

## Metro Report Archives

### March 2000

#### **City Honors Everett Wilson as [‘Legacy Runner’](#) in LA Marathon**

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#### **Who's Interested in [College Courses](#)? Human Resources**

**Wants to Know** (March 1) Please raise your hand if you'd like to take some college courses - even get your MBA - by taking on-site classes at the MTA.

#### **Honors for ‘Best of Best’ Bus Operators Kicks Off [Employee Recognition Program](#)**

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#### **Operator [Booked on Suspicion](#) of Stealing, Selling Transfers**

(March 2) Detectives of the LAPD's Transit Group have booked a Metro Bus operator on suspicion of grand theft for allegedly stealing and selling books of MTA transfer tickets.

#### **TCAP Program Needs [Transportation Pros to Mentor](#) Students at North Hollywood High**

(March 2) There are 85 juniors at North Hollywood High School who need help from MTA employees. They're TCAP students. And, beginning in April, each one should have a transportation professional as a mentor.

#### **LAPD [Undercover Cops](#) Wipe Out Lincoln High School Graffiti**

**Ring** (March 3) Focused undercover work by LAPD anti-graffiti GHOST unit officers has virtually wiped out vandalism on Metro Bus Line 45, a bus route heavily traveled by students at Lincoln High School.

#### **[Cafeteria Prices](#) to Rise March 13; Lunch Entrees to Remain**

**under \$5** (March 3) Metro Café prices will rise beginning Monday, March 13. The overall increase, as approved by General Services, will be less than 5 percent. Lunch entrees will remain priced at under \$5.

#### **HR Issues [New Guidelines](#) for Employee Salary Equity Reviews**

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#### **Metro Red Line [Subway Extension to North Hollywood](#) Set to Open, June 24. Metro Rapid Buses Begin Operations the Same**

**Day** (March 6) The Metro Red Line North Hollywood extension will open to the public on Saturday, June 24, the MTA announced today. The extension is currently on budget and will open six months ahead of the December 31, 2000, deadline mandated in the agency's construction funding agreement with the federal government.

#### **State Disability [Withholding to Increase](#), April 1; 104 %**

**Increase in Actual Dollars Withheld** (March 6) A state-mandated increase in withholding for State Disability Insurance (SDI) goes into effect, April 1. The requirement amounts to a 104 percent increase in actual dollars withheld from some MTA employees' wages.

**'Best of the Best' Metro Bus Operators Honored for Perfect Safety Records, Outstanding Customer Relations** (March 6) An amazing 45 of the MTA's 4,200 bus operators hailed as unsung heroes for logging five years without accidents, customer complaints or workplace injuries.

**New Brochure Now Available Highlights [LA's Brightest Spots Served by Metro Rail](#)** (March 7) With the opening of the North Hollywood extension of the Metro Red Line planned later this year, MTA has developed a new brochure highlighting major destination points along the entire Metro Rail system.

**[ELAC Architecture Students](#) Create Ideas for Proposed Eastside Rail Stations** (March 7) A group of architecture students from East Los Angeles College has made some creative suggestions about the design of proposed commuter rail stations in the Eastside Transit Corridor.



**MTA to Request \$99 Million to Cover NoHo Startup Costs, [Lipsky tells Congress](#)** (March 8) The MTA plans to request approximately \$99 million in federal New Start funds over the next two fiscal years to help cover startup costs for the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood Extension, MTA Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky told a House subcommittee, today, in Washington.

**Vermont/Santa Monica Subway Station Wins National 'Concrete in Transit Award'** (March 8) The Portland Cement Association, a nationwide industry group, has named the Metro Red Line Vermont/Santa Monica station as one of four projects to receive its 2000 "Concrete in Transit Award."

**MTA's Panas Composes [Winning Entry in Metrolink Motivational Essay Contest](#)** (March 9) Basis Panas was feeling pretty good riding Metrolink's San Bernardino line into work not long ago.

**MTA Puts Environmental Benefits, Reliability under Microscope in Year-Long [Test of Low-Sulfur Diesel Fuel](#)** (March 9) The MTA began a year-long trial today to determine the environmental benefits of using low-sulfur fuel in diesel transit buses.

**Why didn't Blind Talent Agent Receive [\\$10,000 Checks](#) MTA Wrote for Him?** (March 13) Did the MTA really neglect blind Hollywood agent Timothy Schumaker, as the *LA Times* reported last Friday, or did something else happen that kept him from receiving \$10,000 the agency's insurance company paid him in 1995?

**MTA Completes Alcohol to [Clean-Air Diesel Conversion](#)** (March 13) After more than a year-and-a-half of intense labor, the MTA has completed the conversion of its 333 alcohol-fueled buses to clean-air diesel power --on budget and ahead of schedule.

**[Up is Good!](#) Transit Operations to Present January 'Report**

**Card' to Board** (March 14) The January report highlights significant improvements in Metro Bus and Metro Rail service, maintenance performance, safety and customer relations.

**[Two-Person Carpools](#) Slow Traffic on El Monte Busway During Rush Hours** (March 15) A preliminary analysis of El Monte Busway traffic indicates that since a two-person carpool experiment began Jan. 1, peak period speeds have slowed considerably and express bus trips are being delayed by as much as 4.9 minutes in the afternoon.

**['Grammy' Sponsor](#) Expresses Interest in Building Hall Near NoHo Subway Station** (March 15) The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences - host of the annual "Grammy" awards - has expressed interest in building a six-story building on MTA property next to the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood station.

**[Supervisors Graciano, Gomez](#) Help Reunite Boy, 9, Grandmother after Frantic Search** (March 15) For 90 frenetic minutes on Metro Bus Line 68, a lost little boy and his grandmother hop-scotched for more than five miles among bus stops in East Los Angeles, constantly missing each other in a desperate effort to reunite.

**Operators to get ['Training Wheels'](#) for Metro Rapid Bus Demonstration** (March 15) The first of 100 buses that will be used to train operators for the Metro Rapid Bus demonstration project are expected to arrive in Los Angeles later this month.

**Opening a [New Credit Union Account](#) Could Win You a Luxury Vacation** (March 16) Open a new service account in the MTA Credit Union before March 31 and you could win a cruise aboard a Royal Caribbean ship or at a luxury resort vacation. Credit Union members who recruit a new member also are eligible for the prizes, which will be announced following a drawing in April.

**Co-Workers to Wish ['Happy 94th Birthday'](#) to Arthur Winston** (March 21) Wednesday's celebration will be a small and informal gathering at 10 a.m.

**Bus Rapid Transit, Clean-Air Regs Among Items on [Board Agenda for March](#)** (March 22) A proposal to include the Crenshaw Transit Corridor as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) demonstration project is on the MTA Board's agenda this month. During its Thursday meeting, the Board also is expected to discuss clean-air regulations, a request for federal dollars and transit zone rules.

**[Transit Operations](#) Making Progress in Reducing Hourly Operating Costs** (March 17) Transit Operations has made substantial progress in reducing per-hour operating costs and expects to achieve a reduction this fiscal year from \$105.54 per hour to \$102.14.

**[Explore Former Subway Terminal](#), Tunnel During Dance, Theater Performances** (March 17) In the mood to do something interesting related to LA's transit history and - at the same time - "cool" and artsy?

**Construction Slated this Month for New Light-rail [Maintenance-of-Way Building](#)** (March 20) The MTA expects to begin construction this month on a new 23,000 square foot facility for maintenance of Metro Blue Line

and Metro Green Line wayside equipment.

## **Hollywood/Highland Metro Rail Station**

**Stars in [Hollywood Remake](#)** (March 21) A crush of media greeted Mayor Richard Riordan and MTA officials as they arrived by subway to tour the Metro Red Line station at Hollywood/Highland Tuesday morning.

## **'Lion King' Rules at Pantages; [MTA Customer Center](#) to Close**

(March 22) The MTA will close its Hollywood Metro Customer Center, April 7. The management of the Pantages Theater, where the Customer Center has been located since April, 1985, is ending the current month-to-month lease to make way for expansions required for the stage production of Walt Disney's "The Lion King."

## **Board OKs [Bus/Rail Interface Plan](#), Rapid Bus Demo, Service Changes for North Hollywood Debut**

(March 23) The MTA Board has approved a series of bus service changes in connection with the opening of the North Hollywood segment of the Metro Red Line, scheduled for mid-2000.

## **[Board Approves Free Rides](#) on NoHo Subway, Rapid Bus System**

(March 23) The Board has approved free rides on the entire Metro Red Line subway system for the weekend of June 24/25 when Metro Rail expands to the San Fernando Valley. The Board also approved free fare for one week on two new innovative Metro Rapid bus lines, also making their debut June 24.

## **BOARD ACTION UPDATE MARCH 24: MTA Will Offer ["Charter Bus" Service](#) to Democratic Convention, if State, FTA Approve**

(March 24) The MTA will provide "charter-type" bus service for the Democratic National Convention in August if California law can be amended and the FTA permits the agency to offer the service.

## **UPDATE: MARCH BOARD ACTIONS Bus Rapid Transit, Clean-Air Regs**

**Among Items on [Board Agenda for March](#)** (March 24) A proposal to include the Crenshaw Transit Corridor as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) demonstration project is on the MTA Board's agenda this month. During its Thursday meeting, the Board also is expected to discuss clean-air regulations, a request for federal dollars and transit zone rules.

## **MTA Should Make Effort to Provide [Transit Facts](#) to Asian**

**Pacific Islanders** (March 27) The MTA should make a concerted effort to provide transit information to Los Angeles County's fast-growing Asian Pacific Islander community, a recently completed study of the multi-ethnic group recommends.

## **[Intranet Introducing](#) Transit Operations, General Services Web**

**Sites** (March 27) The MTA's *metro.net* welcomes two exciting and informative web sites - Transit Operations and General Services - to the Intranet. They will join nine other active department web sites and other on-line services.

## **Procurement Selects Division 15 as [Storeroom of the Quarter](#)**

(March 27) The Division 15 Storeroom staff was named Procurement's Storeroom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter for October - December.

## **Transit Pros Begin [Peer Review](#) of MTA Bus Operator Training**

**Program** (March 28) They're a team of transit operations pros, and they've come to Los Angeles at the MTA's request to thoroughly review the agency's bus

operator training program.

**HR's '[Class and Comp](#)' Unit to Handle Salary Reviews and Analysis** (March 28) Human Resources' Classification and Compensation Unit has been expanded to include review and analysis of salaries for newly hired employees and employee promotions.

**'[Express Yourself and Win](#)' Contest asks Patrons How Metro System Saves Time** (March 29) Starting April 1, Metro Bus and Metro Rail riders will be given an opportunity to win great prizes, but first they must express themselves on paper.

**[Cornerstone Theater](#) Wants You to Help with Script for Taper Forum Play** (March 30) Wannabe playwrights and actors: here's your opportunity to be involved in the development of an "epic, multi-lingual, musical" stage production at one of LA's leading live theaters.

**MTA Hosts Meeting, Tour for Eastside [Intercambios Network](#)** (March 31) The MTA hosted the bimonthly meeting, Thursday, of the Eastside Intercambios Network, an informal community-based network consisting of the Chamber of Commerce, government agencies, elected officials, police and non-profit health organizations.

## Who's Interested in College Courses? Human Resources Wants to Know

(March 1)



lease raise your hand if you'd like to take some college courses - even get your MBA - by taking classes at the MTA.

The Human Resources Development and Training Department will be conducting a "needs assessment" survey to determine how many employees - both union and non-represented - would be interested in taking courses offered by regional colleges.

### **More needed for program**

Currently some 54 employees have expressed interest in the classes, but more are needed to make the program viable, according to Marion Colston-Fayyaz, manager, HR Development and Training.

The Professional Development and College Degree Interest Survey will determine employee interest in undergraduate or advanced degrees, the amount of time employees expect to spend on courses, college preference, personal and professional goals, subjects of interest to employees and other topics.

### **Tuition reimbursement available**

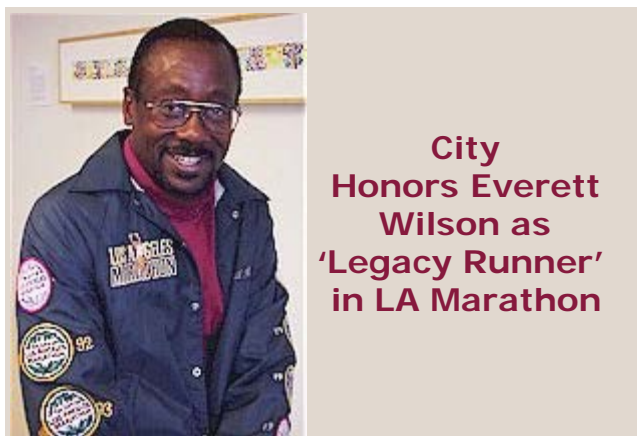
Although students will be expected to pay for the college courses at registration, partial reimbursement may be available through the MTA's Tuition Assistance Program for students who make C or better grades in the courses.

HR Development and Training has been working with the 38 members of the MTA's Training Council, who were appointed by department executive officers to give agency-wide representation to the training needs of employees and to disseminate information about MTA training courses.

For more information about college courses, the survey or about employee training programs, contact Marion Colston-Fayyaz at 922-2260. For information about tuition assistance, contact Lavenia Sims at 922-7113.

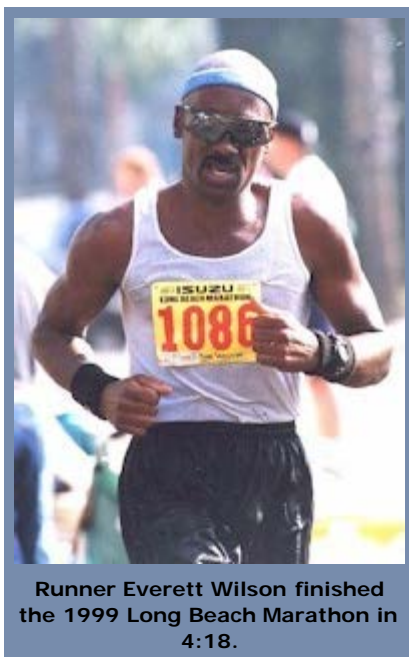
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By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 1) In 1986, the MTA's Everett Wilson ran the very first Los Angeles Marathon. On Sunday, March 5, he'll run in the 15th Marathon – one of only 366 "rare individuals who have started and finished the 26.2-mile" race every year, says a City of Los Angeles commendation.



City officials presented the commendation to Wilson and his fellow runners, walkers and wheelchair athletes in ceremonies, Feb. 26. The group was honored as Marathon Legacy Runners and "part of an exclusive club that will forever be closed to new members...."

### **Sense of euphoria**

"I love running," says Wilson, an assistant auditor in the Revenue Compliance Department. "It gives me such a sense of euphoria."

Wilson, 53, trains for the LA Marathon and other races all year 'round. He ran the Long Beach Marathon last November and the San Diego Marathon in January. "My training has been pretty good lately, although the rain hasn't helped," he says.

On Sunday, he hopes to break four hours and expects to be within the top 10 to 15 percent of finishers. He's been averaging about seven miles an hour, finishing a recent 14-mile run in one hour, 58 minutes. His personal record for a 26.2-mile marathon, set when he was in his early 40s, is three hours, 15 minutes.

### **Wants to outrun everybody**

Although he now competes in the Masters Division for runners ages 50 to 55, the New Jersey native says, "I'm out there to outrun everybody. That's always my goal, even if it's not realistic. I'm not one of the elite runners, but that doesn't mean I don't try; it's the only way to improve."

Elite runner he may not be, but Wilson estimates he's in the top third of the region's marathon runners with races in Canada, Alaska, New Mexico and other western states to his credit.



**And he can still give the youngsters a run for their money. Wilson often trains with the Muir High School track team in Pasadena. Said to be among the top track and field teams in the country, the school produced Ingrid Miller, now Number 2 in the world in the 100-meter and 200-meter dash.**

Wilson in the  
LA Marathon.  
[See MTA  
Report.](#)

**"It's tough running against them," he says, "but, it's always a pleasure to see how well I can do."**

**Wilson and his wife, Diane, a property manager, live in Alta Dena with their daughter, Jonell, 16, a high school junior.**

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## **Honors for 'Best of Best' Bus Operators Kicks Off Employee Recognition Program**

(March 2) Transit Operations will kick off a revitalized employee recognition program this weekend with a banquet honoring 45 Metro Bus operators whose records qualify them as the "Best of the Best."

To rate the award, an operator's record had to be entirely free of accidents, customer complaints and workplace injuries for the fiscal years 1994 through 1999. Each of the 45 honorees will receive a commemorative plaque and a voucher for a special uniform jacket with the "Best of the Best" slogan embroidered on it.

### **More recognition programs coming**

"The 'Best of the Best' program is the kick-off," says Dan Ibarra, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations. "During the coming weeks, we'll be announcing employee recognition programs for maintenance and non-contract employees."

Criteria for individual awards include perfect attendance and no workplace injuries. Division and management team recognition will be awarded for best on-time performance, lowest accident frequency rate, best manpower management and lowest customer complaints.

Employees also can expect a revival of employee-of-the-month-type programs for operators, maintenance employees, transit operations supervisors and others.

The "Best of the Best" event, scheduled Saturday evening at the Windows Restaurant in the TransAmerica Tower Penthouse, will be co-hosted by Transit Operations, Risk Management and the Office of System Safety and Security.

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## TCAP Program Needs Transportation Pros to Mentor Students at North Hollywood High

(March 2) There are 85 juniors at North Hollywood High School who need help from MTA employees. They're TCAP students. And, beginning in April, each one should have a transportation professional as a mentor.

There aren't enough mentors to go around just now, says Holly Balderas, the LAUSD liaison at the MTA. She's looking for volunteers to coach individuals or small teams of TCAP students through the end of June and during their senior year.

### One-to-one relationship

"We like to have a one-to-one relationship," she says. "That's what we're shooting for." Mentor volunteers will have an opportunity to meet their assigned students, April 12, during the MTA's TCAP Career Day.

The Transportation Careers Academy Program at North Hollywood High focuses on urban planning. The students work on projects related to transportation and environmental planning, as well as technology-based projects involving computer-aided design and the Internet.

The time mentors spend with their assigned students is flexible, says Balderas, although volunteers should expect to visit the school at least once or twice during the year. Students also communicate with their mentors by phone and Internet e-mail.

### 1,800 participated in four years

See related story Feb. 23

MTA Bolsters Students' Opportunities

About 600 students from five high schools - Locke, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin and North Hollywood of LAUSD and John Glenn of the Norwalk-La Mirada School District - are enrolled in the MTA's TCAP program every year. In the past four years, some 1,800 students have participated in the program.

"The purpose of the MTA's mentoring program is to provide guidance to students who are interested in transportation-related careers," says Balderas. "We also strongly encourage the students to pursue post-secondary education in a college or university."

For more information about volunteering for the TCAP mentoring program, contact Holly Balderas at 922-5260 or Benita Horn at 922-5252.

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## **Cafeteria Prices to Rise March 13; Lunch Entrees to Remain under \$5**

(March 3) Metro Café prices will rise beginning Monday, March 13. The overall increase, as approved by General Services, will be less than 5 percent. Lunch entrees will remain priced at under \$5.

The price increase will be the first since the cafeteria opened in late 1995. It will include lunch specials, ala carte items, fresh fruit, soft-serve yogurt, bottled soft drinks and juices and other items. The price of pre-packaged ice cream and some other snacks will remain the same.

### **Price comparisons made**

The price hike requested by the cafeteria operator, Sodexho Marriott, was approved following price comparisons with other government agency cafeterias, including MWD and DWP.

"Our prices are comparable or lower," said Phyllis Meng, General Services supervisor.

Meanwhile, in response to many customer requests, Metro Café Manager Rob Byrd said the MTA's soft drink supplier plans to add canned juices to the mix of beverages in the vending machines located in the cafeteria lobby.

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(March 3) Focused undercover work by LAPD anti-graffiti GHOST unit officers has virtually wiped out vandalism on Metro Bus Line 45, a bus route heavily traveled by students at Lincoln High School.

Over the past several months, with activity peaking in February, as many as a dozen Special Enforcement Section officers worked Line 45. Some rode the bus in plain clothes to observe passengers, others followed behind four target buses in unmarked vehicles.

#### **Damage estimated at \$7,900**

Officers arrested 16 juveniles - three of them twice - during their surveillance activities. The boys, ages 15 and 17, were cited or booked on charges ranging from vandalism and possession of vandalism tools to possession of an altered bus pass. All are students at Lincoln High School. Graffiti damage was estimated at more than \$7,900.

The GHOST unit worked closely with Division 10 Maintenance Supervisor Jim Fulkerson and Mechanic Leadman Marco Pedemonte, who assured that all buses were graffiti-free when they left the division for morning and afternoon runs.

#### **Surveillance cameras effective**

Camera-equipped buses were assigned to the surveillance effort. The camera evidence proved highly effective in helping police identify the suspects and gaining confessions to the crimes. Lincoln High administrators also helped police during the investigation.

On the last day of the assignment, GHOST officers checking the buses following their last run found "no new observed graffiti," according to a police report.

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Division 18 Manager A.J. Taylor, center, bears proud witness to perfect record top operators Robert Clincy, left, and Gene Freeman, right, at "Best of the Best" awards banquet.

## 'Best of the Best' Metro Bus Operators Honored for Perfect Safety Records, Outstanding Customer Relations

An amazing 45 of the MTA's 4,200 bus operators are hailed as unsung heroes for logging five years without accidents, customer complaints or workplace injuries.

By GAYLE ANDERSON, Associate Editor

(March 6) "I guess I'm just lucky," says Gene Freeman, a 20-year veteran Metro Bus operator who drives Line 117 out of South Bay to LAX. The diligence and professionalism required to maintain a perfect driving and safety "is just part of the job," he says.

The Division 18 operator, who has logged hundreds of thousands of miles in his 20 years behind the wheel, has been accident-free during his entire career as a bus operator.

### GALLERY

Click on photo for  
larger image



HOSTS WITH THE MOST: From left, Dick Brumbaugh, Dan Ibarra, Paul Lennon, Allan Lipsky, Deborah Guy and Tom Conner.



Professional Pride Committee: from left, Cynthia Robinson, Kelly Tran, Matt Barrett, Pamela Engelke, Sylvia Pantoja, Lucille van der Heyden, and Robert Torres. Not pictured: Marie Kim.

### Gala awards banquet

Freeman was one of 45 top operators honored by the MTA for perfect five-year safety records at a gala awards banquet at the TransAmerica Tower Penthouse, March 4. Transit Operations, Risk Management and the Office of System Safety and Security co-hosted the event.

"You've made my job easy," Deborah Guy, managing director, Risk Management, told the honorees. "When you're on the road, I don't have anything to worry about."

The top operators' perfect driving records earned them engraved plaques and jackets emblazoned with a bright badge declaring the wearers "Best of the Best."

"It's a fitting tribute," noted Paul Lennon, managing director, Systems Safety and Security, "that demonstrates the positive momentum of this agency, both in terms of service and safety."



Division 1 manager Dana Coffey enjoys evening with daughter Dana.



'Best' operator Margaret Sifuentes with Division 3 manager Dan Frawley and Dan Ibarra.



Division 7 manager Sonia Owens congratulates 'Best' operator Pete Avila.

The operators' good deeds and daily diligence were the subject of praise from proud bus rider Allan Lipsky, Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer.

### An incredible accomplishment

"Five years of performance like this is an incredible accomplishment," said Lipsky. "This level of service has an amazing effect on how we all do our jobs and how the MTA is perceived as a transportation agency in Washington." Lipsky is scheduled to testify before a Congressional subcommittee, March 8.

"The awards illustrate the bus improvement program currently underway," said Tom Conner, executive officer, Transit Operations. "Performance is at an all-time high, with the highest number of perfect roll-outs and lowest amount of lost service. This is ample evidence of the turnaround experienced by the MTA in the last two years."

"The MTA is on a roll," Conner continued, "with 500 new buses gearing up, the Metro Blue Line's 10th anniversary later this year, the start-up of the Metro Rapid Bus program, and the opening of the Metro Red Line to North Hollywood this summer."

At the conclusion of the evening, Dan Ibarra, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations, christened the awards program a turning point for the MTA. "The 'Best of the Best' program emphasizes positive accomplishments and brings out the best in a transportation agency that's considered the one of the best in the nation," he said.



**Division 1:** Timothy L. Nelson and Oscar A. Reynoso; **Division 2:** Julio C. Garcia and Ben G. Flores; **Division 3:** Robert A. Wageman, Deelmer G. Briscoe, Margaret J. Sifuentes, Ernesto R. Cueva, Delfino C. Rodrigues, Diane K. O'Neal, Anderes J. Padilla, Rosalia Medina and Eric H. Arciniega; **Division 5:** John R. Mitchell; **Division 6:** Johnny M. Hardwick; **Division 7:** Pete Avila and Rudolfo U. Cortez; **Division 8:** Steven Kushner, Michael A. Guity and Parmjit S. Grewal; **Division 9:** Pedro L. Perez, Mario H. Villegas, David I. Singer, Richard A. Lopez and Albert R. Gallardo; **Division 10:** Encarnacion P. Cabrera, Brian Walker, Winfred S. Eckley, Sergio F. Chavez, Daniel B. Saldana and Richard S. Munoz; **Division 15:** Alfonso J. Gonzalez and Stephen W. Glaser; **Division 18:** Edward D. Tanner, Gene E. Freeman, Wilfred L. Batiste, Robert L. Clincy, Arthur J. Fontanez, Frank R. Aguilar, Francisco J. Sanabria, Khanh D. Trinh and Teresa S. Gray; **Division 11:** Reginald H. Harris and William R. Jarvis; and **Division 20:** Stephen M. Earl.

## **HR Issues New Guidelines for Employee Salary Equity Reviews**

(March 6) Having recently completed the first of what will be annual non-contract employee salary reviews, Human Resources is issuing new guidelines for the procedure.

Salary reviews are intended to close the gap between employees whose pay is significantly lower than their counterparts who have similar experience, education and backgrounds. Any pay raises that result are not considered merit or general pay increases.

### **Reviews by HR and COO**

Under the new guidelines, executive officers must determine the appropriateness of requests before submitting them to the executive officer, Human Resources, in August. The executive officer, Human Resources, and the Chief Operating Officer will determine whether a review is warranted before forwarding the request to HR's Classification and Compensation Unit for analysis and a recommendation.

Equity review results will be submitted to the Chief Operating Officer in January for final approval. Employees will be notified of results in February. Results of reviews cannot be appealed. A salary equity review request may not be resubmitted for three years.

In reviewing an employee's salary, HR compares similar job classifications within the employee's department and elsewhere within the MTA. The employee's experience, education and time in the current classification also are considered.

### **Goal to minimize inequities**

"Maintaining internal (and) external equity is vital to an organization's continued success," wrote Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources, in a memo released March 6. "The goal of this agency is to minimize inequities."

A total of 191 requests for salary equity reviews were submitted in August, 1999, by 13 departments. Seventy-nine employees - 41 percent - received pay increases. Another 104 requests were denied and eight were withdrawn. In all, the MTA approved a total of \$201,745 in pay raises.

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## **Metro Red Line Subway Extension to North Hollywood Set to Open June 24**



### **Metro Rapid Buses Begin Operations the Same Day**

By RICK JAGER

(March 6) The Metro Red Line North Hollywood extension will open to the public on Saturday, June 24, the MTA announced today. The extension is currently on budget and will open six months ahead of the December 31, 2000, deadline mandated in the agency's construction funding agreement with the federal government.

The opening of the new 6.3-mile extension from Hollywood to Universal City and North Hollywood will be the capstone of a rail rapid transit system that crisscrosses Los Angeles County. The extension will feature three new stations at Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and Lankershim/Chandler in North Hollywood. The opening will coincide with the NoHo International Theater and Arts Festival.

#### **Metro Rapid bus service**

At the same time the subway extension opens, the MTA will debut its Metro Rapid buses on Ventura Boulevard and along Wilshire Boulevard. Modeled after a rapid bus system in Curitiba, Brazil, the new service will expedite bus connections to the subway stations.

The MTA's Metro Rapid buses will be outfitted with special transmitters to extend green lights for faster service. They will make fewer stops than regular buses and will run more frequently. They will stop at specially designed stations to facilitate passenger loading. All Metro Rapid buses will be state-of-the-art, low-floor, compressed natural gas buses with a distinctive red and white color scheme for easy identification.

#### **Almost 60 miles of rail service**

With the opening of the North Hollywood extension, the Metro Rail system will have nearly 60 miles of rail in service and 50 stations. This includes 17.4 miles of subway with 16 Metro Red Line stations linked with the Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line.

"This latest expansion of the Metro Rail system will give the transit dependent, commuters, tourists and others access to major job centers, government, schools, hospitals, shopping, sports, entertainment and cultural venues throughout Los Angeles County," said Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke.

#### **Through trains to NoHo**

When the MTA inaugurates Metro Red Line service to North Hollywood, June 24, trains bound for Hollywood will continue on to the new stations at Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and North Hollywood.

The last train bound for the North Hollywood Station will depart 7th Street/Metro Center at 11:42 p.m. The last connecting train from North

Hollywood to 7th Street/Metro Center will depart from the North Hollywood Station at 11:15 p.m. with a stop at the Universal City Station at 11:18 p.m.

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## **State Disability Withholding to Increase, April 1; 104 % Increase in Actual Dollars Withheld**

(March 6) A state-mandated increase in withholding for State Disability Insurance (SDI) goes into effect, April 1. The requirement amounts to a 104 percent increase in actual dollars withheld from some MTA employees' wages.

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) ordered the hike in SDI withholding to ensure the disability fund's ability to pay higher benefits, according to a spokesperson for the umbrella agency, Health and Human Services.

### **Weekly benefits increased**

Senate Bill 656, signed last year by Governor Gray Davis, raised SDI benefits to a maximum of \$490 a week. SDI pays benefits for non-job-related injuries or illnesses. Workers Compensation covers on-the-job injuries.

Under the revised EDD regulation, the employee wage base for withholding was raised from \$31,767 to \$46,327. The withholding rate was raised from .005 percent to .007 percent. The first paycheck to be affected for most MTA employees is scheduled April 21.

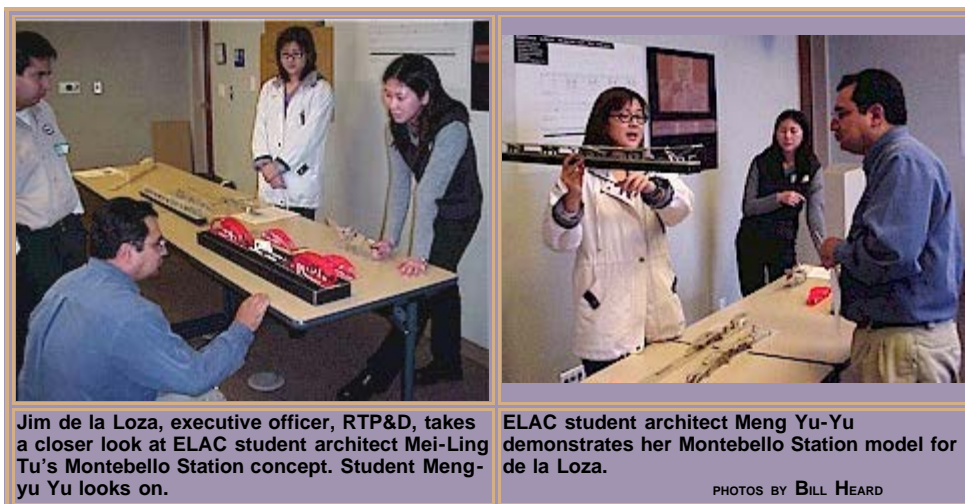
The amount withheld from the old wage base of \$31,767 at .005 percent totals \$158.84. The amount withheld from the new wage base of \$46,327 at .007 percent will total \$324.29. The difference in actual dollars withheld is \$165.45 – or 104 percent.

### **Two tax rates in 2000**

During the first three months of 2000, however, the old .005 percent withholding rate remains in effect. That means wages earned in January, February and March will be taxed for SDI at .005 percent. Wages earned during the rest of the year will be taxed at .007 percent until the maximum of \$46,327 is reached. Wages over that amount are not subject to SDI withholding.

For more information about SDI withholding, employees may contact the local Employment Tax Customer Service Office listed in the telephone directory white pages under "Employment Development Department, Payroll Tax Information" or access the EDD Internet web site at [www.edd.ca.gov](http://www.edd.ca.gov).

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Jim de la Loza, executive officer, RTP&D, takes a closer look at ELAC student architect Mei-Ling Tu's Montebello Station concept. Student Meng-yu Yu looks on.

ELAC student architect Meng Yu-Yu demonstrates her Montebello Station model for de la Loza.

PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

## ELAC Architecture Students Create Ideas for Proposed Eastside Rail Stations

(March 7) A group of architecture students from East Los Angeles College has made some creative suggestions about the design of proposed commuter rail stations in the Eastside Transit Corridor.

In a presentation, March 3, to MTA transportation planners, the 13 students exhibited plans and models of their station designs. The ELAC students were asked to design the stations not merely as shelters, but as "linear museums" that would communicate the history, culture and other aspects of the community.

### Opportunity to contribute ideas

The seven-week class design project gave the budding architects an opportunity to contribute ideas toward what promises to become a major development within their community.

At its February meeting, the MTA Board directed the staff to begin work on draft Environmental Impact Statements/Reports for alternative transportation projects in the San Fernando Valley, Mid-City/Westside and East Los Angeles Transit Corridors. Both light rail and rapid bus projects are under consideration for the Eastside.

The ELAC student architect design project was coordinated for the MTA by James Rojas, transportation planning manager, RTP&D.

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## Bus Improvements, Transit Corridors Discussed...



# MTA to Request \$99 Million to Cover NoHo Startup Costs, Lipsky tells Congress

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 8) The MTA plans to request approximately \$99 million in federal New Start funds over the next two fiscal years to help cover startup costs for the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood Extension, MTA Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky told a House subcommittee, today, in Washington.

The federal New Start funding share of the \$1.31 billion subway extension project is \$681 million. There are two remaining increments of \$50 million for FY 2001 and approximately \$49 million for FY 2002. The new extension is scheduled to open June 24.



In testimony before the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Transportation, Lipsky noted that the North Hollywood project is 90 percent complete and will be delivered "on budget" and almost six months early. He said \$25 million in added administrative and overhead costs "can be fully covered by available contingency" funds.

"The North Hollywood Project is now a significant MTA success story," Lipsky said. "For a project of this magnitude and complexity, completion within the original project budget is both impressive and unusual."

### Bus service No. 1 priority

The MTA has made improving bus service its Number One priority, Lipsky told the committee. "Almost half the MTA's financial resources are committed to improving the bus system," he said, with more than \$7 billion committed to improvements between FY 1996 and FY 2004. The agency also has added 600,000 revenue service hours to meet terms of the federal Consent Decree.

"More than 98 percent of our service now meets the stringent load factor standards," he said.

But, Lipsky warned the committee that the MTA could face millions of dollars in capital funding deficits if its Consent Decree appeal to the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals is denied.

### Court ordered bus purchases

In May, 1999, the Special Master ordered the MTA to buy an additional 379 buses. A District Court order in September, 1999, reduced the purchase figure to 297 buses, but also ordered the agency to operate 88 temporary buses. The Court of Appeals, at the MTA's request, stayed these orders and is expected to hear arguments later this year.

"If the current Ninth Circuit stay is lifted and the District Court ruling is reinstated," Lipsky testified, "the MTA could be faced with a capital deficit in the amount of \$115 million. If the Special Master's May, 1999, ruling is reinstated...the deficit in capital funding could be \$411 million...."

The MTA expects an operating expense shortfall through FY 2004 or approximately \$197 to \$282 million. "The MTA has in the past

demonstrated its capacity to manage shortfalls of this magnitude," he said, adding that lack of success in court "will place financial burdens on the MTA that will be difficult to manage even with the most rigorous cost containment and revenue enhancement programs."

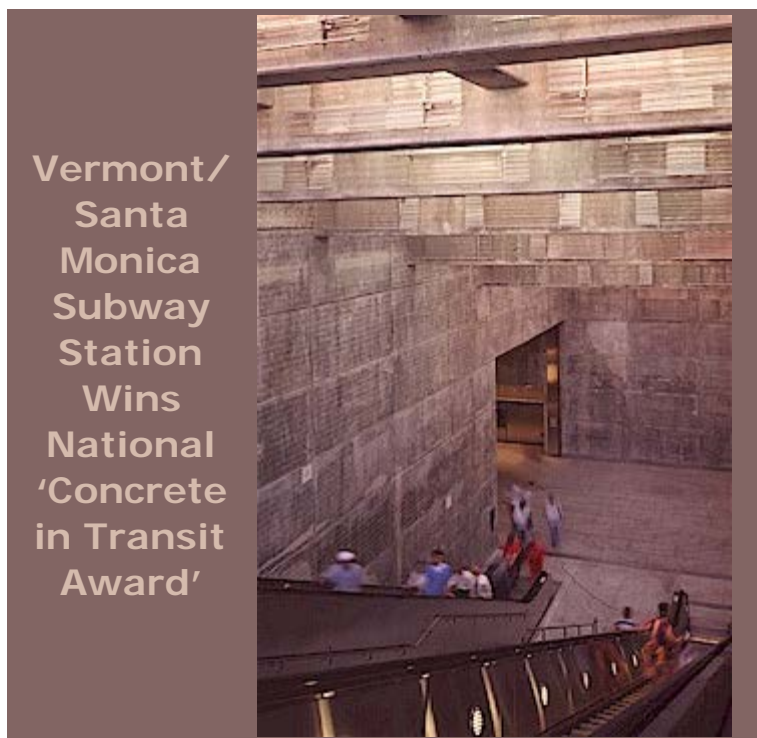
#### **MTA committed to Eastside, Mid-City**

Meanwhile, the MTA remains "committed to addressing the substantial transportation needs of residents in the Eastside and Mid-City corridors," Lipsky said. The Board, which in February voted to begin work on draft environment impact documents, has emphasized the critical importance of preserving \$647 million in federal funding for those transit projects and in the San Fernando Valley.

He said studies, thus far, have indicated that a light-rail alternative being considered for the Eastside would be almost twice the length of the proposed subway line at about 65 percent of the cost. Similarly, a bus rapid transit alternative in the Mid-City area would be almost 12 miles longer than the proposed subway line and could be built for some \$250 million less.

"Given the significant funding demands on the federal New Start program," Lipsky said, "federal grantees should be encouraged to develop the most cost-effective projects possible and should certainly not be faced with the disincentive of losing federal funds if they decide not to pursue expensive subway projects."

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## Vermont/ Santa Monica Subway Station Wins National 'Concrete in Transit Award'

(March 8) The Portland Cement Association, a nationwide industry group, has named the Metro Red Line Vermont/Santa Monica station as one of four projects to receive its 2000 "Concrete in Transit Award."

The Vermont/Santa Monica station features a main entranceway whose concrete walls are stenciled with 10,000 questions concerning the design, fabrication, financing and politics of the transportation system and its art.

### **Textures and bold, simple colors**


The station design, a joint effort of the architectural firm of Ellerbe Becket and artist Robert Millar, uses concrete of varying textures throughout. The textures and the use of bold, simple colors aid students and visitors to the nearby Braille Institute and other visually impaired subway passengers. An anti-graffiti coating over the concrete keeps maintenance costs low.

Picked from among 28 other submissions, the Vermont/Santa Monica station design was judged on creativity, transferability, aesthetics, economics and functionality. Also winning awards this year were WMATA's Green Line Aerial Structure, Toronto's Sheppard Subway Don River Tunnel/Bridge and the Historic Canton Viaduct Rehabilitation Project for Amtrak.

The awards will be presented during the American Concrete Institute convention in San Diego, March 30, and again at the APTA conference in St. Louis in June.

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	<b>MTA Puts Environmental Benefits, Reliability under Microscope in Year-Long Test of Low-Sulfur Diesel Fuel</b>
Decal will identify buses using low-sulphur fuel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>New ARCO Fuel aimed at reducing particulate emissions</b></li></ul>

By Ed Scannell  
([March 9](#)) The MTA began a year-long trial today to determine the environmental benefits of using low-sulfur fuel in diesel transit buses.

The MTA is one of seven agencies and companies in Southern California that will test ARCO's new EC-Diesel fuel which the company says can reduce particulate emissions from diesel engines up to 90 percent when used in conjunction with a device that traps particulate matter.

**Test will use 20 diesel buses**

The trial will employ 20 diesel buses operating from Division 5, the Arthur Winston Division. Purchased in 1998, they are the newest diesel buses in the MTA's active fleet. More than 800 Metro Buses now operate on compressed natural gas (CNG).

Of the 20 buses, four will operate on EC-Diesel fuel and will be equipped with a Continually Regenerating Trap (CRT) designed to reduce particulate matter emissions. Eight other buses will operate on EC-Diesel fuel but without the CRT device.

The remaining eight buses will serve as the control group and will operate on Number 2 diesel fuel, the industry standard diesel fuel as regulated by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). These buses will not be equipped with the CRT device.

**Four-day battery of tests**

After about three weeks of operation in regular service, three of the buses will undergo a four-day battery of tests at CARB's emissions testing facility located at the MTA's Regional Rebuild Center.

The facility's dynamometer will simulate driving environments of increasing intensity: Central Business District, Arterial conditions that resemble city and freeway driving conditions and a New York City Test, which models the more demanding conditions experienced by buses operating in New York City.

The three buses undergoing the dynamometer testing will include one bus from the control group that operates on regular Number 2 CARB-approved diesel and one bus operating on EC-Diesel fuel with the CRT trap.

**Three fueling configurations**

The third bus will undergo the dynamometer testing using three fueling configurations in succession: EC-Diesel with the trap device, EC-Diesel without the trap device, and regular Number

2 diesel without the trap device. The buses operating on EC-Diesel will be tested at the end of one year to determine whether any degradation in emissions reduction has occurred.

The trial not only is intended to determine the emissions benefits of

EC-Diesel and CRT traps, but also whether the low-sulfur fuel has any impact, over time, on the reliability of diesel engines. The 17 buses not undergoing dynamometer testing will be tested strictly to measure reliability.

The California Air Resources Board has adopted a regulation that will require transit agencies, beginning Jan. 1, 2003, to retrofit their existing diesel buses with devices capable of reducing diesel particulate emissions by 85 percent.

#### **Test will provide useful data**

The MTA's participation in the testing of EC-Diesel diesel fuel and the Continually Regenerating Trap (CRT) will provide useful data about their effectiveness in reducing the level of diesel particulate emissions.

While current MTA Board policy calls for the purchase of buses that operate exclusively on alternative fuels, such as CNG, the MTA still will have approximately 1,000 diesel buses in its fleet when all existing contracts for CNG buses are completed. These diesel buses eventually will operate on EC-Diesel or other low-sulfur fuel prior to their replacement with new alternative fuel buses.

The anticipated benefits of EC-Diesel and the CRT device will support the MTA's long-standing commitment to using the cleanest technology available.

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MTA accounting manager Basil Panas on board Metrolink.

## **MTA's Panas Composes Winning Entry in Metrolink Motivational Essay Contest**

(March 9) Basis Panas was feeling pretty good riding Metrolink's San Bernardino line into work not long ago. Thinking about his good fortune to be able to take the train and not have to drive into LA.

It was that sense of well-being that inspired Panas, an MTA accounting manager, to write a 50-word essay that he entered in a Metrolink writing contest. Patrons had to explain how Metrolink helps them achieve their motivational goals.

### **Wins round-trip airline tickets**

**Surprise!** His tribute to commuting by rail won the contest and two round-trip tickets on Southwest Airlines. Destination? Maybe Texas or New Mexico, states he has yet to visit.

Panas, 42, a resident of Upland, joined the MTA in January. Every morning he boards the 6:27 Metrolink train at Montclair, arriving at Union Station at 7:20 a.m.

"I read about the contest in the Metrolink newsletter and thought it was perfect for me," says Panas, formerly controller for the City of West Covina. "I thought about how I can work on the train ride if I want, when before that time was wasted commuting by car."

### **The winning entry**

A few thoughts later and Panas had composed these contest-winning lines:

"Being near the mountains is good for the soul, so I live there. The scenery recharges my batteries. Jobs in the big city are good for the pocketbook, so I work there. The money replenishes my finances. To alternate between these two blessings, I ride Metrolink. It couldn't be otherwise."

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## **MTA Completes Alcohol to Clean-Air Diesel Conversion**

**Even Division 9's ol' Number 1259 - the last holdout among the methanol buses - has been converted, a fact that has fleet managers singing, "Hallelujah!!"**

(March 13) After more than a year-and-a-half of intense labor, the MTA has completed the conversion of its 333 alcohol-fueled buses to clean-air diesel power--on budget and ahead of schedule.

The conversion program began in late summer, 1998. To date, all but 10 of the converted buses are back in service and those 10 are being refitted with new wheelchair lifts.

### **Meets all emission standards**

Each of the converted buses now has a Detroit Diesel 6v92 engine that meets all current federal and California emission standards. The company even developed a new fuel injector, used for the first time on MTA buses, to keep emissions as low as possible.

"This was a great team effort," says John Drayton, manager, Vehicle Acquisition and Technical Support. "Everyone involved in supporting this program, including fleet management, the RRC, Inventory Control, the operating divisions and Detroit Diesel, deserves credit. There truly were a lot of heroes in this program."

As a result of the \$5.5 million conversion program, the repowered buses are doing "far better," says Drayton. Prior to conversion, the alcohol-fueled engines were failing about every 20,000 miles, requiring up to two engine rebuilds per bus each year. Alcohol fuels were two-to-three times more expensive to operate than diesel and it was operationally difficult to schedule the unreliable buses.

### **More dependable configuration**

"The bottom line," says Drayton, "is that the repowered configuration is far more dependable and that helps ensure that buses are there when our passengers expect them."

"It's a credit to all on the maintenance staff that we put 70 million miles on the ethanol- or methanol-fueled buses," he says. "There's nothing inherently wrong with the alcohol fueled technologies, but these technologies weren't well-suited to the severe demands of our working environment."

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## **Why didn't Blind Talent Agent Receive \$10,000 Checks MTA Wrote for Him?**

(March 13) Did the MTA really neglect blind Hollywood agent Timothy Schumaker, as the *LA Times* reported last Friday, or did something else happen that kept him from receiving \$10,000 the agency's insurance company paid him in 1995?

According to legal documents on file in the County Counsel's office, the MTA's insurer wrote a \$10,000 check in October, 1995, in response to a request by Schumaker's attorney. The attorney wrote that the Schumakers had found an apartment where they could both live and conduct their talent agency business.

### **Advance against future claims**

The money the attorney requested was to be an advance against future claims the talent agent may have had as part of a class action lawsuit filed against the MTA following the Hollywood subway tunnel subsidence.

The chain of events involving Schumaker's participation in the lawsuit and the MTA insurer's two attempts to pay him \$10,000 are discussed in a March 10 letter from Assistant County Counsel Steve Carnevale to the MTA Board. ([Click here to read letter.](#))

County Counsel records show that Schumaker later was withdrawn as a plaintiff in the suit and his claim was to be handled by arbitration. The \$10,000 check never was cashed, but in April, 1999, his attorney requested a second \$10,000 check because the first one had expired.

### **Second \$10,000 check sent**

Although a second \$10,000 check was sent to Schumaker's attorney, the *Times* reported that the talent agent "said he never received a cent from the MTA and has not withdrawn from the...suit."

According to Carnevale's letter to the Board, Schumaker still may request binding arbitration to "demonstrate the value of their claim."

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**Best in Recent Years**  
**Transit Operations to Present**  
**January 'Report Card'**  
**to Board**



**UP**  
**is**  
**GOOD!**

- Transit Operations report highlights significant improvements in Metro Bus and Metro Rail service, maintenance performance, safety and customer satisfaction.

By JOSE UBALDO

(March 14) Transit Operations will present to the MTA Board this month its best performance report in recent years.

On-time pullouts (OTP) from bus divisions reached a record high in January of 99.36 percent – the best performance since the MTA began tracking this indicator in 1995. Four of the 11 bus divisions - 1, 3, 8 and 9 - reported OTP equal to or exceeding the 99.5 percent goal, and all divisions posted OTP in excess of 99 percent.

**Metro Red Line makes 100**

On-time pullouts on the Metro Red Line maintained a 100 percent level in January, while performance on the Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line rose for the third consecutive month from 99.4 percent in December, 1999, to 99.75 percent in January - well above goal. In-service, on-time performance rose in January on heavy- and light-rail and both services operated above goal.

"These are just two of the indicators that show the MTA's commitment to quality on-time service for our passengers," said Tom Conner, executive officer, Transit Operations. "We set very high standards and we followed through."

Under the category of Scheduled Revenue Service Hours Lost due to cancellations, in-service incidents or mechanical breakdowns, bus operations recorded the lowest figure - 1.2 percent - since the agency began tracking this indicator in December, 1997. It has continued to drop since October, 1999.

**On-time performance declined**

The only major performance indicator that did not show improvement was in-service, on-time performance declined to 53.5 percent. On-time performance is affected by such factors as traffic lights, traffic flow, accidents and construction along the route. However, incidents of buses departing from stops or certain checkpoints more than 15 seconds early - "running hot" - declined by more than two full percentage points to 25.12 percent.

Another strong performer in January was maintenance, which has been improving steadily for the past five months. Miles between mechanical failure reached 6,300, the highest level recorded since tracking began in July, 1995.

The number of past-due Preventive Maintenance Points (PMP) jobs declined for the fifth consecutive month from 0.35 percent to 0.28 percent. This performance measure has exceeded goal for two months in a row.

**Consent Decree compliance improved**



Consent Decree load-factor compliance performance for January was the highest since October, 1997, when the MTA began tracking the indicator.

The system-wide bus traffic accident rate decreased sharply from 4.55 percent in December to 3.82 percent in January. Safety remains a focus of MTA training, mentoring and monitoring efforts in both bus and rail divisions.

Finally, customer complaints hit a low for January with 1,136 complaints compared with 1,168 in December, 1999. This was only the third time in 15 years that passengers had fewer complaints about Metro Bus and Metro Rail service during the month of January than they had during the preceding December, historically the lowest months for complaints during the year. This continues a trend of declining customer complaints recorded over the past year.

### **Report is a 'milestone'**

In presenting the January Performance Report to the Board's Operations Committee, Conner termed the report a "milestone in improving and expanding MTA bus and rail service." He commended the MTA staff for their diligence and thanked all who have assisted in this effort.

Conner also outlined four performance areas that need continued focus. These are safety, which is always top priority; bus on-street, on-time performance; complete elimination of seat and window graffiti; and reduction in workers compensation costs.

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## **Preliminary Study Shows Two-Person Carpools Slow Traffic on El Monte Busway During Rush Hours**

(March 15) A preliminary analysis of El Monte Busway traffic indicates that since a two-person carpool experiment began Jan. 1, peak period speeds have slowed considerably and express bus trips are being delayed by as much as 4.9 minutes in the afternoon.

But, the study also shows that relieving congestion on the mixed-flow lanes has resulted in a slight net gain, per-hour, in the numbers of commuters who travel through that portion of the freeway during peak hours.

### **Buses averaged 43.5 mph**

Before the state law requiring the 18-month two-person carpool experiment went into effect, three-person carpools and vanpools were averaging 60 mph on the 12-mile El Monte Busway. Buses, which serve two stations along the line, were averaging 43.5 mph and completing the run in 12 to 17 minutes.

Once the experiment took hold among commuters, time checks conducted Jan. 28 and Feb. 24 indicated that morning westbound traffic on the Busway increased an average of 1.8 minutes for a 16-minute trip (11 percent) and by an average of 4.9 minutes for a 17-minute afternoon eastbound trip (28 percent).

Observations by Caltrans and transit operators also indicated that enough vehicles had shifted from the mixed-flow lanes to the Busway "to roughly equalize the travel speeds on both," according to a report presented to the Board's Operations Committee. Average bus speeds slowed from 43.5 mph to 34 mph.

### **Trade-off in time savings**

"All the benefit to auto drivers is at the expense of bus riders and three-person carpools," says Dana Woodbury, deputy executive officer, RTP&D. "These people no longer enjoy as much as a 30-minute travel time savings over mixed-flow auto users."

The California Highway Patrol and Foothill Transit operators reported a significant increase in the number of unsafe driving incidents at points where vehicles using the Busway attempted to merge back into the mixed-flow lanes. Foothill also reported more than 800 complaints from passengers during the first month of the two-person carpool experiment.

The Board's Operations Committee has requested a comparison of El Monte Busway performance with the Harbor Transitway and information about the impact of the experiment on ridership on Metrolink's San Bernardino line.

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## **'Grammy' Sponsor Expresses Interest in Building Hall Near NoHo Subway Station**

(March 15) The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences - host of the annual "Grammy" awards - has expressed interest in building a six-story building on MTA property next to the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood station. The proposed site of nearly two acres is located on the west side of Lankershim Boulevard between Chandler Boulevard and Weddington Street, southwest of the the North Hollywood Metro Red Line Station.

To be known as "Encore Hall," the mixed-use building would provide ground-level retail space and 160 units of affordable housing, including assisted living for seniors. The Academy must secure control of the site by June 30 in order to meet public agency deadlines for the project, which will be built with state and local funding.

### **CEO to negotiate an agreement**

The Construction Committee on Wednesday sent to the Board without recommendation a motion by Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke and Director Jaime de la Vega that would direct CEO Julian Burke to negotiate a "final agreement" with the Academy and report to the Board no later than May 31.

The CEO would be directed to enter an exclusive right to negotiate (ERN) for six months with the Academy and its development team for the purchase and/or long-term lease of the two MTA parcels. The Academy will be asked to make a presentation at the Board's March 23 meeting and provide documents about the proposed building.

According to the motion, Encore Hall would be linked to other projects near the subway station, including the El Portal Theater and the Leonard Bernstein Center for Learning. It could become part of a regional musical arts attraction for students, tourists and residents.

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By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 15) For 90 frenetic minutes on Metro Bus Line 68, a lost little boy and his grandmother hop-scotched for more than five miles among bus stops in East Los Angeles, constantly missing each other in a desperate effort to reunite.

It all started at about 7:40 a.m., March 9, when Rosa Peraza and her grandson, Brandon Rivera, 9, approached the bus stop at Atlantic and Cesar Chavez. Brandon ran ahead and jumped on the westbound bus. The doors closed and the bus pulled away, leaving Peraza behind. Luckily, she noticed the bus number.

#### **Called BOC for assistance**

A frantic Peraza boarded the next westbound bus, hoping to catch up with Brandon somewhere down the line. But, Brandon got off at the next stop, intending to walk back to Atlantic. Peraza missed her grandson, but she asked the bus operator to call the Bus Operations Center for assistance.

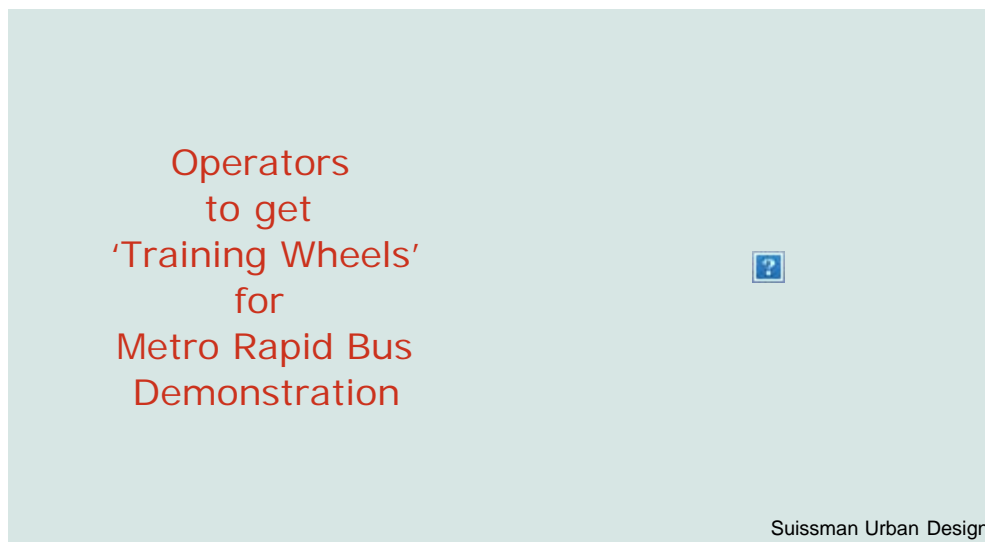
BOC alerted the LAPD and Division 1 Transit Operations Supervisor Rosa Graciano, who went looking for the bus she hoped Brandon was on. She caught up with it a Cesar Chavez and Vignes, but the boy wasn't aboard.

#### **Searched every bus going by**

Meanwhile, Transit Operations Supervisor Eddie Gomez had joined the chase. He met Peraza at Cesar Chavez and Mission and, together, they drove toward East LA, searching each bus that went by.

Finally, at Cesar Chavez at Atlantic, Gomez and Peraza found Brandon. He was safe, relieved and very happy to see his grandmother.

[Back to metro.net](http://metro.net)



(March 15) The first of 100 buses that will be used to train operators for the Metro Rapid Bus demonstration project are expected to arrive in Los Angeles later this month.

[metro.net](#)  
[Jan. 7](#)  
"Rapid Bus  
Project Shifts  
into Top  
Gear..."

The NABI coaches will be painted in a distinctive red and white design. The operator training program will be conducted in April and May.

Metro Rapid Bus routes are planned for Ventura Boulevard in the San Fernando Valley and on Wilshire Boulevard in conjunction with the opening, June 24, of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension.

#### **'Pilot Bus' due in April**

The MTA also expects to receive in April the "Pilot Bus" of an order of 223 New Flyer low-floor CNG buses. Production is to begin on the full order late this summer.

During February, the MTA accepted 38 New Flyer high-floor CNG buses and put 32 of them into service. A total of 200 of the 223 buses to be provided in this New Flyer contract have now been shipped to the MTA and the remainder are expected by the end of March.

[metro.net](#)  
[March 13](#)  
"...Clean-Air  
Diesel  
Conversion"

Meanwhile, Detroit Diesel has completed the conversion of all 333 of the MTA's alcohol-fueled buses to clean-air diesel power.

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## Opening a New Credit Union Account Could Win You a Luxury Vacation



(March 16) Open a new service account in the MTA Credit Union before March 31 and you could win a cruise aboard a Royal Caribbean ship or a vacation at a luxury resort. Credit Union members who recruit a new member also are eligible for the prizes, which will be announced following a drawing in April.

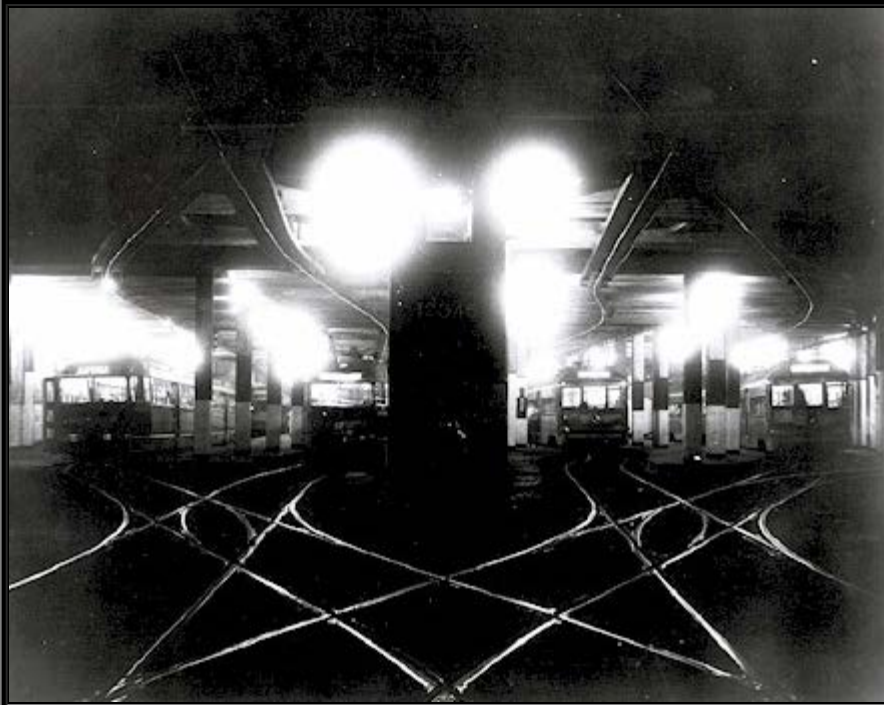
The four-day cruises are for destinations in Mexico or the Caribbean. The winner also may choose a four-day, three-night vacation at one of a lengthy list of resorts located in the United States and Canada.

The Credit Union cruise promotion covers meals, room service, midnight buffet, shows, movies and many other shipboard expenses, except port charges. If the winner chooses a Caribbean cruise, he or she must bear the cost of travel to Miami or San Juan, Puerto Rico. Travel costs to the luxury resort location also are not covered.

For more information about the "Drive Away, Get Away" promotion or opening a new service account, contact the Credit Union at 922-6183.

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## Explore Former Subway Terminal, Tunnel During Dance, Theater Performances



L.A.'s FIRST SUBWAY--The former Pacific Electric Railway terminal is in the basement of the Subway Terminal Building, an office building constructed in 1925 at Fourth and Hill streets in Downtown. From the Terminal Building, "Red Car" lines ran to such destinations as Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley. The tunnel that began at the building was just over a mile long, with it's western portal near Beverly Boulevard and Lucas Street.

(March 17) In the mood to do something interesting related to LA's transit history and - at the same time - "cool" and artsy?

It's "SubVersions," a theater and dance creation that takes its audiences underground and into the abandoned streetcar tunnels of the historic Subway Terminal Building at 4th and Hill streets.

### Top 10 of 'cool'

LA Magazine has named "SubVersions" one of the 10 "coolest" things to do in March and April. Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening performances begin March 18 and continue through April 8. MTA employees who show their badges will receive \$5 off the price of a \$20 adult ticket. Students and seniors pay \$15.

The performance, which explores spaces not viewed by the public in years, travels throughout the old Terminal Building, once used each day by some 65,000 workers and shoppers.

According to a theater spokesperson, the opening performance, March 18, is sold out, but tickets are available for other performances. Ticket holders should plan to wear comfortable clothes and shoes for the hour-and-a-half walking performance.

### Free parking available

Free parking is available next door to the building. The entrance is at 417 South Hill St. For information and ticket reservations, call Collage Dance Theatre at 818-784-8669. Payment for tickets



**should be addressed to Collage Dance Theatre, 2934-1/2 Beverly Glen Circle, No. 25, Los Angeles, CA 90025.**

**"SubVersions" is not accessible to the disabled due to building limitations and the fact that the audience must follow the performers as they explore the building and tunnel areas.**

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## **Transit Operations Making Progress in Reducing Hourly Operating Costs**

(March 17) Transit Operations has made substantial progress in reducing per-hour operating costs and expects to achieve a reduction this fiscal year from \$105.54 per hour to \$102.14.

A further reduction to \$90 per hour in 2001, as voted in a recent Board action, would require significant changes in the way the MTA operates.

### **Compared with peer agencies**

In a joint report to the Board's Operations Committee, March 15, Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner and Chief Financial Officer Dick Brumbaugh discussed factors affecting operating costs. Conner said a recent study comparing MTA operations with nine other transit agencies indicates MTA bus service, including contracted services, is seven percent higher than peer agencies.

"From the benchmarking information," he said, "it looked to us that if we could reach \$98 per hour, we would be equal to our peer group."

Achieving a level of \$90 per revenue service hour "would require significant changes in the way we do business," Conner told the committee. This would include re-evaluating the cost of labor agreements, contracted transportation, the MTA's alternate fuels policy, workers compensation and transit security.

### **Save \$20 million this year**

Brumbaugh said the MTA will save some \$20 million this fiscal year by reducing its hourly operating costs. The average hourly cost for bus operators has declined as new employees are hired to replace retiring bus operators. Currently, 30 percent of Metro Bus operators have less than two years' experience.

Maintenance costs are expected to be \$9 million lower than originally budgeted, Brumbaugh said, while savings from staff vacancies and reductions will reach \$11 million this fiscal year.

However, diesel fuel costs are expected to increase operating costs by 42 cents an hour and workers compensation costs will rise by about 19 cents an hour above budget.

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## **Construction Slated this Month for New Light-rail Maintenance-of-Way Building**

(March 20) The MTA expects to begin construction this month on a new 23,000 square foot facility for maintenance of Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line wayside equipment.

The \$3.8 million maintenance-of-way building, which should be completed late this year, will be located just west of the Rail Operations Center at Imperial and Wilmington, according to MTA Construction Manager Dave Compton.

### **Moving from temporary trailers**

About 50 Wayside Systems employees who maintain light-rail tracks, traction power equipment and the right-of-way signal system will relocate to the building. For the past 10 years, the group has been working out of temporary trailers at Division 11, the Metro Blue Line yard.

The concrete block and steel building will house supervisors' offices and shops for repair and testing of electronics, traction power and signal equipment. The storage facility will include an automated carousel and rack system.

The building will have an employee lunch room, locker rooms, showers and training rooms. The site will provide a fenced and lighted parking area with a card-activated gate for employee cars and for maintenance vehicles.

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# Hollywood/Highland Metro Rail Station Stars in Hollywood Remake

- **Hollywood/Highland Tour Led by Mayor Includes Sneak Peek of Future Home of the Oscars. See [Gallery](#) for virtual tour.**

By GAYLE ANDERSON, Associate Editor  
(March 21) A crush of media greeted Mayor Richard Riordan and MTA officials as they arrived by subway to tour the Metro Red Line station at Hollywood/Highland Tuesday morning.

"We're here six months ahead of schedule and under budget," announced a triumphant Dennis Mori, North Hollywood construction chief whose refrain was immediately echoed by media reports.





The Mayor and Hollywood business leaders celebrated the subway as a major player in Hollywood's renaissance during a press conference attended by more than 20 news media outlets, including seven newspapers, three radio news stations, and eight television news crews.






Following a tour of the station's artwork led by Metro Art Director Maya Emsden, the entourage emerged from the subway for a sneak peek at the construction site of TrizecHahn's *Hollywood & Highland* entertainment and retail complex. The 640,000-square-foot development, that features the Academy Theater, (the future home of the Oscars), shops, restaurants and cinemas, is a \$430-million joint venture with the MTA. It is expected to open in Fall, 2001.

The opening of the 6.3-mile subway extension to the San Fernando Valley is scheduled to open June 24.

**GALLERY**  
Click on photos for larger view.

Photos by Gayle Anderson

	<b>View from the Mezzanine at Hollywood/Highland station.</b>
	<b>Mayor Richard Riordan arrives by subway.</b>
	<b>Quote of the day from Dennis Mori: "Six months ahead of schedule and under budget."</b>
	<b>Mayor Richard Riordan: "Smooth ride."</b>

	<b>Metro Art Director Maya Emsden on station's artwork.</b>
	<b>Media Relations Director Marc Littman lines up press conference.</b>
	<b>Media's eyes wide open at stairway entrance.</b>
	<b>The sky above reveals TrizecHahn construction.</b>
	<b>TrizecHahn developer David Malmuth and MTA COO Allan Lipsky on the set of Hollywood's renaissance.</b>

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## **'Lion King' Rules at Pantages; MTA Customer Center to Close**

(March 22) The MTA will close its Hollywood Metro Customer Center, April 7. The management of the Pantages Theater, where the Customer Center has been located since April 1985, is ending the current month-to-month lease to make way for expansions required for the stage production of Walt Disney's "The Lion King."

The agency will continue to operate six Customer Centers in Baldwin Hills, East Los Angeles, Van Nuys, and in Los Angeles at ARCO Plaza, at Wilshire and La Brea, and at MTA Headquarters.

### **Looking for Hollywood location**

"We're looking for an alternate Hollywood location," says Jim Cudlip, deputy director, Revenue. "We're concentrating our efforts along the Hollywood Metro Red Line corridor because we have an established customer base in that area."

In the meantime, MTA patrons in the Hollywood area will purchase passes and tokens from private vendors. There are 10 in the vicinity of Hollywood and Vine.

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## **Board Approves Free Rides on NoHo Subway, Rapid Bus System**

By GARY WOSK

(March 23) The Board has approved free rides on the entire Metro Red Line subway system for the weekend of June 24/25 when Metro Rail expands to the San Fernando Valley. The Board also approved free fare for one week on two new innovative Metro Rapid bus lines, also making their debut June 24.

The 6.3 mile expansion of the subway will link downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood with the San Fernando Valley. The subway will expand from its current 11.1 mile length and 13 stations to a total of 17.4 miles and 16 stations.

### **Service to cut travel time**

The Metro Rapid Bus demonstration project will cut the travel time of passengers commuting across the San Fernando Valley and the LA Basin by as much as 25 percent. It will complement service on the nearly 60-mile Metro Rail system. Buses equipped with loop-transponder detectors will lengthen green signals up to 10 seconds to allow buses to continue without stopping.

The 26-mile Metro Rapid Bus route in the LA Basin will traverse the Whittier/Wilshire Corridor from Montebello to Santa Monica, and will include stops at the Wilshire/Western, Wilshire/Normandie, Wilshire/Vermont and Westlake/MacArthur Park Metro Red Line stations.

In the San Fernando Valley, a 16-mile Metro Rapid Bus route will extend along Ventura Boulevard between Warner Center and the Universal City Metro Red Line station.

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## **Board OKs Bus/Rail Interface Plan, Rapid Bus Demo, Service Changes for North Hollywood Debut**

By RICK JAGER

(March 23) The MTA Board has approved a series of bus service changes in connection with the opening of the North Hollywood segment of the Metro Red Line, scheduled for mid-2000.

In addition, the Board reaffirmed its commitment to the Metro Rapid Bus Demonstration Project to be implemented later this year, as well as other service change proposals designed to improve the operation of the Metro Bus system.

### **Extension opens June 24**

On June 24, the MTA is scheduled to begin passenger revenue service on the Metro Red Line subway extension to North Hollywood in the San Fernando Valley. The Board approved free rides on the Metro Red Line on Saturday and Sunday, June 24 and 25, during the official opening.

To enhance rail service and reduce service duplication, the following bus routes will be impacted as part of the bus-rail interface plan: Lines 96, 152, 154, 166, 183, 420, 424, 425, 426, 427 and 522.

These service changes will take place on Sunday, June 25, or later. Line 427 will be canceled. The other lines will be rerouted or shortened to end at either the North Hollywood or Universal City Metro Red Line stations. Free bus to rail transfers will be issued for patrons on the shortened lines who use the Metro Red Line to complete their destinations into Hollywood and downtown Los Angeles.

### **Fast, high-quality bus service**

A Metro Rapid Bus Demonstration Project will introduce new, fast, high-quality bus service in key transit corridors in the Eastside, Mid-City and San Fernando Valley. This service will upgrade and replace existing limited stop bus service in the Whittier/Wilshire and Ventura Boulevard corridors.

The Metro Rapid Bus Project will provide more reliable service using low-floor buses, signal priority at intersections, streamlined on-street boarding and alighting of passengers and improved bus stop spacing at planned Rapid Bus stations.

Metro Bus lines affected by the demonstration project include Lines 318, 320, 322 and 425. Two new Rapid Bus lines are proposed to be implemented along Whittier and Wilshire Boulevards and along Ventura Boulevard on June 24 with the Metro Red Line debut. Fares will be free with the first week of service on these two new bus lines only.

### **New experimental route**

Other service changes proposed to improve the operation of the bus system include the permanent implementation of a new experimental route on Line 434 (Los Angeles-Santa Monica Express).

In addition, reverse commute service during the morning and afternoon peak periods will be offered on Line 418 (LACBD-Roscoe Boulevard Express). A minor reroute on Line 154 to serve the Northridge Metrolink Station also is planned.

Line 429 will be canceled due to a significant ridership decline since the Metro Red Line extension to Hollywood opened last year.

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## UPDATE: MARCH BOARD ACTIONS

### Bus Rapid Transit, Clean-Air Regs Among Items on Board Agenda for March

**Editor's Note:** This story was updated at 9:15 a.m., Friday, March 24.

(March 24) A proposal to include the Crenshaw Transit Corridor as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) demonstration project was approved by the Board at its March meeting. The Board also discussed clean-air regulations, a request for federal dollars and sale or lease of property adjacent to the Metro Red Line North Hollywood station.

<b>metro.net Reports</b>
March 24 update: <a href="#">"Board Items"</a>
<a href="#">Bus/Rail Interface Plan</a>
<a href="#">Free Rides</a>

#### Items to watch in March include:

**Item 9 APPROVED by the Board.** The motion includes a provision for free rides on the Metro Red Line and on Metro Rapid Buses operating in the Wilshire and Ventura boulevard corridors in connection with the opening of the North Hollywood extension in June.

Forwarded without recommendation by the Planning and Programming Committee, the item calls for the Board to adopt for FY 2000 a number of Metro Bus service changes. Approval would allow the MTA to implement a bus-rail interface plan with the opening, June 24, of the North Hollywood extension. The plan also is aimed at reducing duplication of bus and rail service.

**Item 13 APPROVED by the Board with an amendment that the action is "contingent on the eligibility of all three corridors for those funds."** Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke's motion asks the Board to support a request to the Federal Transit Administration for approval and funding of the Crenshaw Transit Corridor as a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) demonstration project. The corridor would provide north-south access to the Wilshire Corridor BRT, the Metro Red Line, the Metro Green Line and LAX.

**Item 49 APPROVED by the Board.** Under this item, the Board would adopt an advertising policy for Metro Buses and Metro Rail train cars. Among other provisions, the draft policy would prohibit vinyl window graphics that would cover more than 30 percent of a bus's total window surface. It also would prohibit covering any portion of a rail car's windows with vinyl graphics. The Executive Management Committee approved the item, 5-0, with an amendment by Mayor Richard Riordan that would prohibit "any exterior advertising on...rail vehicles, BRT vehicles, rapid bus vehicles, and other new types of transit service."

See metro.net report March 15: <a href="#">"GRAMMY SPONSOR EXPRESSES INTEREST IN BUILDING HALL..."</a>
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**Item 63 APPROVED by the Board with an amendment that directs the CEO to enter into a NON-exclusive right to negotiate for four, instead of six, months with the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences.** Approval of this item would direct the CEO to negotiate with the "Grammy" awards sponsors, the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, for the purchase or lease of MTA-owned land adjacent to the North Hollywood subway station. The academy wants to construct "Encore Hall," a six-story development that would include retail, housing and offices.

The item was forwarded to the Board without recommendation by the Construction Committee.

**Item 65 APPROVED by the Board with an amendment that directs the CEO to enter into a NON-exclusive right to negotiate for two, instead of six, months with the Children's Museum.** Supervisor Zev

Yaroslavsky's motion would direct the CEO to negotiate with the Children's Museum for a long-term lease of MTA property at the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station. The CEO would be required to report back to the board on the status of negotiations by May 31.

**Item 67 APPROVED by the Board.** With approval of this item, the MTA would request through the Congressional delegation a total of \$132.15 million in federal funds. The funds would be allocated to such projects as the North Hollywood extension, bus and bus-related facilities, and the Eastside, Mid-City and San Fernando Valley transit corridors. The CEO also would be directed to seek additional state and local funding to ensure that the Eastside, Mid-City and San Fernando Valley projects are funded at the same percentage of estimated project costs.

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## **BOARD ACTION UPDATE: March 24** **MTA Will Offer "Charter Bus" Service to Democratic Convention, if State, FTA Approve**

**Editor's Note:** This story was updated at 9 a.m., Friday, March 24.

(March 24) The MTA will provide "charter-type" bus service for the Democratic National Convention in August if California law can be amended and the FTA permits the agency to offer the service.

See  
[metro.net](#)  
[March 24](#)  
[report](#)

That motion and some 60 others touching on bus procurement and clean-air rules, among many other topics, were discussed during the March Board meeting.

**Item 47 APPROVED by the Board.** A motion to support the vision and goals of the Southern California Intercity Rail Group and to work closely with SCIRG in seeking funding for transportation projects in Los Angeles County

**Item 50 APPROVED by the Board.** A motion to seek an amendment to state law and to seek a waiver from the FTA that would permit the MTA to provide "charter-type" bus service, operators and staff for the Democratic National Convention scheduled August 12 - 17. The motion would direct the CEO to negotiate with city agencies to determine a range of services the MTA could offer. The CEO would ensure that any service provided is "cost-neutral" to the MTA and doesn't interfere with regular service to the public.

**Item 53 Following a closed session, the Board decided that this issue should be subject to labor negotiations and should not be voted on.** This motion by Director Jenny Oropeza, carried over from February, would prevent the MTA from approving creation of any transportation zones unless the governing organization "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...." The new zone would be "obligated to employ" MTA employees working there when the new zone begins operation.

**Item 18 APPROVED by the Board.** This motion, which requires a two-thirds vote, would award a \$203,946 fixed-price contract to E.F. Johnson Radio Systems of Mesa, Ariz., for purchase of 177 portable field radios and related equipment for use on the Metro Green Line.

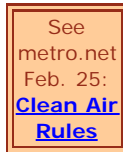
See  
[metro.net](#)  
Dec. 3:  
[CNG](#)  
[Fueling](#)  
[Facility](#)

**Item 19 APPROVED by the Board.** A motion to exercise a \$12,178,440 option with Trillium USA, Inc., of Salt Lake City, to design, build and maintain a CNG fueling station at Division 1. The company completed a similar CNG facility at Division 7 in January and another fueling station at Division 5 in December.

**Item 20 APPROVED by Committee.** A motion to delete a requirement to provide Automatic Voice Annunciation Systems on 223 New Flyer high-floor CNG buses now on order. The MTA has decided to implement a voice system technology fleetwide through the "smart bus" program, rather than have differing systems installed on portions of the bus fleet.

**Item 22 APPROVED by the Board.** A motion to request that the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) modify its clean-air rules to address concerns of LA County transit operators and delay an April

hearing on proposed clean-air Rule 1192. The MTA would ask the AQMD to provide funding to help transit agencies comply with proposed emissions rules.



The agency would ask for a more flexible AQMD approach to reducing emissions, to allow agencies to find the most cost-effective method of meeting emissions targets and to allow development of multiple technologies. The motion proposes that clean-air requirements be phased in over many years to allow agencies to plan and budget for the change.

**Item 23 PARTIAL BOARD APPROVAL. This portion of the motion was not approved by the Board.** Director John Fasana has filed a motion to approve a new bus procurement policy that would supplant all previous policies relating to the purchase of CNG buses. If approved, the Board would delay further CNG bus purchases "until the service performance, reliability and cost issues can be addressed and remedied."


**This portion of the motion was approved by the Board.** MTA staff would be directed to seek federal or state assistance to offset the cost of clean-air requirements. The staff also would be directed to develop specifications for driver-side bus doors and to explore the use of articulated and bi-articulated buses to improve service. A report to the Board would be due in 90 days.

**Items 27/28 APPROVED by Committee.** Together, these two items would authorize an expenditure of \$550,650 to reimburse Tutor-Saliba-Perini for repairing water leaks in the Metro Red Line stations at Vermont/Beverly and Vermont/Sunset.

**Items 41/42 APPROVED by the Board.** Together, these two items concern the procurement of 74 Breda rail cars for the Metro Red Line through a financing program called "defeased leasing." In this type of financing program, outside investors would lease the rail equipment, valued at about \$146 million, from the MTA as a means of gaining a tax benefit by depreciating the lease over the life of the contract.

The MTA would lease the equipment back from the investors at an estimated savings of \$15 million over the original purchase price. In 1997, the MTA executed a defeased lease of 30 Metro Red Line rail cars with the Bank of New York as the equity investor.

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<p><b>Study Recommends: MTA Should Make Effort to Provide Transit Facts to Asian Pacific Islanders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MTA brochure, "How to Take The Bus," is printed in both English and the Khmer language and distributed to members of the Cambodian community.</li></ul>	
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By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 27) The MTA should make a concerted effort to provide transit information to Los Angeles County's fast-growing Asian Pacific Islander community, a recently completed study of the multi-ethnic group recommends.

The county's Asian Pacific Islander (API) community, which numbers more than one million, is divided among citizens of Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Chinese and Cambodian heritage, as well as residents from a number of Pacific islands. Together, they speak at least 18 separate languages.

Recent API immigrants, in particular, have the potential of becoming a sizeable segment of public transit commuters.

#### **Reaching a diverse group**

The \$350,000 study, funded by the Federal Transit Administration and the MTA, found that communicating regularly with such a diverse group would require more than media announcements and distribution of brochures and posters.

A pilot project among the Cambodian community, with a population of some 30,000, confirmed that many types of communication efforts would be required for this hard-to-reach ethnic group.

The study recommended that the MTA designate a liaison officer who would maintain regular communication with API leaders. Community organizations should be trained to help members access transit information, which should be provided in the various languages. Recommendations included telephone hotlines with operators who speak API languages and cultural awareness training for transit operators.

#### **New funding needed**

"The API community played a key role in obtaining the federal grant for the study followed the Cambodian project closely, anticipating that the MTA would expand the program to other segments of the community,"

said Andrea Burnside, RTP&D transportation planning manager. "We want to do it, but we must identify new local sources of funding."

In researching the Cambodian community, which currently is concentrated in the Long Beach area, consultants found that 72 percent don't speak English well and others don't speak the language at all. As many as 33 percent don't have vehicles available to them - three times the county average of 11 percent.

Despite the lack of personal transportation, poor English skills, lack of familiarity with the transit system and fear of the unknown keep many Cambodians from using transit.

#### **Range of communication efforts**

In a bid to familiarize Cambodians with local transit services, the pilot project's consultants provided special brochures, conducted a door-to-door information campaign, operated a Cambodian-language hotline, held transit familiarization events, worked with the API leaders and media, and made presentations to community groups.

Results of those efforts were difficult to quantify, but Burnside said the project showed that improving transit ridership among Cambodians and other members of the Asian Pacific Islander community will require a continual and consistent grass-roots approach to communication.

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Pictured above, from left, are Division 15 Materiel Supervisor Kent Fagernes, Stock Clerk Ken Munroe, and Storekeeper Mike Hagen, and, in photo at right, Stock Clerks Robert Willkomm and Robert Garcia. Not pictured is Relief Stock Clerk Arnold Carpio.

## Procurement Selects Division 15 as 'Storeroom of the Quarter'

By JIM MONTOYA

(March 27) The Division 15 Storeroom staff was named Procurement's Storeroom of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter for October - December. During the period, the storeroom staff received excellent ratings on their inspection reports for inventory accuracy and overall performance.

The staff also has passed the test of longevity, with three of the four employees having supported the maintenance operation for more than 15 years in Sun Valley. They are well recognized and much appreciated by their customers.

### Committed to excellence

"Division 15's storeroom personnel are some of the most professional individuals I have had the pleasure to work with. Anytime I bring a matter of importance to their attention they promptly try to resolve the issue," Division 15 Maintenance Manager Jeff O'Keefe says of the group. "Storeroom personnel have committed to working with us on setting up new parts orders and working to keep minimum and maximum levels stocked at all times."

Ted Montoya, deputy executive officer, Procurement, said, "I am pleased with the performance Division 15 staff has achieved. It has been consistent and distinguished. Together, they have displayed all the traits associated with excellence. Keep up the excellent work; our customers in operations depend on it."

In addition to their outstanding checklist ratings, the entire Division 15 storeroom staff had excellent attendance during the quarter, with only 24 hours of unscheduled absences.

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## Intranet Introducing Transit Operations, General Services Web Sites



Click on image to visit new sites.

(March 27) The MTA's **metro.net** welcomes two exciting and informative web sites - Transit Operations and General Services - to the Intranet. They join nine other active department web sites and other on-line services.

Transit Operations' "In Transit" web site covers the Bus Operations Center (BOC), the operating divisions and the Office of Central Instruction, and provides news from the LAPD and Sheriff's Department transit security units.

### General Services web site

The General Services web site provides information about Graphic Services, Building Services, Printing Services, Copy Services and Records and Mail Services. A building schematic on the home page shows the location of each featured department.

Both web sites are accessed by clicking on "Departments and Division Home Pages," which is located on the right-hand navigation bar on the Intranet News & Information home page.

One of the expected benefits of the "In Transit" web site will be the opportunity for each bus and rail operating division to provide employee and division activity news on its own web page. This will become an even more important communication resource when the project to wire the operating divisions for e-mail and Intranet service is completed within the next year or so.

### Just tapping full potential

"I think we've just begun to tap the full possibility of the Intranet," said Ellis Kyles of the BOC, who along with colleague, John Cohen, developed the "In Transit" web site. "I'm totally excited about its possible uses."

The General Services web site, designed by Intranet Webmaster Joe Simpson and Communications Officer Jessica Ho, includes the Headquarters carpet care schedule and a list of floor wardens, a Q & A about Graphics projects and an on-line form for graphics design and print production. The home page features a commentary on how Graphics Services can help employees "get the message out!"

"Our Intranet web site will help General Services be more customer service-oriented," said Irma Licea, a chief administrative analyst who led the web site development team. "Having information easily available will save employees time when they have questions about our services."

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## **HR's 'Class and Comp' Unit to Handle Salary Reviews and Analysis**

(March 28) Human Resources' Classification and Compensation Unit has been expanded to include review and analysis of salaries for newly hired employees and employee promotions. Prior to March 1, these functions were handled by HR's Employment Unit.

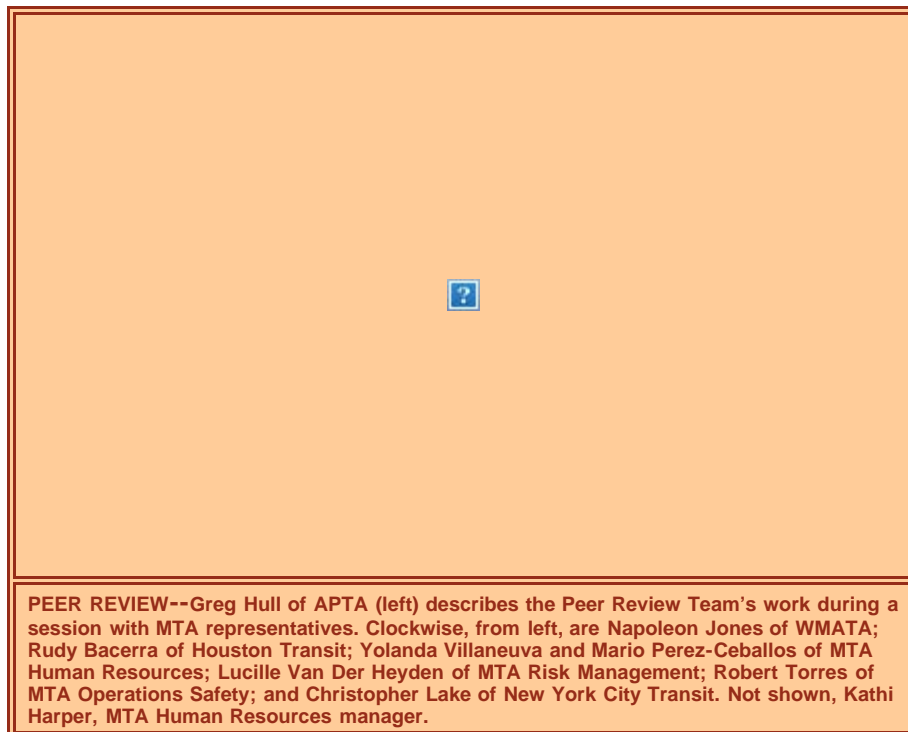
Placing all salary reviews in the same unit will provide the agency with better consistency and uniformed service, according to Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources.

### **Unit also conducts job surveys**

In addition to its new duties, the Classification and Compensation Unit also is responsible for conducting annual benchmark surveys that compare MTA positions and salaries with those at peer transit and government agencies.

Such surveys help ensure that the MTA offers salaries that are competitive with the industry in recruiting and retaining employees.

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## **Transit Pros Begin Peer Review of MTA Bus Operator Training Program**

(March 28) They're a team of transit operations pros, and they've come to Los Angeles at the MTA's request to thoroughly review the agency's bus operator training program.

The four-member peer review team, coordinated by the American Passenger Transport Association (APTA), represents New York City Transit, WMATA (Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority) and Houston Metro.

### **Opportune time for review**

"With the intensive demand on the MTA to buy new buses and put new operators behind the wheel, it was an opportune time for us to look at our operator training curriculum," said Paul Lennon, managing director, Office of System Safety and Security. "We asked the peer review team to come because they have expertise in the realm of bus operator training."

The MTA's previous peer review was conducted in 1985, but Lennon pointed out that many transit agencies have never requested such a review.

"This is an inexpensive way to bring real expertise to bear on our operator training," he said, noting that the MTA pays only the team's travel expenses. "We call this 'learn and return' because, although the members come here as knowledgeable individuals to assist us, they - in turn - will learn something from our programs that they can take back with them."

### **Review classroom procedures**

During the team's three-day visit, members will review classroom procedures, training manuals, audio/visual materials and driving skill training provided by the staff at the MTA's Office of Central Instruction in

El Monte. They'll interview operator trainees, teaching staff and managers.

The team also will take an interest in the MTA's accident investigation procedures, and the role operators play in providing accident information and witness statements. In addition, they'll look at the agency's procedures for operator recruitment, testing, background investigations and physical standards.

Although the team will provide an overview of their findings during an "exit conference" on Wednesday, members also will prepare a final report, due to the MTA within three months.

Headed by Greg Hull, manager, APTA Operations, Safety and Security, peer review team members are Christopher Lake, assistant chief, Office of Safety, New York City Transit; Rudy Bacerra, manager, Safety Training, Houston Transit; and Napoleon Jones, supervisor, Bus Operator Training, WMATA.

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## Essay Contest asks Patrons How Metro System Saves Time

By GARY WOSK

(March 29) Starting April 1, Metro Bus and Metro Rail riders will be given an opportunity to win great prizes, but first they must express themselves  $\frac{3}{4}$  on paper.

Sponsored by the MTA's Marketing Department, the "Express Yourself and Win!" essay contest promotes the June 24 opening of the Metro Red Line from Hollywood to the San Fernando Valley. Patrons will be asked to explain how Metro Rail saves them time.



### Essay contest more interesting

"Last spring, when we celebrated the extension of the subway from downtown Los Angeles to Hollywood, we held a random drawing," said Warren Morse, deputy executive officer, Marketing. "Participants in the essay contest will find this more interesting because they have a hand in how well they do."

First, second and third place winners of the contest, which lasts until June 1, will be selected by a panel of judges.

The Grand Prize is a round trip for two on Southwest Airlines to anywhere the airline flies. Second place is a \$250 shopping spree at Ralphs Supermarkets. Third place is free travel on the Metro system for three months.

### Entry forms in English, Spanish

A total of 200,000 entry forms have been printed in English and Spanish and will be available on all Metro Buses and Metro Rail trains. Southern California Rideshare also will distribute the forms to some 4,000 companies.

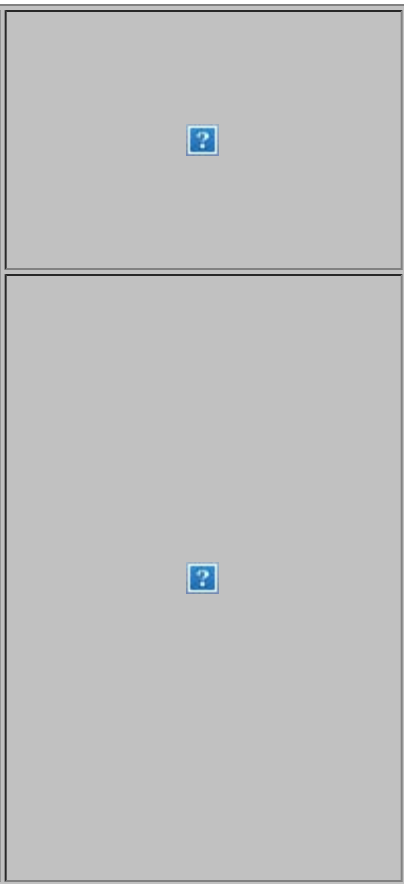
The contest is open to legal residents of California, 18 years of age or older. MTA employees are not eligible to participate in the contest.

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## Cornerstone Theater Wants You to Help with Script for Taper Forum Play

(March 30) Wannabe playwrights and actors: here's your opportunity to be involved in the development of an "epic, multi-lingual, musical" stage production at one of LA's leading live theaters.

The Cornerstone Theater Company of Los Angeles wants MTA employees to help by providing ideas that can be used to create a script for "For Here or to Go," scheduled for eight to 10 performances in December on the main stage at the Mark Taper Forum.

<p><b>SCENES FROM A BUS</b></p> <p>All the world's a stage, or, in this case, a Metro Bus, in these scenes from the 1997 Cornerstone Theater Company production of "Token, Alien" at MOCA.</p>		<p><b>Share your experiences</b></p> <p>An invitation sent to the MTA invites employees to "share with us your perspective and experiences of Los Angeles." Playwright Allison Carey, co-founder of Cornerstone, will conduct a focus group from 10 a.m. until noon, April 8, at the company's office at 708 Traction Ave. in downtown LA.</p> <p>"We want as many people from the MTA as possible to come – drivers, mechanics, dispatchers, office personnel," says Mark Valdez, Cornerstone assistant director. "We need their perspectives on the transit industry and on how they view the community, its sights and sounds."</p>
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Employees of the Los Angeles Library, U.S. Post Office and LAPD, also are invited to participate in the April 8 focus group. The theater will conduct 11 focus groups in preparation for script writing.

**Want 25 - 30 participants**

The sessions will gather ideas from some 14 communities, trades or professions Cornerstone has worked with on previous productions. Valdez is hoping for 25 to 30 participants at the April 8 meeting. For additional information, contact Tamar Fortgang, program coordinator, at 213-613-1700.

Once all focus groups have been conducted, Carey will draft a script for presentation in July during a workshop for focus group participants. She will use the feedback from the workshop audience to finalize the script.

Rehearsals for "For Here or to Go" will begin Oct. 5. As in previous Cornerstone productions, the cast will be a mix of professional and amateur actors. The first performance is scheduled Dec. 11 at the Mark Taper Forum.

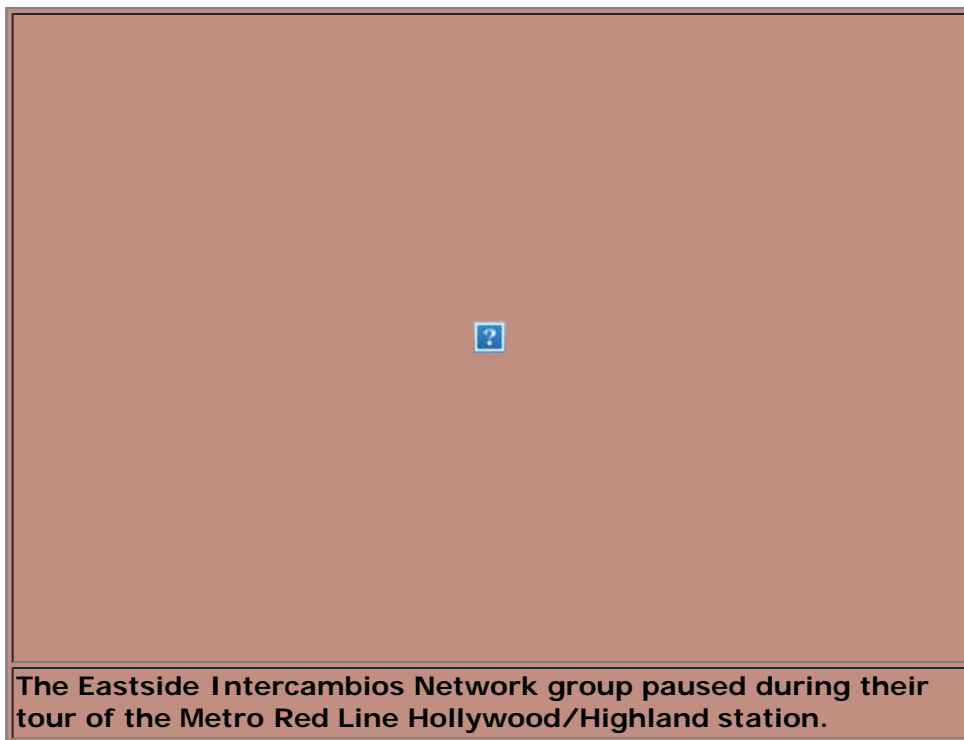
### **MTA employees, bus in 1997 play**

MTA employees acted in a series of Cornerstone dramas, called "bUS pLAY," in 1997 at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Ten employees - Rashaad Ali, Rick Coutts, Dan Denkins, Fred Fluker, Luther Fortinberry Irma Hill, Patrick Hilton, Richard Lopez, Gloria Mitchell and Leslie Jones - had roles as bus operators in the plays.

The agency also provided a Series 1800 coach, which was parked inside the museum and served as both stage and seating for the audiences.

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## **MTA Hosts Meeting, Tour for Eastside Intercambios Network**

By JOSE UBALDO

(March 31) The MTA hosted the bimonthly meeting, Thursday, of the Eastside Intercambios Network, an informal community-based network consisting of the Chamber of Commerce, government agencies, elected officials, police and non-profit health organizations.

The MTA's Planning Department presented results of the Eastside Transit Corridor study and discussed the MTA's community outreach efforts. Afterward, MTA public affairs officers led the group on a tour of the Metro Red Line system to Hollywood and Vine. The group also had a "sneak preview" of the Hollywood/Highland station.

### **Transportation for the Eastside**

At Thursday's meeting, some 40 participants shared their concerns and interest in the future of transportation for the Eastside community. Their questions were answered by RTP&D Director Diego Cardoso and Transportation Planning Manager Steven Brye.

The event was coordinated by State Sen. Richard Polanco's office in conjunction with Health Net, Building Up Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Police Department.

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