



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.

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