie Award" for "giving our community an art-filled station that goes directly to the heart of Hollywood."

LAPD [Detectives Arrest Suspect](#) in Profitable Sales of Stolen

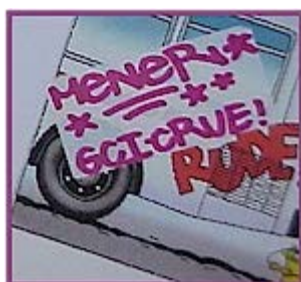
Transfers (Feb. 7) For three days last week, detectives from the LAPD's Transit Group tracked a pair of men as they allegedly broke into Metro Buses to steal transfers they then sold for as much as \$1,200 to \$1,500 a week. The primary suspect is thought to have been operating for almost two years.

Proposed [FY 2001 Federal Budget](#) Would Earmark \$100 Million

for MTA (Feb. 8) The federal budget proposed for FY 2001 by President Clinton includes \$100 million for the MTA within a record \$54.9 billion earmarked for transportation.

MTA [Successful on Many Fronts](#) During Final Months of 1999,

Lipsky Says (Feb. 9) The MTA achieved successes in court, in audits, in administration and transit operations during the last three months of 1999, Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky told employees gathered Wednesday for the agency's quarterly review.



[Vandals Use Stickers](#), Postal Labels as

Destructive New Graffiti Devices (Feb. 9) Slap tags. Quick and easy to apply, but hard to remove, they're the latest and one of the most destructive devices young vandals are using to deface transit buses in Los Angeles County.

Bus Operators, LAPD Help Woman

[Recover Life Savings](#) (Feb. 10) Antonieta Vera

Perez's heart sank when she realized she had just left a duffel bag with her entire life savings tucked under the seat of a Metro Bus – a bus that was receding in the distance down Olympic Boulevard.

[Operator](#) Hailed for 'Courageous' Actions in Fiery Truck-Train

Crash Dies of Heart Attack (Feb. 11) Funeral services were conducted, Friday, for Operator Barbara C. Norsian, who was commended for her courageous actions last September for safely evacuating passengers from her Metro Blue Line train following a fiery collision with a trailer truck.

[Deputies Reward Safety](#), Good Behavior With Basketballs,

Soccer Balls for Kids (Feb. 11) Sheriff's deputies patrolling the Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line have a reward out for kids who observe rail safety procedures or behave courteously on the trains. The reward: a basketball or soccer ball.



[Arthur Winston Film](#) Nominated for Honors; New Transit Facility Second to Bear his Name

(Feb. 14) A film about 93-year-old Arthur Winston, the MTA's sterling example of energy and dependability, has been nominated for three awards by the Pan African Film Festival, the nation's largest independent Black film festival.

[Division 1 Achieves Enviably Record](#) for Few Service Delay.

(Feb. 14) Despite serving some of the most heavily traveled Metro Bus lines with some of the oldest coaches, Division 1 recently compiled an enviable one-day record when it experienced only five service delay incidents.

[Will Pasadena Get a 'Rose Line'? Board to Consider Name,](#)

Other Issues (Feb. 15) Should the area's newest light-rail line be named the "Pasadena Rose Line"? That question and others are expected to be discussed during MTA Board committee meetings Feb. 16 and 17.

[Committee Supports Audit of MTA's Handling of Prop A and C](#)

Revenues, Expenditures (Feb. 15) The Independent Citizens Advisory and Oversight Committee issued a report, Wednesday, that supports the findings of an extensive audit of the MTA's revenues and expenditures generated by two LA County half-cent transit sales taxes.

[Council to give \\$34 Million for Subway Contingent on Parking](#)

at U. City Station (Feb. 16) The Los Angeles City Council approved a motion, Wednesday, to contribute an additional \$34 million to construction of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension. The payment would be contingent upon the MTA's providing 250 parking spaces at the Universal City station in time for the opening of the new line this summer.

[Raising Money for Research: MTA's Geffen is Training](#)

Intensively for 560-Mile California AIDS Ride in June (Feb. 17) On Sunday, June 4, the MTA's Haim Geffen will climb aboard his Trek 2100 road bike in San Francisco and begin a 560-mile, seven-day run to Century City. And, he'll do it for money – not for himself, but for the Jeffery Goodman Special Care Clinic at the Gay & Lesbian Center of Los Angeles.

[Resignation Rumors 'Exaggerated' CEO Burke says, Quoting](#)

Twain (Feb. 18) CEO Julian Burke is paraphrasing a famous Mark Twain witticism by saying that "the reports of my resignation any time soon are greatly exaggerated."

[MTA Changing 'Crosstown Bus' Route to Satisfy Concerns of](#)

Beverly Hills Neighbors (Feb. 18) Less than a month into its operation of the new Line 305 Crosstown Bus, the MTA is making changes in the route to respond to the concerns of a Beverly Hills neighborhood. The line was developed to serve major employment, medical and educational centers between South Central LA and the Westside.

[Supervisor Burke Urges Participation in 2000 Census During](#)

Speech at Black History Month Luncheon. (Feb. 17) Warning that the "future of full representation" is at stake, County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, in a speech Wednesday, urged a vigorous participation in the nation's 2000 census. Burke's remarks were delivered to a standing-room-only crowd at the African-American Employees Association's Black History Month luncheon.

[Intranet News Readership Sets New 1-Day Record of 1,786 Hits](#)

(Feb. 22) The Intranet's News & Information pages reached a new one-day readership record Wednesday, Feb. 16, when 1,786 hits were recorded on MTA News, Bulletin Board, Employee Forum and the four other pages monitored by the editor.

[Arthur Winston Suffers Daughter's Death During Weekend of](#)

Film Festival Honors (Feb. 22) The MTA's Arthur Winston experienced both personal joy and tragedy this past weekend. Joy at the honors extended to him during the Pan African Film Festival and at Division 5, Saturday, and tragedy in the untimely death, possibly the same day, of Norma Robinson, the last of his four children.

MTA Bolsters Students' Opportunities with [Donation of Computer Equipment](#)

(Feb. 23) Students at five area high schools said "Thanks" to the MTA, Wednesday, for the agency's donation of 125 personal computers, 50 monitors and other peripheral equipment.

CEO Urges Board to Seek \$832 Million in State [Funding for Transit Corridors](#)

(Feb. 24) CEO Julian Burke urged the Board at its February meeting, Thursday, to immediately request state funding of \$632 million for construction of rapid bus and light rail lines in the East LA, Mid-City/Westside and San Fernando Valley transit corridors and \$200 million to cover the cost of operating those new services.

UPDATE Board Agrees to let MTA Staff Start [Transit Corridor Environmental Studies](#)

(Feb. 24) The MTA Board agreed at its February meeting, Thursday, to take the next step toward development of major transit projects to serve East Los Angeles, the Mid-City/Westside areas and the San Fernando Valley. **See article for link to Feb. 25 *Daily News* story.**

UPDATE [Board Vote](#) on 'Pasadena Rose Line,' Bus-Rail Interface

Postponed to March (Feb. 24) Without comment, the Board postponed until its March meeting a vote on a motion to name the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena the "Pasadena Rose Line" and action on Item 42, concerning the restructuring of Metro Bus lines for the opening of the Metro Red Line North Hollywood extension.

January Sees [Historic Low](#) in Metro Bus Service Complaints

(Feb. 24) For only the third time in 15 years, passengers had fewer complaints about Metro Bus service in January than they did during the preceding December, which historically brings the lowest complaint totals of the year.

Air Resources [Board Adopts Clean-Air Rules](#) for Transit Buses

(Feb. 25) The California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted clean-air regulations, Thursday, that by 2007 will require the MTA and other transit agencies to operate only buses that are powered by alternative fuel engines or clean diesel engines. **See article for link to Feb. 25 *L.A. Times* story.**

Mountain [Water Levels Recovering](#) Following Subway Tunnel

Construction (Feb. 25) Ground water levels in the Runyon Canyon area of the Santa Monica Mountains are recovering from Metro Red Line tunneling and should be back to normal in five or six years, or sooner, Dr. Dan Eisenstein of the MTA's Tunnel Advisory Panel told the Board, Thursday.

[Salt Lake City Recruiting](#) Operators, Mechanics for 2002 Winter Olympics

(Feb. 29) Salt Lake City's Olympic Organizing Committee is looking for bus operators and mechanics who want to "drive for the gold" in 2002. The Committee is inviting operators and mechanics to spend their vacations working the XIX Winter Olympic Games.

LAPD Commends [MTA's John Dover](#) for Providing Vital Lead in Stolen Transfer Case

(Feb. 29) Transit Operations Supervisor John Dover was on his way to work, Jan. 14, when he saw something very suspicious at a Metro Bus layover zone in Burbank.

[Strategic Business Plan Booklet](#) Outlines Proposed MTA

Mission, Vision, Goals (Feb. 28) A draft of the MTA's proposed Mission Statement calls for the agency to "ensure the planning, development and operation of a just, efficient and effective transportation system for the traveling public in Los Angeles County."

Board Ensures [Late-Night Service](#) for Staples, Music Center

Patrons (Feb. 28) The MTA Board has extended a pilot project that will assure late-night Metro Rail service for patrons attending events at the Staples Center and Music Center. Originally planned for April through June, the pilot project now will run through September.

[Help Save a Life:](#) Volunteer as a Speaker for Operation

Lifesaver (Feb. 29) Want to help save a young life? California Operation Lifesaver needs volunteers to make rail safety presentations at schools and community organizations in Los Angeles.

Employees Invited to [Celebrate 50th](#) with Electrical Railway

Historical Association (Feb. 29) The Electric Railway Historical Association of Southern California will celebrate its 50th anniversary of street railway preservation with a banquet and history presentation in the MTA cafeteria beginning at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, March 18.

MTA Ranks Increase by 601 in 1999; Agency now has 8,457 Employees

(Feb. 1) There are 601 more MTA employees on the payroll as of Jan. 1, 2000, than there were on Jan. 1, 1999 – an increase of 7.6 percent to a new total of 8, 457. The statistics were released by Human Resources Personnel Services.

As might be expected, the biggest increase in actual numbers was among bus operators, whose ranks ballooned by 434 to reflect the increase in Metro Bus service in the past year. The number of mechanics increased by 99.

A notable change

The other most notable change in 1999 came when 539 formerly non-represented employees voted for union representation. That event was the primary reason for the number of non-represented employees to drop from 1,651 to 1,154 this year.

The ranks of clerks and Customer Service agents increased by 22 to a total of 632, while the number of Security Officers rose from 51 to 55.

The numbers in the Personnel Services report do not include employees on leave of absence.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Board Workshop Set on Transit Alternatives for Eastside, Mid-City/Westside, SF Valley

By MARC LITTMAN

(Feb. 2) The Board will hold a workshop at 1 p.m., Friday, Feb. 4, to review technical data generated by a team of consultants that has been analyzing various options for improving public transportation in the Eastside, Mid-City/Westside, and San Fernando Valley.

MTA directors will not take action at the workshop. They may act at the Feb. 24 regular Board meeting to advance some of the options for environmental analysis. Those would require further public review and comment.

Developing less costly alternatives

Two years ago, the Board suspended new subway construction in the Eastside, Mid-City and San Fernando Valley. Since that time, MTA staff and consultants have been working with community organizations in those transit corridors to develop less costly fixed guideway alternative projects.

These range from rapid buses traveling on exclusive lanes on city streets or on exclusive busways on existing owned railroad rights-of-way to light-rail projects and, in one corridor, a short underground rail segment.

At Friday's workshop, MTA directors will review 21 different alternatives and consider projected costs, ridership and other technical data before culling those options that will go forward to the environmental review phase.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

MTA Job Fair Scores Record Turn-Out

(Feb. 2) A record number of job seekers turned out for the MTA's Job Fair, Jan. 29 at the Regional Rebuild Center. More than 500 people inquired about openings for BDOF and part-time bus operator and other positions.

Human Resources personnel representatives gave on-the-spot tests to 282 bus operator applicants. A total of 113 of those will be invited for job interviews.

Hire within 30 days

"We hope within 30 days to hire most of them and start training them as bus operators," said Mario Perez-Ceballos, manager, Employment Services.

Those interested in jobs at the MTA will have another opportunity Feb. 5, when the agency will be a major participant in a job fair with the California Employment Development Department. The job fair is set for 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Department of Water and Power Building, 111 North Hope Street.

Information about job openings and applications for MTA and PTSC positions are available from the agency's Internet web site (www.mta.net) by clicking on [Employment Opportunities](#) or by calling the 24-hour Jobline at 922-6217.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

HR Completes First Annual Review of Non-Represented Employee Salary Equity

(Feb. 2) Human Resources has completed the first of what will become an annual review of salaries of non-represented employees whose pay may be out of line with the salaries of their peers.

HR's Classification and Compensation unit met its deadline last week and submitted "salary equity reviews" requested between Aug. 1 and Sept. 30, 1999, to Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky.

Employees to get memos

Executive officers and department heads will be notified of the results this week and will distribute individual memos to affected employees.

"Salary equity reviews are intended to identify employees whose salaries are significantly lower than their counterparts who may have the same amount of related experience, education and background," explained Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources.

Previous salary equity reviews were conducted on a case-by-case basis either at the request of the employee or of the department head.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



(Feb. 3) Now there's a quicker, easier way to order your business cards. It's the Business Card Hotline, a new service offered by MTA Graphics.

Information about and assistance with first-time orders and reorders of business cards can be obtained by calling the Hotline at 922-CARD (2273). A caller also can check on the status of an order and receive an answer within 24 hours.

Speeds up ordering

"The Hotline will increase efficiency and speed up the ordering process," says Anne Roubideaux, manager, Graphics and Printing Services. "A caller only needs to follow the prompts to get information or assistance."

Graphics also has placed a new business card order form on the computer network "W" drive and on the General Services Intranet page. Forms also can be obtained from the Graphics office on the 19th Floor of Headquarters or by FAX.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

MTA's Internet Web Site Gets A Crisp New Look

By WARREN MORSE

(Feb. 3) Beginning Friday, Feb. 4, Internet users will see a brand new look when they call up the MTA's homepage at www.mta.net.

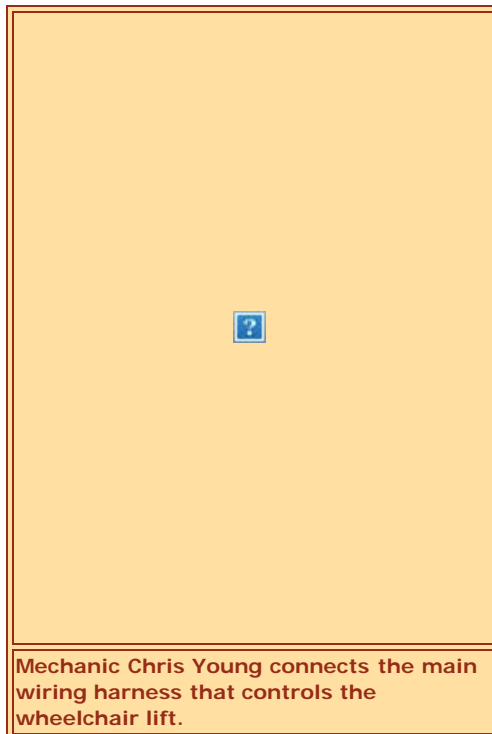
The new design, created by Internet webmaster Joe Simpson of MTA Marketing, provides clear organization of the site's growing number of features, spotlighting transit riders' needs while keeping other MTA topics easily accessible.

Speeds users' access

Among the new features are more direct information links that will speed the user's access, plus new links to other Southern California transit sites.

Graphically, the design is consistent with the web site's new Metro Trip Planner and an online Customer Comment Form to be posted soon. It also should maintain the user's interest by displaying a different Metro System photo each time the site is accessed.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Wheelchair Lift Upgrade Will Provide Better, Safer Service to Bus Patrons

(Feb. 3) A small team of mechanics at the MTA's Regional Rebuild Center has taken on a substantial project that already is providing better, safer service to wheelchair-bound Metro Bus patrons.

The seven-member team is installing new wheelchair lifts on some 300 TMC buses – the same buses that are undergoing engine conversions from methanol to diesel power. To date, the mechanics have completed 84 installations and are several

weeks ahead of schedule.



\$5.7 million project

Slated for completion June 30, 2001, the \$5.7 million project is currently under budget.

"The old lifts are unreliable, labor-intensive to maintain and experience a higher percentage of downtime," says Rick Hittinger, RRC director.

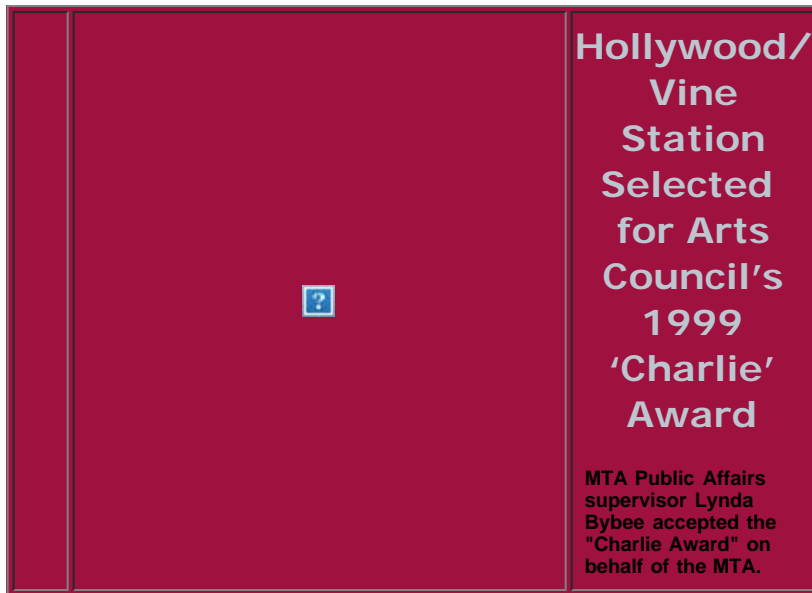
The new lifts were tested by the MTA's Access Advisory Committee and by members of Metro Wheels, a volunteer group that rates Metro Bus service to wheelchair patrons. "Patrons say the new lift is smoother and they feel safer than they did on the original lifts," says Hittinger.

Project team members

Harold Peterson, RRC Systems Shop manager, heads the lift conversion project with assistance from Sam Yi, equipment maintenance supervisor, who helped design and install the first lifts. Mechanics involved with the project are Lead Mechanic Oscar Benavente, Jose Barron, Juan Duenas, Gabriel Martinez, Reed Parker, Michael Roth and Chris Young.

The new lifts, manufactured in Modesto, Calif., are easier to operate and maintain. All functions can be controlled by the operator from inside the bus, even if the lift should malfunction. When an older lifts gets stuck, a mechanic must crawl under the bus to restart it.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



(Feb. 4) The Hollywood Arts Council has honored the Metro Red Line's Hollywood/Vine station with a coveted "Charlie Award" for "giving our community an art-filled station that goes directly to the heart of Hollywood."

Actresses Stella Stevens and Jenny Gago presented the award during the Arts Council's 14th annual luncheon, Jan. 28, at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. Hollywood's arts, industry and community leaders attended the sold-out event, which raised more than \$30,000 for Arts Council programs.

Accepting the award

Lynda Bybee, a Public Affairs supervisor, accepted the award on behalf of the MTA and station artist Gilbert "Magu" Lujan.

"Nowhere is the experience more exciting than upon entering the MTA's Metro Rail station at Hollywood and Vine," Stevens told the crowd. "You instantly know that you are in a very special place."

Gago described the station as, "Reminiscent of a Hollywood movie palace...Hollywood is now graced with a station that has become a destination in itself."

Eight "Charlies" awarded

The Arts Council awarded "Charlies," named after Comedian Charlie Chaplin, in eight categories. Recipients included the LA Marathon for showcasing the arts and diverse culture, the Stella Adler Theatre for its commitment to keeping live theater a presence in Hollywood, and CUNA Mutual for restoring the historic El Capitan Building.

The Arts Council was "a consistently strong supporter of Metro Rail," said Nyla Arslanian, president. "Certainly the station at Hollywood and Vine is the crowing glory of the project. We were thrilled that the artist chosen was from Los Angeles and is sensitive to what Hollywood is all about."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

MTA Unveils Proposed Transit Alternatives For Mid-City/ Westside, Eastside, SF Valley Corridors



MTA BOARD WORKSHOP

Metro Rapid Bus and light-rail service are among transit options being considered by the MTA Board.

By ED SCANNELL

(Feb. 4) MTA transportation planners and consultants today unveiled a series of 21 potential alternatives and recommendations to improve transit mobility in three key corridors of Los Angeles County. The alternatives were discussed at a special Board workshop.

The transit alternatives were recommended for further study for the Mid-City/Westside, Eastside and San Fernando Valley east-west corridors. They range from buses traveling on exclusive lanes on city streets or on exclusive busways on existing MTA-owned railroad rights-of-way, to light rail projects, and in one corridor, a short underground light-rail segment.

Read
the
[CEO's
full
remarks.](#)

"It is critical for the MTA to accept the challenge" of providing alternative transit in three transportation corridors, CEO Julian Burke said during Friday's Board workshop. But, he said the agency can only "move ahead with projects when we know we have enough money to construct and operate them." The CEO will present a formal set of recommendations at the Feb. 24 Board meeting.

Additional public input

The Board may make a decision at its Feb. 24 meeting on which alternatives to pursue. Those alternatives will then advance to the draft environmental phase. This phase would include significant additional public input.

Based on their analysis of projected costs, potential ridership, cost effectiveness, travel time savings, environmental issues and community input, MTA staff and consultants recommended these alternatives:

EASTSIDE

Light-Rail Extension

This approximately 7-mile extension would proceed east beginning at Union Station via First Street to First and Lorena, then transition to 3rd Street and proceed east via 3rd Street/Beverly Boulevard to the Beverly Boulevard/Atlantic Boulevard intersection.

This recommended alternative would operate at-grade or would include 5.3 miles at-grade and a 1.7-mile tunnel through Boyle Heights due to the narrowness of the streets in that portion of the corridor.

MID-CITY/WESTSIDE

Wilshire Corridor: Wilshire Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit

This alternative calls for an exclusive 4.9-mile bus lane on Wilshire Boulevard (curb or center lane) to Wilshire/San Vicente and future consideration in the MTA's Long-Range Transportation Plan of a Metro Red Line subway extension.

Exposition Right-of-Way: Bus Rapid Transit/Light-Rail Transit

The Bus Rapid Transit option would be an exclusive bus lane on the Exposition railroad right-of-way with a potential full project length of 15.1 miles from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica.

The Light-Rail Transit option would be an extension of the Metro Blue Line from downtown Los Angeles which would operate on the Exposition railroad right-of-way with a potential full project length of 15.5 miles from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica.

Both the Bus Rapid Transit and Light-Rail Transit recommendations call for consideration of shorter length projects to either Crenshaw Boulevard, La Cienega Boulevard or Venice/Robertson.

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY EAST-WEST

Bus Rapid Transit

Buses would operate at-grade on an exclusive 14-mile busway from the Metro Red Line North Hollywood station to Warner Center via the Burbank/Chandler right-of-way. It would parallel several major streets,

including Chandler Boulevard, Oxnard Street, Victory Boulevard and Topham Street. In North Hollywood, Oxnard Street is being considered as a route alignment alternative to Chandler Boulevard.

3 corridor studies

The Board awarded contracts in July, 1999, to conduct the three

corridor studies. The Board's chosen alternatives will require approval by the Federal Transit Administration and the California Transportation Commission.

Completion of these projects will have to recognize the MTA's continuing obligations under the 1996 Consent Decree. Since the January, 1998, suspension of the two Metro Red Line extensions, MTA has embarked on a thorough overhaul of the Metro Bus System.

Purchased 2,403 buses

The Board approved the Accelerated Bus Procurement Plan and an additional procurement that, combined, called for the purchase of 2,403 new buses through FY 2004.

The Board recently approved the Metro Rapid Bus pilot for the Ventura Boulevard and Whittier/Wilshire corridors, two of the most congested in Los Angeles County. Metro Rapid buses will operate with signal priority, reducing travel time by as much as 25 percent.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

CEO Julian Burke's Remarks before the MTA Board Transit Alternatives Workshop held Friday, February 4, 2000

"It is critical for the MTA to accept the challenge" of providing alternative transit in three transportation corridors, CEO Julian Burke said during Board workshop. But, he said the agency can only "move ahead with projects when we know we have enough money to construct and operate them." The CEO will present a formal set of recommendations at the Feb. 24 Board meeting. Here are the CEO's full remarks presented Feb.4.

This afternoon we will be taking the first steps toward developing a new and realistic program to meet future transportation needs in Los Angeles County. When I say "new," what I mean is that the old vision of an extended rail network built on the spine of a subway is being replaced by a truly multi-modal plan which looks at rapid bus fixed guideways, and light rail as well as subway options. When I say realistic, I mean we will only move ahead with projects when we know we have enough money to construct and operate them.

The three consultant reports which will be discussed today were done within this new and realistic framework. These studies began about nine months ago when the board directed staff to study all of the options to meet transportation needs in the three corridors where subway projects were suspended - the Eastside, Mid-cities and San Fernando Valley. As you will hear today, the recommendations the consultants are presenting are based on extensive community input combined with in depth technical analysis.

As we discuss the next steps in this process, you will also understand that a great deal more work needs to be done to refine the consultants' recommendations so that broadly supported locally preferred alternatives can be adopted. For each corridor, the consultant is recommending that the board approve for further study several options. Today's workshop is an opportunity to listen, learn and question - I will present a formal set of recommendations at the regular board meeting on February 24. Months of further work will be required before a specific mode, alignment and construction plan is selected.

Our presentation today will include a discussion of the capital and operating costs of each of the projects which were studied and some very preliminary analysis of possible funding sources. One important

focus will be to preserve existing commitments -- the federal full funding grant agreement and the additional federal and state funds previously reserved for the eastside and mid-city fixed guideway projects. Additional capital may be available as a result of Governor Davis' plan to accelerate state transportation spending. So while we cannot be absolutely certain today what the financial capacity of the MTA is, we will be working with staff and the consultants over the next several months to determine how much money is available to build the adopted projects, and within what time frame.

[Return to
metro.net](#)
**MTA Unveils
Proposed
Transit
Alternatives**

Even if we can fund the money to build these projects, we cannot move forward with them unless we can identify the money to operate them. As you will see, each of these projects require sizeable operating funds because they will attract many new passengers to our public transit system. The subsidy required to support any new project will be added to existing projected operating deficits for the next five years, and before we can begin to spend precious operating dollars on new transit projects we must recognize existing commitments to satisfy our consent decree obligations, our rapid bus pilot project, and our highway, pedestrian, soundwall and other programs.

Nevertheless, it is critical for the MTA to accept this challenge. We have a particular obligation to the residents of the three corridors who have waited so long for new public transportation options. Moreover, as the agency responsible for countywide transportation policy, planning and funding, we must continue this process of examining transit alternatives to deal with the growing needs of the county as a whole to improve mobility.

[Back to Viewpoint Articles](#)

Long List of Successes Recorded in MTA's Second Quarter

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 6) The MTA can point to a long list of successes for the October-December quarter of FY-2001, the heads of the agency's major departments reported during Tuesday's second-quarter review.

"It's been a tremendous quarter," said Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky. "We're on a roll. Everybody has contributed and we should be proud of the work we've done."

Lipsky had special recognition for Transit Operations, which in December recorded the lowest number of customer complaints in six years – 2.64 per 100,000 boardings. Ops also reduced the vehicle accident rate, while achieving improved bus cleanliness for the sixth quarter in a row.

Countywide Planning came in for its share of praise for completing the first phase of an estimated \$850 million Call for Projects. A recommendation is due to the Board in June. Planning also finished a draft of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Ahead of schedule

Lipsky congratulated Engineering and Construction for staying ahead of schedule on a project to extend the Metro Blue Line platforms to accept three rail cars. Completion is expected in June. Construction also finished a Metro Green Line maintenance-of-way building ahead of schedule and \$1 million under budget.

"When we all come together and work as a team, we have these great successes," Lipsky said.

The quarterly review, which was completed in less than an hour, focused on department performance, challenges ahead and action items. Financial performance will be discussed at a later meeting.

Open to all staff members, the quarterly reviews serve as a reminder of department – and even individual – accomplishments and what's planned for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Here are some specifics of departmental reports:

Engineering and Construction

Completed paving and lighting project at Division 6

Completed roofing projects at divisions 2 and 4 and a bus washer project at Division 6

Reached 90 percent completion of a Metro Green Line noise barrier project

Challenges ahead include installing CNG facilities at bus divisions; completing the Metro Blue Line platform extensions and tail track project at 7th and Metro; completing a radio retrofit in Segment 1 of the Metro Red Line; and acceptance of the P-2000 light-rail cars.

Countywide Planning and Development

Finalized the 2000 STIP submittal and programmed TEA-21 funds in FTIP

Completed a stakeholder outreach plan for the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Registered 113 employers and 370 Rideshare rewards for the Rideshare 2000 program and enrolled 407 Club Metro participants

Obtained FTA approval for the draft environmental report on the Eastside corridor

Challenges include obtaining FTA approval to circulate draft environmental studies and reports for the Wilshire and San Fernando Valley corridors; reviewing Call for Projects applications; completing the LRTP; and improving collection of ridership data.

Transit Operations

Met the bus cleanliness goal with a rating of 7.1 and the rail car cleanliness goal with a rating of 9.1

Placed 114 new CNG buses in service

Maintained an on-time pullout standard of more than 99 percent for buses, light- and heavy rail

Trained 167 new bus operators and promoted all part-time operators to BDOF status

Implemented pilot lines 58 and 214

Challenges for the months ahead include completion and implementation of new labor contract provisions; P-2000 car acceptance; and kicking off three new bus operator recognition programs.

Support Services

Customer Relations reduced its call response time by 50 percent to an average of 2 minutes, 13 seconds

Real Estate reached 55 percent (\$7.9 million) of its annual goal of \$14.5 million in revenues from property sales and leases

Treasury exceeded its benchmark for investments, reaching 2.85 percent

Human Resources hired 149 bus operators and filled 123 other vacancies

Procurement reduced material and supply costs with savings, thus far, of \$375,188

Challenges include continuing to improve the procurement process; implementing a pay-for-performance program; leasing 54 light-rail cars; completion of design specifications for computer wiring at operating divisions; and completing construction of new ground floor office space at Headquarters.

Administration
The installation of 882 new Dell computers.
Transit Operations

<p>Achieved 99.3 percent on-time pull-outs while providing more than 1.5 million revenue service hours.</p> <p>Trained 236 new operators, 276 mechanics and 13 line mentors.</p> <p>Painted 96 buses.</p> <p>Placed 146 new and repowered buses into service.</p> <p>Achieved 98.9 percent on-time pull-outs for light rail services.</p> <p>Achieved 99.9 percent on-time pull-outs for heavy rail services.</p>
Metro Construction
<p>Received the permanent certificate of occupancy for the Vermont/Hollywood corridor - the earliest a C.O. has been received.</p> <p>Reached a major milestone on the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood project when the third rail was energized.</p> <p>Vehicle and train control testing began.</p>
Risk Management
<p>Achieved savings for \$3.72 million for the MTA.</p>
RTP&D
<p>Submitted \$454.5 million in federal grant applications for Metro Red Line segments 2 and 3, and for bus and rail capital programs</p> <p>Achieved annual savings of 80,000 bus service hours with the bus/rail interface program for the Metro Red Line.</p>
Procurement
<p>Maintained a 98.7 percent annual service rate in material supply.</p> <p>Received 99 New Flyer buses, of which 88 were accepted during the quarter.</p> <p>Reduced the construction contract backlog by 21 percent and the change-order backlog by 22 percent.</p>
Finance
<p>Increased mail order sales of MTA fare media by \$393,000.</p> <p>Repaired 7,536 fareboxes.</p> <p>Processed 20,751 invoices valued at \$324.8 million and 1,393 check requests valued at \$24.1 million.</p>
Office of System Safety and Security
<p>Made safety presentations to more than 8,000 students at schools and safety fairs.</p> <p>Trained 667 employees in safety procedures.</p> <p>Recorded no lost-time injuries at MTA construction sites where more than 200 construction workers are employed.</p>

[Back to MTA Report](#)

LAPD Detectives Arrest Suspect in Profitable Sales of Stolen Transfers

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 7) For three days last week, detectives from the LAPD's Transit Group tracked a pair of men as they allegedly broke into Metro Buses to steal transfers they then sold for as much as \$1,200 to \$1,500 a week. The primary suspect is thought to have been operating for almost two years.

On Wednesday, officers swooped in and arrested the suspect's alleged partner outside a garment district sales point. The primary suspect was still at large on Monday. Detective Tim Gipson, supervisor of the Revenue Protection Team, said his arrest is just a matter of time, since police have impounded the suspect's vehicle and know where he lives.

Six felony counts

A warrant with six felony counts has been issued for the man. Five of the counts are for burglary. One is for counterfeiting – in this case, altering transfers by punching them with transfer times.



Cracking the stolen transfer case was the second major illegal fare bust for the LAPD this year. On Jan. 3, the LAPD announced the arrest of a man and two women they alleged were operating a counterfeit transit pass ring that may have cost the MTA more than \$2 million annually in lost revenues.

According to a police report on the transfer thefts, the primary suspect's partner, Arturo Flores, 21, of Panorama City, has admitted to committing at least 50 prior burglaries during the past six months. During one of those, Flores told police he had taken an operator's transfer punch and had been using it to time-punch his customers' transfers.

Method of operation

From the detectives' surveillance of the pair as they hit a number of Metro Bus layover zones and then sold the stolen transfer tickets, the Revenue Protection Team was able to piece together their method of operation.

The primary suspect and his partner, Flores, allegedly spent mornings making the rounds of Metro Bus layover zones throughout the city. They would wait for an operator to leave a bus. Police never observed a confrontation with an operator.

Then with burglary tools or a homemade key, they would jimmy the bus door and grab the operator's supply of transfer tickets.

Eight or more books

On heavily traveled lines, Gipson said, this could amount to eight or more books of 50 tickets each, per bus. The pair would hit from two to four buses, depending upon the number of transfer tickets they could collect from each bus.

After completing their rounds of the layover zones, the suspects then would drive to the garment district where they divided up the books of transfers.

On one occasion, a surveillance team "was able to follow (the primary suspect) into several buildings and watch him make contact with eager customers who seemed to know he would be around during the lunch hour," according to a police report.

Earned \$250 a day

"The stolen transfers were being offered at 50 cents each," the report continues. "It is highly probable that (the suspect) earned at least \$250 per day on days when he worked alone and considerably more when he teamed up with an additional suspect or suspects."

Gipson said the LAPD's Revenue Protection Team is working to determine the magnitude of the transfer theft problem. The team is focused on catching transfer thieves and stopping illegal sales at the distribution points.

"We'll continue to go through the areas of distribution and ensure that copycats aren't continuing the illegal sales of transfers," he said. "We'll go after additional suspects in the same way, locate points of distribution and eliminate those also."

Gipson asked Metro Bus operators to report suspicious vehicles parked in or near layover zones, or suspicious persons loitering nearby.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Proposed FY 2001 Federal Budget Would Earmark \$100 Million for MTA

(Feb. 8) The federal budget proposed for FY 2001 by President Clinton includes \$100 million for the MTA within a record \$54.9 billion earmarked for transportation.

The budget would provide to the MTA \$50 million in "extraordinary costs associated with the Master's decision" in connection with the Consent Decree. It also would allocate \$50 million for completion of the North Hollywood segment of the Metro Red Line.

MTA appreciates support

"The MTA appreciates the Administration's continued support for Los Angeles County's transportation programs," said CEO Julian Burke.

"The MTA is currently formulating its FY 2001 federal appropriations requests, which will be submitted to Congress within a month."

The Administration's transportation budget proposal is \$4.7 billion - 9 percent - higher than the current year's \$50.2 billion budget. It would fund key programs in the areas of safety, mobility, economic growth and trade, environmental protection and national security.

Months-long process

The President's proposal is the first step in a months-long federal appropriations process involving both houses of Congress that will culminate with a finalized budget Oct. 1.

Funding categories in the FY 2001 proposed budget include:

- \$117 million, 6 percent more than this year, to prevent train collisions, reduce highway-grade crossing accidents and improve railroad safety;

- A record \$6.3 billion for mass transit, including 12 new or expanded rail systems in Portland, Ore.; Chicago; Seattle; Pittsburgh; Memphis; Minneapolis; Denver; Baltimore; Washington, D.C.; northeastern New Jersey; and Salt Lake City;

- A record \$1.28 billion, 37 percent more than this year, for transportation research and for the development and deployment of new technologies. This includes \$338 million, 83 percent more than this year, for smart traffic signals, regional travel information networks and other intelligent transportation systems;

- A record \$3.8 billion, 5 percent more than this year, for programs to protect the environment and to support community-based initiatives to combat congestion and pollution, including \$1.6 billion for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, to fund transit, ridesharing and other projects that help communities clean their air.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Slap On, Scrape Off



Vandals Use Stickers, Postal Labels as Destructive New Graffiti Devices

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 9) Slap tags. Quick and easy to apply, but hard to remove, they're the latest and one of the most destructive devices young vandals are using to deface transit buses in Los Angeles County.

Slap tags, in police parlance, are name badge stickers and self-adhesive postal labels. Vandals pre-mark the labels with their monikers. In seconds, they can slap them on bus windows, walls, seats and even the lenses of bus security cameras.

40 percent use slap tags

Members of the LAPD's undercover GHOST unit, an anti-graffiti team, estimate that 40 percent of vandalism arrests now involve slap tags. The labels have joined the list of vandal tools, including spray paint, indelible markers, scribing tools and scouring pads, that are illegal under California law.

Most popular are U.S. Postal Priority Mail and Express Mail labels, according to Officer Mark Hernandez, a GHOST team member. "They're free and you can get them at any post office. The kids just walk in and grab them."

The GHOST team late last year arrested an 18-year-old with 200 postal labels in his possession – about 20 of which already were prepared as slap tags. Officers also have arrested vandals as young as 10 and as old as 30.

Slap tags on 'school trippers'

Slap tags are most prevalent on the MTA's "school tripper" bus routes, such as Lines 68, 204 and 81, serving central Los Angeles, and Lines 76 and 78, serving the San Gabriel Valley. But, slap tag vandals also hit Foothill Transit buses and buses operated by Santa Monica, Montebello, Torrance and Gardena, among others.

Young vandals choose labels, in part, because they can take more time with their "art work," GHOST team members say. They also may

believe that stick-ons don't permanently damage a surface.

Not so, says Tony Chavira, Transit Operations maintenance superintendent. His office is responsible for the MTA's anti-graffiti programs. Over the years, he and his staff also have developed a number of techniques to prevent and remove graffiti. One example: the clear inserts used to protect bus windows from etching.

Almost impossible to get off

"The glue on the labels is so strong that once they hit a window or interior bus panel it's almost impossible to get them off," Chavira says. "Rather than removing them with a rag and chemical solution, our maintenance people have to use razor blades. We take a lot of time and care to deal with those stickers."

Chavira has taken one measure he hopes will slow the use of postal labels as slap tags.

He asked postal officials in downtown LA, in the Crenshaw District, in the City of Alhambra and elsewhere to remove supplies of the labels from lobby tables to prevent their use as vandalism tools. Now, patrons must request the labels at the counter.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Bus Operators, LAPD Help Woman Recover Life Savings

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 10) Antonieta Vera Perez's heart sank when she realized she had just left a duffel bag with her entire life savings tucked under the seat of a Metro Bus – a bus that was receding in the distance down Olympic Boulevard.

For more than two hours last Saturday morning she sat at the bus stop, checking each Line 28 bus that went by, hoping and praying that she would spot the right one. At last, fearing that she'd never recover the \$1,200 she'd worked so hard to save over many months, Vera Perez boarded another Metro Bus.

And that's when her luck changed.

Because, when she stepped aboard the Line 200 bus, there was Division 2 Operator Mercedes Malone. "She asked me if I speak Spanish," Malone recalls. "She was almost crying."

Poured out her story

Through trembling lips, Vera Perez poured out her story in Spanish to Malone. The operator tried to calm the frightened woman and kept her nearby as she continued her route. "I told her, if the operator finds it, he'll return it."

As she drove, Malone swung into action for Vera Perez. Over the next three hours, she called Bus Operations Control on her radio and on her cell phone to ask for assistance for the woman. She phoned MTA Lost and Found, but it was closed for the weekend. Finally, she called Division 3, which operates Line 28.

Cut to earlier in the day. Division 3 Operator Nelson Martinez braked at a Line 28 bus stop on Olympic and discharged a female passenger he had picked up near Robinson. He pulled away from the curb, but shortly afterward noticed a duffel bag under the front seat.

A large sum of money

"I asked a woman sitting there if it was her bag, but she said, 'No,'" Martinez said. He retrieved the duffel and put it beside his seat. Later, when he opened it to look for identification, he found a large sum of money.

Martinez, who joined the MTA as a part-time operator in May, 1999, and only became a full-time operator in September, turned in the bag as soon as he arrived back at Division 3.

He left to run an errand, but by the time he returned, LAPD officers



**Division 2
Operator
Mercedes
Malone,
above,
and, right,
Division 3
Operator
Nelson
Martinez**



Derek Sledge and Emillson Saint-Julien had arrived to take possession of the duffel bag and the money. They were just leaving when Malone's call to the division came through.

A much-relieved passenger

Over the phone and with Malone interpreting, Vera Perez identified the duffel bag and its valuable contents. The two officers then drove out to meet Malone and her much-relieved passenger at the layover zone at Montana and Logan.

"When the officers arrived, they told her to count the money," said Malone. "She did and it was all there."

Editor's Note: Prior to joining the MTA, Operator **Nelson Martinez** was a 15-year employee of Carl's Jr. restaurants where he had been an assistant manager. He and his wife, Erlin, have two children, Nelson, Jr., 19, a sophomore at Glendale College, and a daughter, Delni, 4. Operator **Mercedes Malone** joined the MTA in 1990 and is married to Charles Malone, also a Division 2 bus operator. The Malones have three daughters, Mercedes, 21; Star, 15; and Alexandra, 10.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky, left, and Sheriff's Capt. Marc Klugman try out basketballs and soccer balls that Sheriff's deputies use to reward kids for safe, courteous behavior.

Chase your mouse over picture for live play!

Deputies Reward Safety, Good Behavior With Basketballs, Soccer Balls for Kids

(Feb. 11) Sheriff's deputies patrolling the Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line have a reward out for kids who observe rail safety procedures or behave courteously on the trains. The reward: a basketball or soccer ball.

Started in late December, "Score a Goal for the Kids" gives the deputies "a chance to do something positive for youths at risk," says Sheriff's Sgt. John Harris. "The program helps establish a bond between the patrol deputies and the youth in the communities we serve."

300 youths rewarded

The Transit Services Bureau received 1,000 of the 6,400 basketballs and 25,500 soccer balls given to the Sheriff's Department by Toyota for a youth program. To date, deputies patrolling the two light-rail lines have rewarded some 300 kids.

Deputies who want to reward youngsters for safety or good behavior hand them a card they and their parents or guardian can redeem at the Imperial/Willowbrook Sheriff's station. The card notes that the youth earned the reward for observing rail crossing signals, courtesy, platform safety or other reasons.

"By having the kid and his parents or guardian come to the Sheriff's station to collect the ball, we can convey a positive message," Harris said. "And it gives the parents an opportunity to reinforce that message at home."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Operator Hailed for 'Courageous' Actions in Fiery Truck-Train Crash Dies of Heart Attack



BARBARA NORSIAN
1960-2000

(Feb. 11) Funeral services were conducted, Friday, for Operator Barbara C. Norsian, who was commended for her courageous actions last September for safely evacuating passengers from her Metro Blue Line train following a fiery collision with a trailer truck.

Norsian, 39, suffered a heart attack Sunday night, Feb. 6, and was hospitalized. She died Tuesday of complications. The funeral mass was celebrated at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church in Los Nietos.

Burst into flames

On the evening of Sept. 28, Norsian was operating a southbound Metro Blue Line train near downtown Los Angeles. An eastbound trailer truck attempted a turn onto a freeway ramp, struck the train and burst into flames. Fuel spilled from the truck's tanks.

Norsian managed to escape the burning cab and escorted passengers off the train to safety. No passengers were injured in the accident, but a passenger in the truck was transported to a hospital with minor injuries.

Norsian "acted calm and professional during this tragic ordeal," wrote Duane Martin, Metro Blue Line transportation manager, in an Oct. 1 commendation. "Her first reaction was the safety of her passengers. She immediately, amongst the fire and confusion, evacuated all of her passengers to safety."

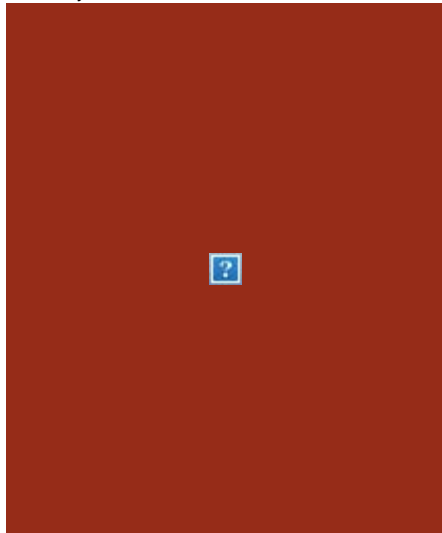
Prevented passenger injuries

"She was a very conscientious operator," said Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. "She handled the evacuation so smoothly, the fire battalion chief at the accident scene just couldn't say enough about her actions."

Norsian was named Rail Operator of the Month following the truck-train accident. A resident of Whittier, she is survived by a son, Brandon, and a daughter, Kristina, a part-time bus operator at Division 2.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Photo by Clarence Hendricks, 1997



Arthur Winston Film Nominated for Honors; New Transit Facility Is Second to Bear his Name

(Feb. 14) A film about 93-year-old Arthur Winston, the MTA's sterling example of energy and dependability, has been nominated for three awards by the Pan African Film Festival, the nation's largest independent Black film festival.

The 27-minute film, titled "Mr. Winston, A Living Treasure," was nominated for Best Documentary, Best Short Subject and the Audience Award. It will be screened at noon, Saturday, at the Magic Johnson Theatres in the Crenshaw Mall. Festival award winners will be announced Sunday.

Facility to be named for Winston

In January, 1997, MTA Division 5 was rededicated as the "Arthur Winston Division." In March, a local transportation company will break ground on a maintenance facility in Hyde Park that also will be named for the MTA's most senior employee.

The Arthur Winston Maintenance Center will be a major element of the Hyde Park Commercial Transportation Hub and Occupational Training-Education Center at 67th Street and Crenshaw Boulevard. The facility, which will include a large child care center for children of transit workers, is expected to open in September.

Winston will be a featured guest during a festival kickoff news conference at 10 a.m., Saturday. Also expected to attend are Assemblyman Herb Wesson, City Attorney James Hahn, City Council members Nate Holden and Mark Ridley-Thomas. MTA Transit Operations chief Tom Conner will represent the agency.

Employee of the Century

The Transportation Foundation of Los Angeles last December named Winston the "Transportation Employee of the Century." He marked his 66th year of employment with the MTA and its predecessor agencies, Jan. 24, and will celebrate his 94th birthday, March 22.

An Oklahoma native born in 1906, Winston moved to Los Angeles with his family in the early 1920s. He graduated from Jefferson High School and in 1924 signed on to work as a janitor at the Pacific Electric Railway Company's South Park facility. Although Winston took a short hiatus in the early 1930s to work at another job, he returned to public transit in 1934.

After serving with Pacific Electric and Metropolitan Coach Lines, he was promoted to Service Attendant Leadman in 1953 - a position he holds today. Monday through Friday, Winston rises at 5 a.m. to arrive on time for his 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. shift at Division 5, where he supervises a crew of service attendants.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Division 1 Achieves Enviably Record for Few Service Delays

(Feb. 14) Despite serving some of the most heavily traveled Metro Bus lines with some of the oldest coaches, Division 1 recently compiled an enviable one-day record when it experienced only five service delay incidents.

Division Manager Jesse Castorena's Service Delay Report for the Jan. 4 indicates that only three of the five delays were "chargeable" incidents involving mechanical problems. One involved a sick passenger and another was caused by heavy traffic during a deadhead trip. The total patron delay was only 71 minutes in the 24-hour period.

Only 20 delays a weekday

"Since last June, Division 1 has been averaging approximately 20 service delays per weekday," says Dan Ibarra, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations.

"That's not bad," he said, "considering the fact that the division has 214 weekday pullouts, 1,710 daily revenue hours and roughly 21,114 revenue miles."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Will Pasadena Get a 'Rose Line'? Board to Consider Name, Other Issues

UPDATE



Feb. 17, 2000

(Feb. 15) Should the area's newest light-rail line be named the "Pasadena Rose Line"? That question and others are expected to be discussed during MTA Board committee meetings Feb. 16 and 17.

Committee agendas include motions to provide job protection for MTA employees affected by proposed transit zones and changes in bus service to accommodate the opening of the North Hollywood extension. Committees also will hear reports on Metro Blue Line safety projects and the impact of tougher AQMD regulations.

Here are some of the Board items to watch this month:

Operations Committee, Feb. 16, 1 p.m.

metro.net
Jan. 19

[Tough AQMD Rule Forcing Clean-Air Buses..... with link to CEO's AQMD Testimony](#)

UPDATE



Item 11 - Report received. Staff reported that the AQMD now has divided Rule 1190 into six new proposed rules. Rule 1191 would govern light- and medium-duty public agency fleets, such as the MTA's non-revenue vehicles. Rule 1192 would require all new transit buses to be alternative fuel vehicles. The proposed rule would prohibit diesel fuels of any type. Rules 1193, 1194, 1195 and 1196 would cover other types of public vehicles, including school buses and heavy-duty vehicles, such as postal trucks. The committee will receive a status report on the fiscal impact to the MTA of the AQMD's proposed Rule 1190. The rule would require all fleets of public vehicles to convert to alternative fuels.

UPDATE



Item 12 - Report received. Staff reported that it would cost approximately \$50 million per intersection to construct grade separations along the Metro Blue Line alignment. The total cost could reach \$1.5 billion. The committee will receive a report on Metro Blue Line safety activities. Among a number of MTA efforts, the report describes the testing of experimental four-quadrant railroad crossing gates, which are intended to provide an extra measure of safety for motorists and pedestrians at rail intersections.

UPDATE




Item 14 - Approved unanimously, sent forward to full Board. MTA Director Michael Antonovich has filed a motion to rename the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena as the "Pasadena Rose Line." The motion is intended "to eliminate possible confusion with the existing (Metro Blue Line)...and to better represent the community which will be served...."


Construction Committee, Feb. 16, 3 p.m.

Item 21 - The committee will receive a report from the Tunnel Advisory Panel on the MTA's compliance with blasting restrictions and the impact of groundwater during the construction of Metro Red Line tunnels beneath the Santa Monica Mountains.

Executive Management Committee, Feb. 17, 2 p.m.

UPDATE  **Item 32 - Postponed.** The committee will hear a monthly status report on the Pasadena Blue Line Joint Powers Authority's activities.

UPDATE  **Item 35 - Postponed.** The committee will consider support for the vision and goals of the Southern California Intercity Rail Group (SCIRG). According to a Board report, the MTA's support will help SCIRG "work to expand and integrate rail services in Southern California...(and would help the MTA) attract state intercity rail funding to Los Angeles."

UPDATE  **Item 36 - Postponed.** The committee is expected to take up the motion again at its March meeting. Director Jenny Oropeza proposes a motion that would prohibit the MTA from approving "the creation of any transportation zone unless the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) governing the zone assumes the collective bargaining agreements, rights, and obligations that currently exist between the MTA and the labor organizations representing employees who will be affected or displaced by the creation of the zone. The JPA...will be obligated to employ those employees of the MTA...who will be displaced...."

Planning and Programming Committee, Feb. 17, 1 p.m.

Item 41 - The committee will hear a report on MTA funds or projects that could be reprogrammed by the state as a result of Governor Gray Davis' "use it or lose it" policy.

UPDATE  **Item 42 - Sent forward** to the full Board with motions by two committee members. One motion concerns the effect of service changes on Metro Bus patrons; the other concerns maintaining express lines following the opening of MOS-3. The committee will consider adopting changes to a number of Metro Bus lines in June, 2000, as part of the restructuring plan once Metro Red Line service opens to North Hollywood. The committee also will consider adopting a free fare on the Metro Red Line for the opening weekend of the North Hollywood extension.

The Finance and Budget Committee met at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 17.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Funds Properly Spent:

Committee Supports Audit of MTA's Handling of Prop A and C Revenues, Expenditures

By ED SCANNELL

(Feb. 15) The Independent Citizens Advisory and Oversight Committee issued a report, Wednesday, that supports the findings of an extensive audit of the MTA's revenues and expenditures generated by two LA County half-cent transit sales taxes.

"I believe we can state with a high degree of certainty that the results of the audit fairly report the compliance of the MTA with the Proposition A and C funds," said committee chairman Russ Lesser in a report to the MTA Board.

Deserves high marks

Lesser also said the audit shows the MTA deserves high marks for its level of compliance with the purpose of the two sales taxes.

"We believe it can be stated with a very high degree of certainty that Proposition A and C funds are being spent in the areas the voters intended," added Lesser. "If people had doubts about this they should be put to rest."

In their review of more than \$5.7 billion in local transit taxes collected in the seven-year period, the auditors concluded that MTA's financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the revenues and expenditures of Proposition A and Proposition C sales tax revenue for the fiscal years ended June 30, 1992, to June 30, 1998...."

No 'material weaknesses'

Auditors concluded that "several weaknesses were found in the internal control over fiscal reporting," but Lesser noted that these were "reportable conditions," not the more serious "material weaknesses" which can result in a lower than acceptable level of confidence in financial reporting.

"Management has concurred with the findings and is taking action to correct any weaknesses that were found," he said.

Auditors found only one error during the seven years under audit, which the committee deemed "immaterial." In fact, Lesser pointed out, the opinion of the auditors was "the highest level opinion that can be expressed on a financial statement."

Larger than typical audit

The audit examined 845 transactions which firm partner Ralph Bazilio said was three times as large as the typical audit sample. The firm was unable to audit the receipt and expenditures of sales tax monies prior to fiscal year 1992 as a result of the MTA's Board-approved records retention policy, but Lesser said the committee found that the policy was "very reasonable and in some cases exceeded the normal guidelines for keeping records."

The Independent Citizens Advisory and Oversight Committee was created in accordance with a measure (Proposition A) passed by LA County voters in November, 1998. The measure prohibits the use of revenues from the two sales taxes for any new subway projects.

A public hearing on the audit findings has been scheduled for 10 a.m., April 4, in the Board room.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

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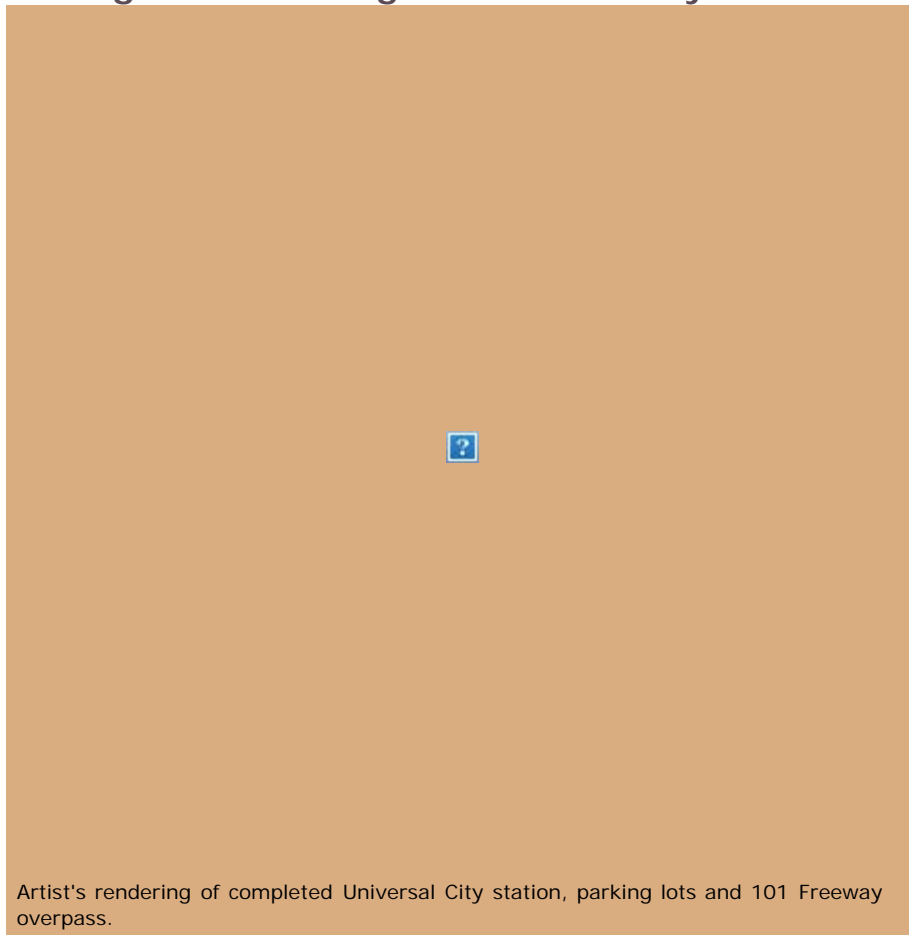
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[Back to MTA Report](#)

Council to give \$34 Million for Subway Contingent on Parking at Universal City Station



Updated Feb. 17.

(Feb. 16) The Los Angeles City Council approved a motion, Wednesday, to allocate another \$34 million in previously committed transit tax funds toward construction of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension.

The Council's approved report recommends that the city pay the MTA the balance in increments from the FY 2000 through FY 2005 budgets. The city's contribution to the subway project now will total \$92 million.

The payments would be contingent upon the MTA's providing 250 parking spaces at the Universal City station in time for the opening of the new line this summer.

The measure was passed on a motion by Council Member Hal Bernson, also an MTA director. MTA Construction officials are confident that at least 250 parking spaces will be available to the public on opening day.

Parking lot work began recently

Although the Universal City subway station, itself, is virtually complete, MTA contractors only recently began work on the 437-space parking lot, kiss 'n ride plaza and 24-space bus plaza. The \$27.9 million project also will include a six-lane overpass over the 101 Freeway.

Station neighbors have expressed concern about traffic and the availability of off-street parking after the opening of the North Hollywood extension.

The council motion also directed the LADOT to report within 30 days on the schedule for completing traffic signals and street improvements near the station.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



MTA Board Chair and County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke joins with African American Employees Association officers following Black History Month luncheon. From left, Carol Martin, Supervisor Burke, Jerry Kiper, and Naomi Nightingale.

Supervisor Burke Urges Participation in 2000 Census During Speech at Black History Month Luncheon

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Feb. 17) Warning that the "future of full representation" is at stake, County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, in a speech Wednesday, urged a vigorous participation in the nation's 2000 census.

Burke's remarks were delivered to a standing-room-only crowd at the African-American Employees Association's Black History Month luncheon.

"Allocations of funding are based on population, but more than money is at stake," she said, "So is transportation, the reapportionment of districts and adequate representation in local and national government."

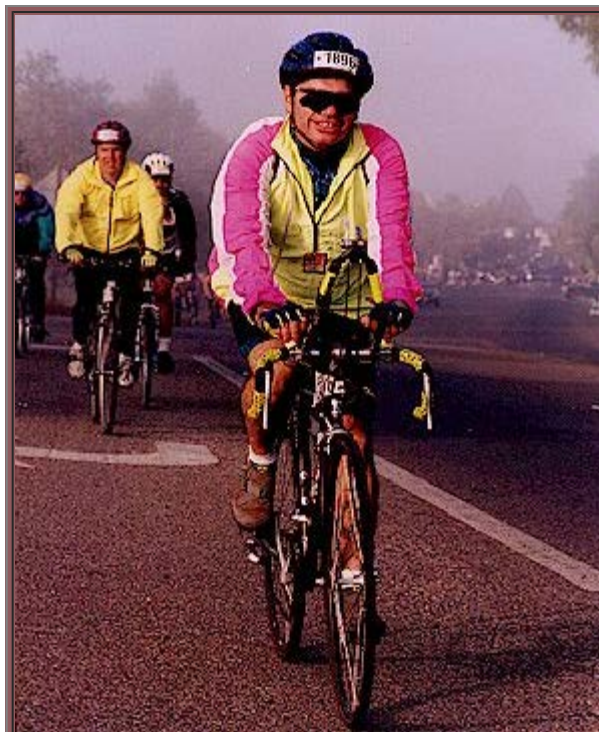
Praised employees' achievements

Supervisor Burke lauded past achievements and contributions of the MTA's African American employees and others in Los Angeles. She said an important part of her mission on the Board is to support training opportunities to help minorities develop expertise and gain access to full upward mobility in transportation agencies across the nation.

The African American Employees Association supports professional development within the MTA. The group sponsors events that celebrate African American culture throughout the year.

For membership information and a schedule of coming events, contact Jerry Kiper at 922-7323 or Carol Martin at 922-3048.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Haim Geffen rolls toward the finish line during the 1995 Solvang Prelude.

Raising Money for Research

MTA's Geffen is Training Intensively for 560-Mile California AIDS Ride in June

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 17) On Sunday, June 4, the MTA's Haim Geffen will climb aboard his Trek 2100 road bike in San Francisco and begin a 560-mile, seven-day run to Century City. And, he'll do it for money – not for himself, but for the Jeffery Goodman Special Care Clinic at the Gay & Lesbian Center of Los Angeles.

Along with some 2,500 other cyclists, Geffen, 53, will participate in California AIDS Ride 7, an annual event to raise money and awareness for those suffering from HIV infection and AIDS. To qualify as a rider, Geffen must raise at least \$2,500 by May 11 as a donation to the Goodman Clinic for AIDS research and services.

Lucky to help the cause

"I've been training for a long time, biking and running," says Geffen, a transportation project manager in RTP&D and 20-year employee. "I feel lucky to be able to help this cause."

Geffen was moved by the death from AIDS a few years ago of a fellow UCLA graduate. He also was saddened by the death from AIDS in January, 1999, of Ryan Nakagawa, the MTA's late Ethics manager.

"I remembered him giving presentations about ethics," says Geffen. "He looked so good and vibrant, and he had such a sense of humor. But then, after watching him deteriorate from the disease, I was inspired to look for a way to help people with AIDS."

Veteran runner and biker

Geffen is training hard for the AIDS Ride and also for the 26.2-mile LA Marathon, March 5. A veteran amateur runner and biker, he is cross training to increase his stamina for the two events.

On Mondays and Fridays, he swims. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, he

runs five miles. On Wednesdays and Sundays, he cycles at least 50 miles. On Saturdays, he runs as many as 24 miles. As training continues, Geffen expects to cycle up to 100 miles. "It's double training now," he says, "but, after March 5, I'll focus more on bicycle training."

Despite his experience in previous 100-mile rides and his intense training schedule, Geffen finds the AIDS Ride to be daunting. "It's seven days averaging about 75 miles a day, but some days cycling 100 miles."

A real challenge

"The first day is OK. You can ride it and maybe be tired when you finish," he says. "But, when you're already sore and have to get on the bike the second day and the third day and everything is hurting, it's a real challenge."

Haim Geffen was born in 1946 in Poland to a Polish father and Romanian mother. Although his Jewish parents managed to elude the Nazis during World War II, his family lost most of its members to the Holocaust. The Geffens moved to Israel in 1948 when Haim was 2 years old.

As a youngster, Geffen lived at Gevar-Am, an agricultural kibbutz just north of the Gaza Strip near the Biblical city of Ashkelon, famous for its association with Samson and Delilah. The kibbutzim grew peaches, plums and other fruits and ran a large dairy.

Served in Six-Day War

He enlisted for three years in the Israeli Air Force at age 18 and served as an aircraft mechanic. During the Six-Day War against Egypt, Syria and Jordan in 1967, he flew as part of an aircrew delivering supplies to Israeli troops in the Sinai Desert. After his service, Geffen worked as a mechanic for El Al Airlines before immigrating to the United States in 1970.

He graduated from UCLA in 1975 with a degree in geography, then earned a master's degree in urban planning. He joined the SCRTD in 1979.

Geffen and his wife, Leslie, the director of a private school, live in Encino with their children, Talia, 16, a high school junior, and son, Yoni, 14, a ninth-grader.

Editor's Note: If you're interested in helping Haim Geffen raise money for the Jeffery Goodman Special Care Clinic at the Gay & Lesbian Center, you may contact him at 922-6977.

HIV+ / AIDS TODAY	
The Jeffrey Goodman Special Care Clinic is expected to test some 12,000 people this year.	Worldwide, more than 75 percent of adult HIV infections have resulted from heterosexual intercourse.
18 - 20 million people are HIV-infected worldwide.	The rate of infection has tripled in just one year from one every 17 seconds to one every 5.5 seconds.
13.9 million people worldwide have died of AIDS: 400,000 in the United States	50 percent of all new infections are in people under age 25.

70,000 in California 24,000 in Los Angeles County	
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[Back to MTA Report](#)

Resignation Rumors 'Exaggerated' CEO Burke says, Quoting Twain



(Feb. 18) CEO Julian Burke is paraphrasing a famous Mark Twain witticism by saying that "the reports of my resignation any time soon are greatly exaggerated."

Burke was amused during the Executive Management Committee meeting, Thursday, when transportation gadfly John Walsh predicted an impending resignation.

Burke plans to go on vacation for two weeks at the end of February, but says, "I'll be back to continue working. After all, we have some big things coming up this year I don't want to miss, including the opening of the North Hollywood extension."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

MTA Changing 'Crosstown Bus' Route to Satisfy Concerns of Beverly Hills Neighbors

(Feb. 18) Less than a month into its operation of the new Line 305 Crosstown Bus, the MTA is making changes in the route to respond to the concerns of a Beverly Hills neighborhood. The line was developed to serve major employment, medical and educational centers between South Central LA and the Westside.

Beginning Feb. 27, the turnaround loop at Beverly Drive and Sunset Boulevard will be abandoned and buses will continue on Sunset another 2.5 miles to the UCLA Bus Terminal at Hilgard and Westholme avenues. Extending the line will require the MTA to schedule another bus and will add 12 to 13 minutes to the bus run.

May bring in more passengers

"It will be costly to extend the line," says Frank Schroder, director of Scheduling, "but we're hopeful it will bring in more passengers. Now, they'll be able to ride all the way from South Central to UCLA without changing buses."

The MTA is making the change following a meeting with Beverly Hills Department of Transportation officials and residents along the turnaround loop. Residents had complained about the frequency of buses and the noise as they passed through the neighborhood. Line 305 operates between about 5 a.m. and 10 p.m. with 20-minute headways at peak hours.

The Beverly Drive-Sunset turnaround had been used by SCRTD buses for many years, says Schroder. "It was still on our route sheets and the layover sign was still there, although we had stopped using it about 15 years ago. The neighbors had gotten used to not having buses on their street."

20-minute headways

During weekday peak hours, 10 buses currently are assigned to the 22-mile long route to provide service every 20 minutes. Off-peak weekday and weekend buses run every 30 minutes.

In its diagonal course across the city, Line 305 serves Martin Luther King, Jr. Shopping Center, Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza and the Beverly Center. It also runs near Cedars Sinai Medical Center. The line is operated out of divisions 7 and 18 as an element of a pilot program the MTA agreed to implement as part of the Consent Decree.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

**Arthur Winston Suffers Daughter's Death
During Weekend of Film Festival Honors**

(Feb. 22) The MTA's Arthur Winston experienced both personal joy and tragedy this past weekend. Joy at the honors extended to him during the Pan African Film Festival and at Division 5, Saturday. Tragedy with the untimely death, possibly the same day, of Norma Robinson, the last of his four children.

The body of Robinson, 69, was found Sunday morning by a relative who had to break into her home when no one answered his knock. She had felt ill, Saturday, and had decided not to attend the film festival with her 93-year-old father. Funeral arrangements are pending.



Arthur Winston at film screening Saturday.

Arthur is 'okay'

"Arthur is okay," says Winston's great-granddaughter, Brandii Wright, with whom he lives. "He's going through this very well." The Division 5 service attendant leadman has requested a week's grievance leave and a week's vacation.

"I was with Arthur at the film festival on Saturday and shared in his happiness during that occasion," said Tom Conner, executive officer, Transit Operations. "On behalf of all of us in the department, I want to express our heartfelt condolences to Arthur on the death of his daughter, Norma."

Richard Hunt, deputy executive officer, Bus Maintenance, said, "Arthur and his family are in our prayers during this difficult time."

Winston was honored by Los Angeles city officials, Saturday morning, during a news conference prior to the screening of the documentary, "Mr. Winston: A living Treasure." That afternoon, he participated in Division 5's Black History Month celebration. The highlight of the program was the unveiling of a large sign on Van Ness Avenue marking the "Arthur Winston Division."



Happier moments from Pan African Film Festival include, above, "official" congratulations from City Councilman Nate Holden, left, City Attorney James Hahn and MTA Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner. Below, a family gathering with Arthur Winston includes (from left) his great-grandniece Terri Wade, great-great-grandnephew Nicholas Wade, greatniece Yvette Chappell and great-granddaughter Brandii Wright. Photos by Jose Ubaldo.

See
metro.net
Feb. 14

[Arthur Winston
Film
Nominated
for Honors](#)

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Intranet News Readership Sets New 1-Day Record of 1,786 Hits

(Feb. 22) The Intranet's News & Information pages reached a new one-day readership record Wednesday, Feb. 16, when 1,786 hits were recorded on MTA News, Bulletin Board, Employee Forum and the four other pages monitored by the editor.

The "big news" that motivated Intranet users that day apparently was the announcement that Starbucks coffee will be sold in the MTA cafeteria beginning in March. The Bulletin Board page, which carried the story, delivered 504 of the 1,786 hits - 28 percent of the total.

Parking lot story, commentaries

The MTA News page, with stories about City Council action on the Universal City station parking lot and MTA Board agenda items, got 463 hits. Employee Forum drew 308 hits with new commentaries on the use of personal fans in the Headquarters building and a proposal to involve youngsters who write graffiti in helping stop vandalism on Metro Buses.

CEO HotLine received 183 hits; Metro Café, 134; View Point, 141; and News Releases, 53.

It was only the third time that daily News & Information readership has surpassed the 1,700 mark, noted Editor Bill Heard.

On Dec. 28, the pages recorded 1,733 hits with stories about the arrest of a counterfeiting suspect and a story about Operator Lisa Arredondo-Smith, who was the subject of a worldwide TV feature on women in the workplace. The pages got 1,720 hits, Jan. 4, with stories about an LA Times honor for Metro Construction's Dennis Mori and an MTA victory in an accidental death lawsuit.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

MTA Bolsters Students' Opportunities with Donation of Computer Equipment

(Feb. 23) Students at five area high schools said "Thanks" to the MTA, Wednesday, for the agency's donation of 125 personal computers, 50 monitors and other peripheral equipment.

The students, who participate in TCAP (Transportation Careers Academy Program) at their schools, assembled at Locke High School for a brief ceremony and to show off their new computers to the media.

Computers to be placed in homes

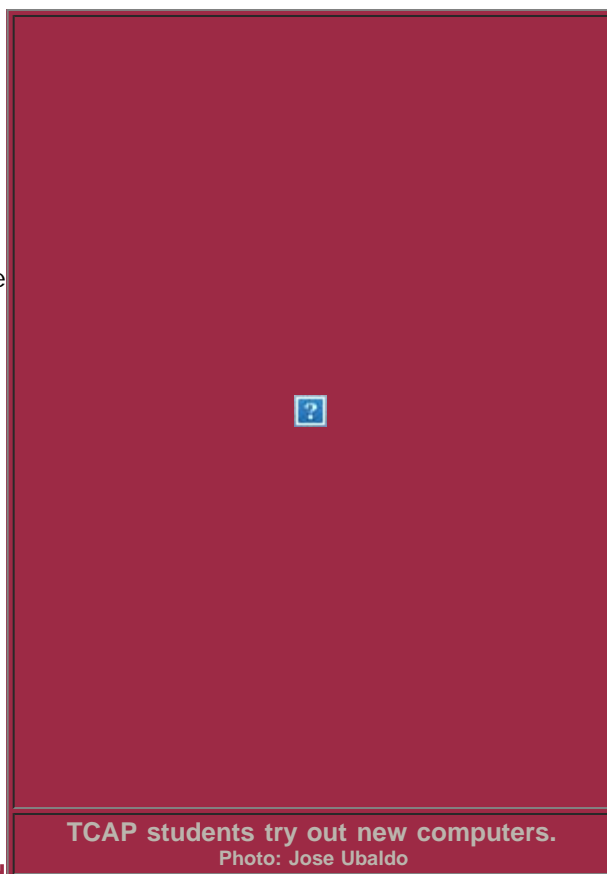
Each TCAP participating high school - Locke, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin and North Hollywood of LAUSD and John Glenn of the Norwalk-La Mirada School District - will receive 25 computers that will be placed in the homes of selected students.

The MTA's computer donation is intended to improve the TCAP students' opportunities for education and job preparation and to provide home access to new technology.

The computers given to the schools had been used by MTA employees until recently when they were replaced by new Dell computers. Along with the PCs, the TCAP students received such accessories as keyboards and printers.

Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources, HR Director Naomi Nightingale, Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett, Graphics Manager Anne Roubideaux and Benita Horn, program coordinator, HR Development and Training, represented the MTA at the ceremony.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



TCAP students try out new computers.
Photo: Jose Ubaldo

Board Agrees to let MTA Staff Start Transit Corridor Environmental Studies

UPDATE (Feb. 24) The MTA Board agreed at its February meeting, Thursday, to take the next step toward development of major transit projects to serve East Los Angeles, the Mid-City/Westside areas and the San Fernando Valley.

The MTA staff now may begin work on draft Environmental Impact Statements/Reports for alternative projects in each of the transit corridors. When completed, the documents will be forwarded to the Federal Transit Administration for review. The recommended alternatives are:

Eastside



This alternative proposes a light-rail transit line from Union Station east to Atlantic Boulevard. The proposal includes an tunnel segment between First and Boyle and First and Lorena that could be used either by a light-rail system or rapid transit buses. It would cost half the estimated cost of the suspended Metro Red Line project, while improving transit in the area.

Mid-City/Westside:

This area has three alternatives.

- A Metro Rapid Transit Bus line on Wilshire Boulevard from Vermont Avenue to San Vicente Boulevard to provide high-speed, low-cost transportation.
- A Metro Rapid Transit Bus line along the Exposition right-of-way from Figueroa Street to downtown Santa Monica to provide service to downtown LA, USC and the Harbor Freeway Transitway at less cost than a light-rail line.
- A Light-Rail Transit line along the Exposition right-of-way from the Metro Blue Line station at Washington Boulevard to downtown Santa Monica to provide service to downtown LA, USC and the Harbor Freeway Transitway with fewer disruptions at intersections than rapid bus service.

San Fernando Valley:

- A Metro Rapid Transit Bus line along the exclusive, landscaped Burbank-Chandler right-of-way from the Metro Red Line North Hollywood station to Warner Center to provide faster, more cost-effective service than either local or rapid bus service on city streets.

Last June, the Board directed the staff to prepare studies of the Eastside, Mid-City/Westside and San Fernando Valley corridors. The studies, budgeted at \$5.5 million, were intended to evaluate more cost-effective alternatives to the suspended Metro Red Line project on the Eastside and in the Mid-City/Westside areas. In the Valley, the study restarted environmental work suspended in 1998.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

CEO Urges Board to Seek \$632 Million in State Funding for Transit Corridors

(Feb. 24) CEO Julian Burke successfully urged the Board at its February meeting, Thursday, to immediately request state funding of \$632 million for construction of rapid bus and light rail lines in the East LA, Mid-City/Westside and San Fernando Valley transit corridors and \$200 million to cover the cost of current operating expenses.

Voting unanimously, the Board approved a motion by Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke that supported the CEO's recommendation. The motion asks the state to identify separate funding so that all three corridors "shall move forward together."

Millions for transit projects

The CEO recommended that the MTA seek \$236 million in state funding for the Eastside corridor, \$251 million for Mid-City/Westside and \$145 million for the San Fernando Valley project.

To fund operations, CEO Burke said the Board should ask for a total of \$200 million over five years. Starting with \$50 million in 2001, the funding would be scaled down each year to \$45 million in 2002, \$40 million in 2003, \$35 million in 2004 and \$30 million in 2005.

"I urge the Board to consider the importance of the opportunity that is being developed in Sacramento," the CEO said. "It is clear to me that it would be appropriate and desirable for the Board to agree to this preliminary funding plan so we can proceed with a unified presentation to the state Legislature, the governor and his staff...."

Plan presented to state officials

Burke said he already had presented his plan to the California Secretary of Transportation, to Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa and to State Sen. Betty Karnette, who chairs the Senate Transportation Committee.

If the plan isn't approved by the Legislature by the end of the state's fiscal year, Burke said he would present the Board with new suggestions for funding.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

January Sees Historic Low in Metro Bus Service Complaints

(Feb. 24) For only the third time in 15 years, passengers had fewer complaints about Metro Bus service in January than they did during the preceding December, which historically brings the lowest complaint totals of the year.

While complaint totals fluctuate for various reasons from month to month, the January figures reflect the impressive downward trend in complaints that has now been going on for 17 months.

Reaffirms service improvements

In a Feb. 17 report, Warren Morse, deputy executive officer, Marketing & Customer Relations, said there were 1,136 complaints in January, 32 fewer than in December. "Although the month-to-month decline...is slight," he said, "it is another significant reaffirmation that both service and customer satisfaction are getting better on the bus."

The report also noted that a 29 percent reduction in schedule-related complaints during 1999 helped to fuel a 14 percent decline in the long-term average of complaints overall.

In the area of accessible service for the disabled, the report said the already impressive low number of 37 complaints registered in December fell to just 27 in January. That was the lowest number of accessibility complaints since the 21 reported in July, 1989.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Board Vote on 'Pasadena Rose Line,' Bus-Rail Interface Postponed to March

UPDATE (Feb. 24) Without comment, the Board postponed until its March meeting a vote on a motion to name the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena the "Pasadena Rose Line" and action on Item 42, concerning the restructuring of Metro Bus lines for the opening of the Metro Red Line North Hollywood extension.

In other action, the Board decided to move forward with Environmental Impact Studies of transit corridors in East LA, Mid-City/Westside and the San Fernando Valley. The Board also authorized the CEO to seek \$632 million in state funding for transit projects in those corridors.

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

Item 14 - Postponed until March meeting. MTA Director Michael Antonovich has filed a motion to rename the Metro Blue Line to Pasadena as the "Pasadena Rose Line." The motion is intended "to eliminate possible confusion with the existing (Metro Blue Line)...and to better represent the community which will be served...."

Item 42 - Postponed until March meeting. This item includes motions by two committee members. One motion concerns the effect of service changes on Metro Bus patrons; the other concerns maintaining express lines following the opening of MOS-3. The committee will consider adopting changes to a number of Metro Bus lines in June, 2000, as part of the restructuring plan once Metro Red Line service opens to North Hollywood. The committee also will consider adopting a free fare on the Metro Red Line for the opening weekend of the North Hollywood extension.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Air Resources Board Adopts Clean-Air Rules for Transit Buses

(Feb. 25) The California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopted clean-air regulations, Thursday, that by 2007 will require the MTA and other transit agencies to operate only buses that are powered by alternative fuel engines or clean diesel engines.

CARB's regulations would permit agencies to follow one of two "paths" in buying new buses - an alternative fuels path and a diesel fuel path. The two paths were proposed to avoid forcing all transit agencies to immediately begin buying only alternative fuels buses.

CARB worked with agencies

"This rule is flexible," Douglas Kim, MTA transportation planning manager, told the LA Times. "The air board went to great lengths to work with the transit districts."

The alternate fuel path would require 85 percent of new buses purchased to be powered by alternative fuel engines. It would allow an agency until 2007 to meet more stringent clean-air standards.

The diesel path would allow agencies to buy new diesel buses until 2004, when they would have to start buying buses that are 87 percent cleaner. In 2007, these agencies would have to buy buses that are 95 percent cleaner.

Little or no impact on MTA

Some of CARB's proposals, such as reductions in NOx emissions and a requirement to use low-sulfur fuels, would have little or no impact on the MTA with its growing CNG fleet. But the MTA Board, at its January meeting ordered a report on the fiscal impact the regulations would have on the MTA.

CARB's proposed regulations, as currently written, are less stringent than those being considered by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

If adopted at its April 21 meeting, the AQMD rule would require transit agencies with 15 or more buses immediately to buy only clean-fuel vehicles. Fleets of 100 or more vehicles - including the MTA's non-revenue fleet - would have to meet that rule by Jan. 1, 2001.

Vulnerable to emergencies

These rules, according to an MTA staff report, would mean a \$54.7 million capital expenditure for the MTA and an increase of \$7.8 million in annual operating costs. The rules also could leave the agency vulnerable in the event of a major earthquake that disrupted CNG fueling.

And, according to MTA testimony at a Jan. 12 AQMD hearing, requiring all fleets of public vehicles to convert to alternative fuels could actually hinder the MTA and other transit agencies in their efforts to reduce air pollution.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Mountain Water Levels Recovering Following Subway Tunnel Construction

(Feb. 25) Ground water levels in the Runyon Canyon area of the Santa Monica Mountains are recovering from Metro Red Line tunneling and should be back to normal in five or six years, or sooner, Dr. Dan Eisenstein of the MTA's Tunnel Advisory Panel told the Board, Thursday.

The possible loss of ground water and the amount of blasting originally planned during construction of the mountain tunnels were the subject of a consent decree agreement between the MTA and residents in the Runyon Canyon area.

Blasting drew no complaints

"Blasting was no problem," Eisenstein said. "It was minimized and...did not concern anybody." In fact, blasting was eliminated along some 60 percent of the tunnel's three-mile length. He said not a single complaint was received from nearby residents.

Construction crews initially were able to reduce the outflow of ground water to about 400 gallons per minute by grouting rock fissures and installing an impermeable tunnel liner, Eisenstein reported. Additional grouting further decreased the outflow to only 120 gallons per minute, "way less than the consent decree requires."

The water table in the Runyon Canyon area already has returned to near its historic lower range, although it is still 40 to 50 feet below pre-construction levels. Based on average rainfall in Los Angeles, experts expect the water table to be back at normal levels in five to six years, if not sooner, Eisenstein said.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Board Ensures Late-Night Service for Staples, Music Center Patrons

[Read News Release \(Feb. 25\) for details on the pilot project Metro Rail schedule.](#)

(Feb. 28) The MTA Board has extended a pilot project that will assure late-night Metro Rail service for patrons attending events at the Staples Center and Music Center. Originally planned for April through June, the pilot project now will run through September.



Extending the pilot project for three months means that the new late-night service also will be offered at Metro Red Line stations scheduled to open this summer - Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and North Hollywood. Extension of the project beyond September, 2000, will depend on ridership demand.

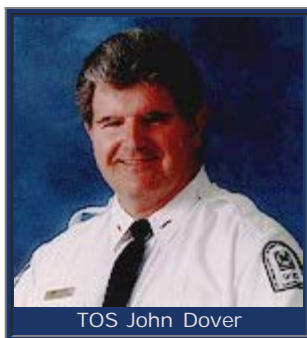
300-500 more boardings

To date, the MTA has experienced approximately 300-500 additional boardings on the Metro Blue Line following sporting events at Staples Center. Ridership on Metro Buses operating near Staples Center also has increased.

The pilot project will cost approximately \$160,000 to operate from April through the end of the fiscal year, June 30. Extending the pilot project through September will cost approximately \$195,000, or \$780,000 if the additional service is funded through the end of FY 2001.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

LAPD Commends MTA's John Dover for Providing Vital Lead in Stolen Transfer Case



TOS John Dover

(Feb. 28) Transit Operations Supervisor John Dover was on his way to work, Jan. 14, when he saw something very suspicious at a Metro Bus layover zone in Burbank.

A van was parked near the buses where it didn't belong and, as Dover watched, two men forced their way into an unoccupied bus. The TOS promptly notified detectives in the LAPD's Transit Group, providing them with the license number and an accurate description of the vehicle, along with descriptions of the men.

Crucial lead helped detectives

See related story
[metro.net](#)
[Feb 7](#)

Dover's quick actions - a crucial lead that helped detectives crack an aggressive transfer theft ring - earned him a commendation from LAPD Chief Bernard Parks and Cmdr. Garrett Zimmon, commanding officer of the Transit Group.

The information led to the felony arrest of one suspect and a six-count felony warrant for the arrest of his accomplice. The pair allegedly were making as much as \$1,200 to \$1,500 a week on sales of stolen transfers.

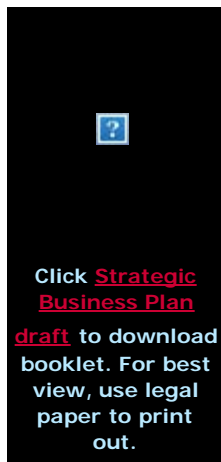
Willingness to go the extra mile

"Mr. Dover's astute observations, attention to detail and his willingness to participate with the criminal justice system has strengthened our Transit Police Partnership," said the commendation from Chief Parks. "John Dover is commended for his dedication, professionalism, and willingness to go the extra mile."

Dan Ibarra, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations, was especially proud of Dover, whom he trained as a Bus Operations Control dispatcher in the early 1980s.

"John has always impressed me as being conscientious and an excellent employee," said Ibarra. "He's one of our top-notch people. They don't make 'em any better than John Dover."

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Strategic Business Plan Booklet Outlines Proposed MTA Mission, Vision, Goals

(Feb. 28) A draft of the MTA's proposed Mission Statement calls for the agency to "ensure the planning, development and operation of a just, efficient and effective transportation system for the traveling public in Los Angeles County."

The Mission Statement, along with the agency's proposed vision and goals, is outlined in a seven-page *Strategic Business Plan* booklet drafted for use during this spring's budget process.

Visionary leadership

The proposed vision statement positions the MTA as "the visionary source of leadership for realizing transportation improvement opportunities and solving transportation problems in Los Angeles County."

The booklet also describes a "balanced scorecard approach" of considering four perspectives in organizing the agency's strategic goals. The perspectives are financial management, the customer, internal processes and innovation. Using this approach, the booklet presents the MTA's proposed agencywide, countywide and operations goals for FY 2001.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Employees Invited to Celebrate 50th with Electrical Railway Historical Association

(Feb. 29) The Electric Railway Historical Association of Southern California will celebrate its 50th anniversary of street railway preservation with a banquet and history presentation in the MTA cafeteria beginning at 6:30 p.m., Saturday, March 18.

MTA employees are invited to join members for dinner and the program. Dr. William Myers, retired Edison Company historian, will speak on the history of street cars and Interurbans and the shaping of Southern California.

A buffet dinner will be served. The fare is \$25 per person. Reservations must be made no later than Saturday, March 11. To make reservations, send a fax to ERHA at (213) 386-3267 or e-mail to members@erha.org. For more information, visit the ERHA website at www.erha.org.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Salt Lake City Recruiting Operators, Mechanics for 2002 Winter Olympics

(Feb. 29) Salt Lake City's Olympic Organizing Committee is looking for bus operators and mechanics who want to "drive for the gold" in 2002. The Committee is inviting operators and mechanics to spend their vacations working the XIX Winter Olympic Games.



Olympic officials distributed recruiting brochures to 70 transit agencies across the country and have received more than 600 applications from active and retired operators and mechanics. The Winter Games are scheduled Feb. 8 to 24, 2002. The Paralympic Winter Games are scheduled March 7 to 16, 2002.

Competitive salary, light work

The Committee is promising transit workers "a competitive salary, convenient accommodations, round-trip airfare, a generous per-diem and souvenir insignia." Operators will have "light work schedules, short routes and no fare collection." Mechanics "will do only light maintenance (work) and tools will be provided."

Olympic officials are expecting to transport 1.6 million spectators and as many as 70,000 family and staff members between 20 venues and parking lots. Some 1,200 buses will be used to shuttle passengers during the two events.

For additional information about vacation jobs with the 2002 Winter Games, MTA division managers have a small supply of brochures. Employees also may call Wade Ashton, Winter Games "Drive for the Gold" Coordinator, at 801-212-2384. The Salt Lake City Committee also provides an on-line application on its Internet web site at **www.slc2002.org/games**. Click on "Transportation" at the bottom of the home page to access the application. (This web site cannot be accessed from MTA computers.) Applicants will receive an acknowledgement postcard from the Organizing Committee.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Help Save a Life

OL Animated GIF

Volunteer as a Speaker for California Operation Lifesaver

(Feb. 29) Want to help save a young life? California Operation Lifesaver needs volunteers to make rail safety presentations at schools and community organizations in Los Angeles.



"This is an urgent situation," says Nate Baguio, Public Affairs communications assistant, who helps coordinate the MTA's participation in the nationwide program. "We've identified more than 80 schools in close proximity to the Metro Blue Line that haven't received rail safety information in some time."

30-minute presentations

Baguio and Rich Morallo, public affairs officer, need to train 15 to 20 volunteers during March to make 30-minute presentations to groups ranging from kindergartners to teenagers to adults. They hope to conduct presentations in some 50 schools by the end of June.

"We're looking for anyone who has presentation skills and wants to speak to youngsters," says Baguio. A one-day training course is planned in March before volunteers are sent out to schools. Because many presentations are conducted during the work day, volunteers must work out schedules with their supervisors.

Presenters are certified

[California Operation Lifesaver](#), which is affiliated with the nationwide, federally supported Operation Lifesaver rail safety program, provides instructors to train volunteers to become certified presenters. The program also provides videotapes and visual aids that will be of interest to audiences of kids, teens and adults.

"We try to make this as easy as possible for the volunteers," says Baguio. "We'll map out the speaking locations, provide contact numbers, set up the audio-visual materials and give the presenters handouts for the kids."

For more information about the Operation Lifesaver volunteer speaker program, contact Nate Baguio at 922-2285 or Rich Morallo at 922-5432.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)