

Metro Report Archives

June Articles

BULLETIN BOARD

Volunteers Reserve Posts to help Coordinate Crown Opening

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Communities Must Create Safe Pedestrian Areas to Make Transit Systems Work, Group Told

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Transit Users' (June 2) Calling it a "milestone for transit users," Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke announced the MTA's 1,000th CNG bus during Friday morning ceremonies. And, with TV cameras rolling, the big white and gold coach burst through a huge banner to welcoming applause at the Arthur Winston Division.

Senate Subcommittee to Consider Funding for MTA Transit

Projects (June 2) A Senate subcommittee will meet in Washington early this month to begin deliberations on funding for federal transportation projects in FY 2001 – including funds for the MTA.

All Smiles during MTA Employee Day for the North Hollywood Segment

(June 5) Employees, their families and friends got a sneak preview of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood segment during an event Saturday, June 3, that combined a whistle-stop tour of the three new subway stations with the atmosphere of a neighborhood block party.

MTA's Haim Geffen Starts California AIDS Ride (June 5) Sunday, June 4, was a big day for the MTA's Haim Geffen. Along with some 2,500 others, the transportation planning manager mounted his bike and pedaled out of San Francisco for the start of a grueling seven-day, 560-mile ride to Century City.

SPECIAL MEETING UPDATE! Board Meeting to Discuss Labor, Award Contracts for Bus Services

(June 6) The MTA Board has scheduled a

special meeting for 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 7, to consider a short agenda that includes an update on labor negotiations and a motion to award contracts for bus services.

MTA, [NoHo Arts Festival](#) to Announce Entertainment Events for Subway Opening (June 6) TV star Beverly Garland, the honorary mayor of North Hollywood, will share the stage with MTA Construction Chief Charles Stark, Wednesday morning, to announce the entertainment lineup for the June 24-25 opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood segment.

[Shuttle Bus Service](#) from Hollywood/Vine to Link Subway with Hollywood Bowl (June 7) A new Hollywood Bowl shuttle bus funded and operated by the MTA will make its debut June 25 ¾ one day after the Metro Red Line begins servicing the San Fernando Valley.

MTA's Metro Rapid System Featured at [Sacramento Rally](#) (June 8) The MTA's fledgling Metro Rapid bus system was a major feature, recently, at a rally in Sacramento. The event was sponsored the California Transit Association to support Governor Gray Davis' transportation funding initiatives.

[Police Arrest](#) Metro Bus Operator as Suspect in Stolen Transfer Case (June 8) The LAPD's ongoing investigation of fare evasion resulted, Wednesday, in the arrest of two men - one of them a Metro Bus operator - on suspicion of selling stolen bus transfers.

[Groundbreaking Ceremonies](#) to Mark Start of LA-to-Pasadena Light-Rail Construction (June 8) A groundbreaking ceremony Friday morning in Chinatown will mark the beginning of construction of a 13.7-mile light-rail line that will run from LA's Union Station to Sierra Madre Villa in East Pasadena.

Marketing Posts [Metro Rapid Animated Feature](#) on Internet (June 8) MTA Marketing added an exciting animated feature to the agency's Internet web site, Thursday, that promotes the new Metro Rapid bus service scheduled to go into operation, June 24.

[Dual Ad Campaigns](#) Promote New Metro Rail and Metro Rapid Service (June 9) As the simultaneous launch of Metro Rapid and the Metro Red Line extension to North Hollywood approaches, the MTA is rolling out dual advertising campaigns to promote these important new transit services to the public. (June 9) As the simultaneous launch of Metro Rapid and the Metro Red Line extension to North Hollywood approaches, the MTA is rolling out dual advertising campaigns to promote these important new transit services to the public.

[2000 a Banner Year](#) for MTA Architectural Design, Art Awards (June 12) The Year 2000 has been a banner year in architectural awards for the MTA, thus far, as honors pour in from a variety of national and international design and art competitions. In the past five years, the agency has achieved a total of 14 such awards.

DEJÁ VU ALL OVER AGAIN [Pacific Electric 'Red Cars'](#) Will Return for 10th Anniversary of Metro Blue Line (June 13) Patrons of the Metro Blue Line have a surprise in store for them beginning July 14: many will take a step back in time and board what appears for all the world to be a Pacific Electric Red Car.



MTA's Haim Geffen Faced Challenges on San

Francisco- to-Century City AIDS Ride (June 14) On the third day of the 560-mile California AIDS Ride 7 the MTA's Haim Geffen - an experience biker and tri-athlete - faced his toughest challenge.

California AIDS Ride's Youngest is Son of Division 10

Employee (June 14) A junior at Whittier High School, the younger Ruedas raised a total of \$4,200 to qualify for the event. The Transportation Communications Union helped out with a \$500 donation and a biker friend

contributed \$1,200.

NO BONES ABOUT IT **Four-Legged Riders** **Have a Doggoned Good Time on Metro Rail** Saturday, June 10, was a nice dog day - or we should say a nice puppy day - when a dozen pooches from the South Bay Guide Dog Puppy Raisers boarded the Metro Rail System with their handlers as part of the group's annual training on public transportation.

'Ambassadors' Will Hit the Streets with Information about MTA

Service Changes (June 16) Some 40 MTA "ambassadors" will be dispatched, June 19, to bus stops along the Ventura Boulevard and Wilshire/Whittier transit corridors. For the next two weeks, they'll be primed with information about the June 24 opening of the North Hollywood subway extension and the start of Metro Rapid bus service.

Local Media Take a Metro Rapid Ride (June 16) The MTA took the media for a ride Wednesday. A Metro Rapid ride down Ventura Boulevard that illustrated how the agency's newest bus line will save passengers as much as 25 percent in travel time beginning June 24.

Rampaging Lakers Fans Vandalize 8 Metro Buses, No

Employees Hurt (June 20) Fans who turned a celebration of the Lakers' NBA championship victory into a destructive rampage, Monday night, severely damaged one Metro Bus and broke windows in seven others in the downtown area.

Crews Extending Metro Blue Line Platforms at 19 Stations (June 19) Construction work is under way to extend passenger platforms at the Metro Blue Line's Grand Avenue station and Washington station - the first of 19 that will be lengthened over the next 14 months to accommodate longer trains.

VIP Ceremony to Kick Off North Hollywood Opening Weekend

(June 22) Actress Vicki Lawrence and a host of VIP guests will kick off the opening weekend of Metro Red Line service to the San Fernando Valley, Friday morning, with a ceremony and inaugural train ride.

Metro Blue Line Adds Trains to Transport Fans to Lakers

Parade (June 21) With thousands of fans headed into downtown Los Angeles for the Lakers' NBA championship parade, Wednesday morning, MTA Rail Operations scheduled six extra Metro Blue Line trains with a total capacity of 3,000-plus riders. Following the parade, passengers disrupted service and vandals damaged two buses.

North Hollywood Extension to Link Riders to Growing List of

Major Tourist Attractions (June 21) The number of major Southland tourist attractions accessible by rapid rail is about to grow with the June 24 opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension.

North Hollywood Extension Opening Features Weekend Family

Festivities (June 22) The MTA will officially throw open the doors of the Metro Red Line's San Fernando Valley line on Saturday morning with family-oriented festivities at the North Hollywood and Universal City stations.

BOARD ACTION UPDATE: JUNE 22 Free Fares, Transit Corridor

Recommendation approved by MTA Board at June Meeting

(June 9) Automated public toilets, a free fare demonstration for disabled passengers and transit services for the Eastside, Mid-City and San Fernando Valley corridors are on Board committee agendas next Wednesday and Thursday.

CEO Burke Asks Gov. Davis for 'Cooling Off' Period to Prevent

Strike (June 22) CEO Julian Burke has asked Governor Gray Davis to invoke a "cooling off" period to prevent a strike by the United Transportation Union, the largest of the MTA's unions.

600 VIPs, Guests and Media Welcome Metro Red Line to San

Fernando Valley (June 23) More than 600 guests and perhaps 60 reporters and photographers turned out on a sunny Friday morning to welcome the Metro Red Line to the San Fernando Valley.

NoHo Opening Weekend Sets Record in Ridership as MTA

Chalks up Handful of Achievements (June 26) What a weekend! The North Hollywood segment opens with a record 500,000 boardings over two days of celebration that - for the first time - got Valley residents excited about the Metro Red Line.

Assembly Restores 3-Person Carpools on El Monte Busway

(June 27) The California assembly has passed a measure that will once again require three-person carpools on the El Monte Busway. And an Assembly committee approved a bill concerning transit zones.

Training Exercise in Chinatown Leads to Arrest of Pickpocket

(June 27) It was an LAPD training exercise that turned into the real thing. And resulted in the arrest of an alleged pickpocket in Chinatown.

Funds Budgeted, but Pay Raise on Temporary Hold during

Labor Talks (June 28) While assuring employees that the money is in the MTA budget for a pay hike in FY 2001, Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky says implementation of the raise is on hold during labor negotiations.

INTRODUCING: The 'Smart Bus' Web Page on MTA Intranet (June 28)

"Smart Bus" - a special project that is expected to deliver the next generation of transit buses to the MTA - debuts today on METRO.NET with its own Intranet web page.

MTA Board Approves 13 Contracts for Freeway Service Patrol Operators

(June 28) The MTA Board of Directors has approved 13 contracts totaling \$13.2 million which will be allocated to tow truck companies that are part of the MTA-funded Metro Freeway Service Patrol (FSP).

MTA to Provide 100 Buses for Democratic National Convention

(June 29) The MTA plans to provide 100 of the 275 buses that will be needed to transport more than 20,000 delegates and officials who will be coming to Los Angeles for the Democratic National Convention, Aug. 13-17. The buses will be chartered to the LA Convention and Visitors Bureau for \$500,000.

New Subway Segment Boosts [Ridership](#) 49% to 59% in 2 Days

(June 29) Figures from the Metro Red Line's first two days of operation following the opening of the North Hollywood segment show a 49 percent to 59 percent increase in ridership.

MTA Welcomes [Governor's Appointment](#) of Fact-Finding Board in Labor Negotiations

(June 30) Gov. Gray Davis moved late Thursday to appoint a fact-finding board to assess the state of labor negotiations between the MTA and its unions. The action is the first step in a process established by the state's Lockyer legislation, which includes provisions for a 60-day "cooling off" period.

[Zimmon Transfers](#) from MTA Assignment; Hansohn to Head

LAPD's Transit Group (June 30) After almost three years as head of the LAPD's Transit Group, Cmdr. Garret Zimmon is being transferred from his assignment at the MTA to head the police department's Detective Services Group. Assuming command of the Transit Group, July 5, will be Capt. Robert Hansohn, currently commanding officer of the Rampart Division.

BULLETIN BOARD:

Meet the [Division 9 Mule](#)

[MTA Appoints](#) Brenda L. Diederichs Chief Labor Relations Officer

[Trains:](#) A Kid's Hobby Turns into Career for MTA's Jess Díaz

Gary Spivack Named [Deputy Executive Officer](#), Transit Operations

[Division 15 Sponsors](#) Educational Fund for Granddaughter of MTA's Karl Downs

USE IT OR LOSE IT! Deadline Draws Near for Using [TOWP Hours](#)



Giddyup, Mule! -- Eddy Rivera and Dennis Alarcon ride the Division 9 mule – a tractor used to push buses around the yard. The mule is unique, not because it has no ears or tail, but because it has a special bumper designed by Alarcon and Rick Merrit, now retired. The mule's bumper has special metal cylinders that roll along the rear bumper of a bus while it's being pushed. The design prevents damage to the bus and is safer for mechanics driving the mule.

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PHOTOS BY JOHN
MAZZARELLA



Demolition above;
construction below.
John Mazzearella, Public
Affairs Officer, right,
with Construction
Manager Fred Smith.

Demolition of 101 Freeway Overpass Scheduled for Completion this Weekend

(June 1) Construction crews working on the Metro Red Line's Universal City station this weekend will complete the second phase of a project to demolish the Ventura Boulevard off-ramp of the 101 Freeway.

The first phase of the demolition, shown in accompanying photos, was completed May 20-21. The old overpass will be replaced by a quarter-mile, six-lane bridge that will connect Lankershim Boulevard with Ventura Boulevard. The new overpass is expected to open in March, 2001.

Construction of the overpass is part of a \$27.9 million project to build parking lots and a bus plaza and a kiss-'n-ride lot for the Universal City station.

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Communities Must Create Safe Pedestrian Areas to Make Transit Systems Work, Group Told



From left: Bob Cashin, deputy executive officer, Countywide Planning; MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, and Diego Cardoso, Countywide Planning director, address the MTA Pedestrian Symposium. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD.

(June 1) Communities must recognize that the people who use mass transit systems must be able to walk safely en route to their destinations. That was the message Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke had today for those attending a pedestrian symposium at MTA Headquarters.

"Pedestrian deaths in Los Angeles were the highest in California," Burke said, noting that some 1,100 children have been killed in recent years. She said the MTA has taken the lead in improving walking areas by providing funding for projects in Los Angeles, Santa Monica and Long Beach.

Quality of life improved

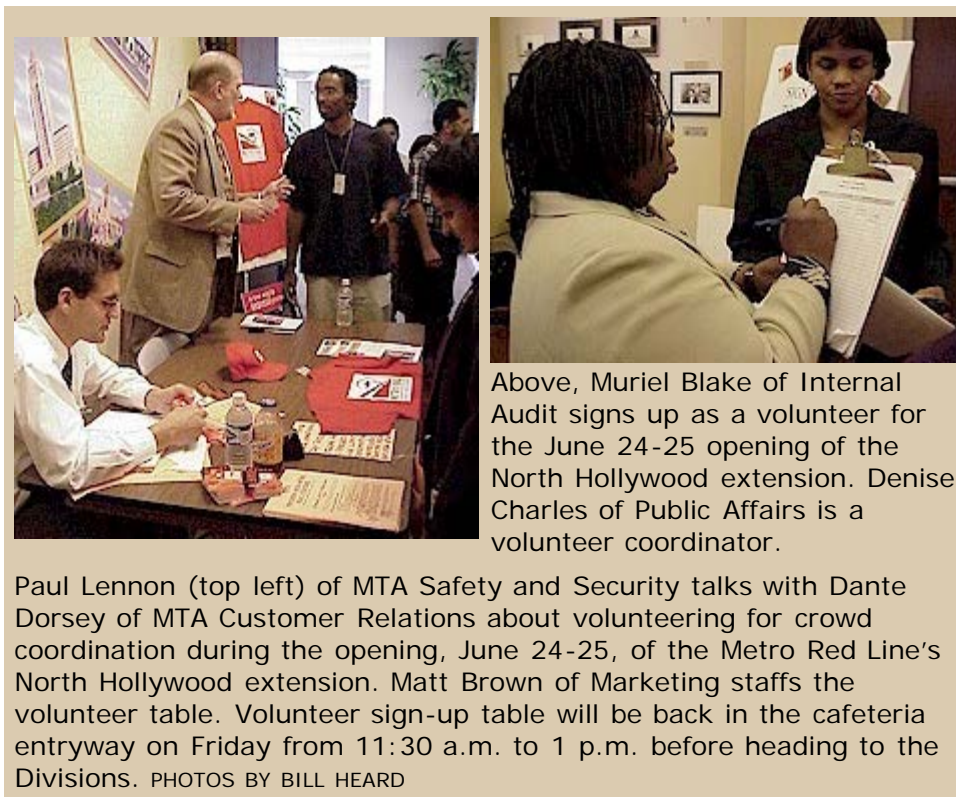
Crime is lower when cities provide safe areas where people can walk and quality of life is improved, she said, adding, "We must look at the pedestrian as a forum for our planning."

Almost 100 representatives of various city and county agencies and community organizations participated in the symposium. Speakers included local transportation officials and the author of a book on walking.

Robin Blair, an MTA transportation planning manager whose responsibility includes pedestrian and urban design, presented a draft of the pedestrian elements of the agency's Long-Range Transportation Plan and led a discussion of the plan.

The MTA provides some \$12 million annually for pedestrian and bikeway projects, according to Blair. He said bus and rail transportation cannot work properly without a strong pedestrian element. "There's a limit to how far people will walk in a miserable environment," he said.

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Above, Muriel Blake of Internal Audit signs up as a volunteer for the June 24-25 opening of the North Hollywood extension. Denise Charles of Public Affairs is a volunteer coordinator.

Paul Lennon (top left) of MTA Safety and Security talks with Dante Dorsey of MTA Customer Relations about volunteering for crowd coordination during the opening, June 24-25, of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension. Matt Brown of Marketing staffs the volunteer table. Volunteer sign-up table will be back in the cafeteria entryway on Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. before heading to the Divisions. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

VOLUNTEERS SIGN UP FOR OPENING WEEKEND

- **Only 100 volunteer posts to help coordinate opening weekend left.**

(June 1) In addition to a first-run official t-shirt, hat, pin and assorted collectibles in a goody bag, employees working one of the 300 staff positions to help usher in the Metro Red Line to North Hollywood and Metro Rapid Bus on June 24 and 25 get to be part of history.

Employees are needed to manage critical traffic stations in the areas of crowd control, safe-boarding for patrons, including access for patrons with disabilities, and bus-rail interface.

Public Affairs Acting Manager Lynda Bybee suggests that employees may want to reserve one of the 300 volunteer stations as soon as possible. "We have only 100 positions left so participation will be on a first-come, first-serve basis."

Event coordinators and station managers will provide details for participation. To make your commitment now, contact Lynda Bybee by e-mail or leave a message with Denise Charles at 922-7408.

Indeed, the Grand Opening weekend on June 24 and 25 is history in the making. The opening of the a new 6.3 mile extension of the Metro Red Line subway from Hollywood to Universal City and North Hollywood will be the capstone of a rail rapid transit system crisscrossing Los Angeles County.

Opening weekend events will celebrate Metro Rapid Bus service and the three new stations at Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and Lankershim/Chandler in North Hollywood.

Pick your venue now:

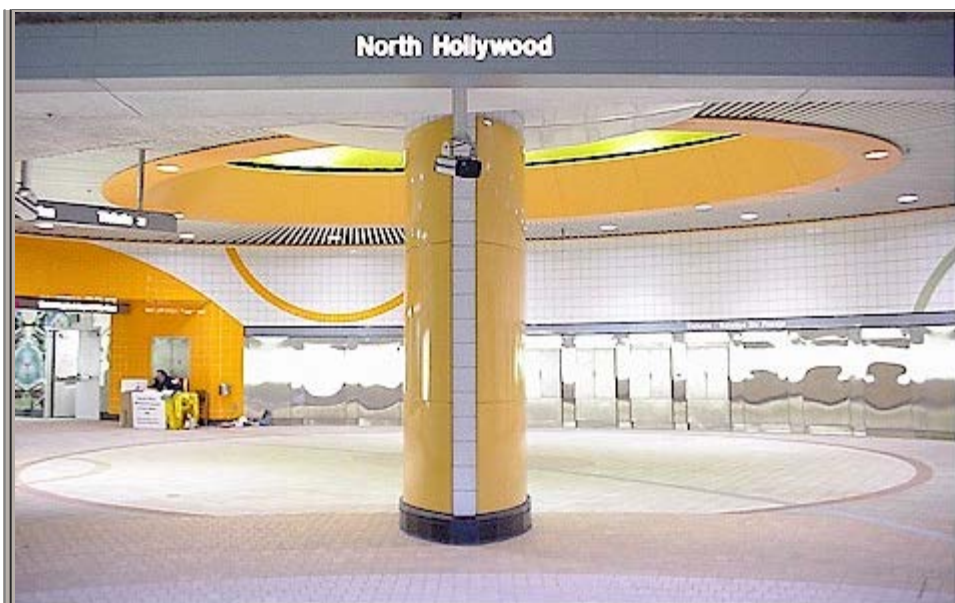


In the heart of Hollywood's historic district, Hollywood Boulevard will be closed for a Saturday session with the hot new jazz club, the Knitting Factory, at the **Hollywood Highland Station**.

PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON



At the Universal City Station, appetizing samples of thrills and fun will abound courtesy of one of the world's most popular theme parks, the Universal Studios Tour and City Walk.



Surrounding the North Hollywood Station, the NoHo Arts Festival will celebrate the culture of the Los Angeles region as well as providing the inside scoop on TV production with spectacular interactive displays provided by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

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(Photos: JOSE UBALDO)

Rollout of MTA's 1,000th CNG Bus Called a 'Milestone for Transit Users'

(June 2) Calling it a "milestone for transit users," Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke announced the MTA's 1,000th CNG bus during Friday morning ceremonies. And, with TV cameras rolling, the big white and gold coach burst through a huge banner to welcoming applause at the Arthur Winston Division.



"Within four years, the MTA will have one of the youngest bus fleets in the country," Burke, a Los Angeles County supervisor, said. "Our average bus will be under five years old."

She said more than 500 new buses will arrive this fiscal year. Between today and 2004, the MTA will accept delivery of a total of 1,400 new buses.

First-class bus system

"Add it all up and it means better service and the emergence of a first-class bus system we all can be proud of," Burke



said.

Division 5 Manager Dana Coffey noted that the division serves some 7 million customers annually with a fleet of 228 buses, 475 operators, 79 mechanics and 40 service attendants.

She reminded the audience that the division has served the community for 89 years – not much longer than division namesake 93-year-old Arthur Winston, employed by the MTA for 70 years, has been working.

Winston, a service attendant leadman, was aboard the 1,000th bus as it rolled into the yard. He was greeted at the podium by Supervisor Burke and joined her for a tour of the division.

Customers are pleased Operator/Mentor William Brinson told the crowd that customers have said "...it is about time that we have new buses and that they are clean,

operating properly and have air conditioning."

"This type of bus improvement has created a positive climate for operators and customers of the diverse communities we serve," Brinson said.

On hand for the event were Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky, Chief Financial Officer Dick Brumbaugh, Transportation Chief Tom Conner with

his Bus Operations Deputy Dan Ibarra and Bus Maintenance Deputy Richard Hunt, Human Resources Executive Officer Ray Inge, Randy and Kimberly Horton of the MTA's Access Advisory Committee and Bishop George Reid of the MTA's Passenger Advisory Committee.

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MTA Selects Naval Supply Officer to Head Procurement, Labor, Contract Compliance



(June 2, 2000) The MTA has selected Capt. Lonnie Mitchell, Jr., a U.S. Navy Supply Corps officer, as the new executive officer for Procurement, Labor and Contract Compliance.

Mitchell will replace Gwendolyn W. Williams, who was named acting executive officer in September, 1999. He plans to retire from the Navy, June 30, and will join the MTA in July. Williams told *MTA Report* she will remain with the MTA until at least September to effect the leadership transition.

Mitchell, 53, currently is vice commander of the Navy Exchange Service Command in Virginia Beach, Va. He is responsible for oversight of information systems, financial operations, contracting, human resources, training and planning for 113 retail complexes with \$1.7 billion in annual sales, 194 ships stores and 40 Navy Lodges.

Responsible for retail outlets

In previous assignments, Mitchell was responsible for the operation and performance of 35 Navy retail outlets with annual sales of \$340 million in 11 states and Iceland. In the mid-1990s, he managed an 1,800-member organization that purchased and distributed materials to Navy commands worldwide.

While stationed in Brussels, Belgium, from 1991 to 1994, Mitchell managed all Department of Defense and NASA contracts for a region that covered the Netherlands and Scandinavia.

Other assignments have included the Naval Air Systems Command where, as business financial manager, he was responsible for purchasing aircrew flight simulators. He also worked in the Office of the Naval Inspector General and had tours of duty aboard four warships.

Washington State graduate

Mitchell is a 1969 graduate of Washington State University, where he earned a BA in economics. He earned a Masters in acquisition management at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. His personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal and Navy Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars.

He and his wife, Mary Alice, a homemaker, have two daughters: Lacy, 21, a senior at the University of Virginia, and Allison, 17, a graduating high school senior.

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Senate Subcommittee to Consider Funding for MTA Transit Projects



(June 2) A Senate subcommittee will meet in Washington early this month to begin deliberations on funding for federal transportation projects in FY 2001 – including funds for the MTA.

The MTA is seeking \$136.1 million to fund a variety of projects that include the North Hollywood subway extension, bus purchases and transportation studies for the Eastside and Mid-City transit corridors.

Funds for subway, buses

Last month, the House voted to earmark almost \$64 million for MTA funding. That includes \$50 million to complete the Metro Red Line, \$9 million for new buses and \$4 million for the transit corridor studies. Another \$3.5 million could be provided for the "welfare to work" transportation program.

The Appropriations Subcommittee of the Senate's Transportation Committee is considering its own, separate version of the federal transportation bill. Full committee action is expected within days of the subcommittee's recommendation, with the bill going to the Senate floor shortly afterward.

The House and Senate versions of the transportation bill are expected to be referred to a joint conference committee in June. Congress plans to recess for the July 4th holiday and also for the national political conventions later in the summer and action on the transportation bill is being given priority by both houses.

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Grueling 560-Mile Trek



MTA's Haim Geffen Starts California AIDS Ride June 7

(June 5) Sunday, June 4, was a big day for the MTA's Haim Geffen. Along with some 2,500 others, the transportation planning manager mounted his bike and pedaled out of San Francisco for the start of a grueling seven-day, 560-mile ride to Century City.

A challenge for a 53-year-old man, sure. But, participation in California AIDS Ride 7 is worth it for Geffen, who has raised more than \$2,800 to support the Jeffery Goodman Special Care Clinic at the Gay & Lesbian Center of Los Angeles.

MTA REPORT (Feb. 17)
Raising Money for Research
[MTA's Geffen is Training Intensively for 560-Mile California AIDS Ride in June](#)

In a special letter to MTA Report, Geffen described a training day in the San Fernando Valley, his feelings about the race and those who supported his effort:

By **HAIM GEFFEN**

Warm weather and a challenging 75-mile route that began in Balboa Park in the San Fernando Valley made for a spectacular but demanding day of training.

We started early (although not as early as an actual day on the AIDS Ride) and many riders found that by pacing themselves and by stopping to stretch, drink, and eat, they were able to cycle further than they had ever had before.

Tired but confident

At the end I was tired but more confident that I could complete at least one day on the ride. At the same time I was also thinking about the effort it would take to complete seven days in a row. I learned that the key would be pacing myself and staying hydrated.

If you have ever trained for a big event, you may agree with me that training time never appears to be sufficient. However, some training partners who participated in the ride in previous years have told me that I am ready.

The donations to the cause of AIDS treatment and research are put into action right away and are already making a difference. I was impressed and touched by the financial support and encouragement I received from the MTA community.

Thanks to caring people

I want to thank the supporters who know me, and in particular, those who do not know me personally but who still reached out to help. You all responded and made a difference. The goal for this ride is to reach a cumulative total of at least \$6 million and it appears that it is well underway, thanks to caring people....

The months, weeks, and days of training have brought me to the threshold, and soon the actual Ride will begin. The training has fortified my body, and the support and encouragement of family and friends within the MTA and outside fortified my spirits.

Eleanor Roosevelt said, "You cannot do the thing you think you cannot do". Well, it is time for me to go out and do it. I am ready. I will tell

you the stories when I come back.

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All Smiles for the North Hollywood Segment during MTA Employee Day



Ready for action at North Hollywood station were LAPD Officer Mike Dickson, Sgt. Song Suh, Officer Marco Morales, Officer Matt Valencia, Officer John Downey and Officer Lonnie Benson.



Dennis Mori, North Hollywood Extension project manager, attended Employee Day with his wife Sally, son Brian, and daughter Lauren.



Joe Simpson of Marketing staffed the guest sign-in table.

[Click on image to view full frame.](#)



Edith Youngblood of Marketing snaps a shot of Bumble the Clown with two young guests.



Ready for the big day were Tom Conner (second left) and his wife, Carol; and Duane Martin (right), his wife, Colleen and daughter, Chastity.



Rail Operations Chief Ralph de la Cruz talks with Rail Operator Ramon Peniche.



Barbara Trigg of Human Resources talks with Moloi Averetta of Yard Control while Manuel Solis of Steiny Electric uses the phone.



Jeanne Kinsel, center, brought her friends Diane Piekarsky of Palm Springs and Bonnie Hoffman of West Los Angeles to Employee Day.



Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky had opening remarks for the Employee Day audience.

[Click on image to view full frame.](#)



Jess Diaz, rail transportation supervisor, briefs visitors on Segment 3 startup procedures.



George Nickle of Human Resources and a friend were among hundreds who visited the souvenir tables.



Robert Kang of the Regional Rebuild Center provided balloons for the kids.



Tami Moore, daughter of Bill Moore of Quality Management, gets instructions on string tying from Bumble the Clown.



A 1960 photo of Diane Nathanson is featured in a mural at the North Hollywood station.

PHOTOS BY
BILL HEARD

(June 5) Employees, their families and friends got a sneak preview of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood segment during an event Saturday, June 3, that combined a whistle-stop tour of the three new subway stations with the atmosphere of a neighborhood block party.

And the occasion had everything: music, speeches, gifts, a clown, balloons, giant decorated cakes. And lots of smiles. At least one on the face of each of the more than 2,000 people who attended the celebration at the North Hollywood station.

"I've never seen so many smiling faces at one time," said Dennis Mori, Segment 3 project manager, who brought his family to see what he's been doing for the past several years. "It's very rewarding to know that everybody has worked so hard toward this opening."

Real feeling of satisfaction

His boss, Charles Stark, executive officer, Construction and Engineering, echoed Mori's thoughts. "A day like today gives everybody a real feeling of satisfaction."

Stark said the project, both below ground and at the surface, will be ready for the June 24-25 opening. "A little paving, a little concrete, plant a few trees and we're done."

Meantime, said Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations, his crews are "exercising all our vehicles, shaking down the equipment."

"Operators have told me, 'We'll finally have a real system that connects so much of Los Angeles County,'" de la Cruz said. "They're rail buffs as well as rail professionals and they're very proud of the system."

Barbara Service, a rail operations supervisor with 29 years of MTA service, is on her third Metro Red Line startup. She's involved with train testing and coordinates with contractors, the LAPD and LA Fire Department to ready the system for operation.

Pretty much problem-free

"This one has been a lot easier than the other startups I've worked on," said Service, who plans to retire soon. "Probably because we learned a lot from the earlier two. This one has been pretty much problem-free."

Jeanne Kinsel, director of Contract Administration, has worked with Metro Red Line construction for 10 years, beginning with Segment 1. Originally brought in to work on contractor claims, she's now involved in retaining consultants to perform studies for the Eastside, Mid-City and San Fernando Valley transportation corridors.

"I think about all the stages the Metro Red Line project has been through and how many times I've been out here wearing a hard hat and boots," she said. "To see it today; it's nice to know we're leaving it for generations to come."

Victor Granillo, a former bus operator and a Metro Red Line operator for the past year, is one of the rail operators that will make the system run day after day. He's pleased that the subway now reaches into the Valley.

"I love it this way. I can't imagine what it was like for the operators when the line was really short," Granillo said.

Going 55 seems slow

What's it like booming through the Santa Monica Mountains tunnel at 70 mph? "Now that I've been operating it for about a month or so, it's normal," he said. "When I go back into the other segments and drop down to 55, it seems slow."

Mike McDonald, 63, a railroad buff who grew up in North Hollywood, remembers when the Pacific Electric Red Cars connected the Valley with downtown Los Angeles.

"You could get on at the North Hollywood station, go down Vineland and Magnolia, then down the middle of the freeway to Highland Avenue, then southbound to Santa Monica Boulevard, then to Sunset, make a right turn on Park and into the subway terminal," he recalled. "It took 45 minutes to an hour."

McDonald is nostalgic, but he doesn't miss the old, slow Red Cars. Looking around at the spanking new North Hollywood station, he said, "The Red Cars were good for their day, but this is going to be great. I think once people find out just how good it is, they'll want it to be expanded."

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Stunt man and skydiver Ted Barba warms up for Metro Rail opening with Betty Service, right, and Cora Hooks at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

Click logo to link to official web pages



MTA, NoHo Arts Festival to Announce Entertainment Events for Subway Opening

(June 6) TV star Beverly Garland, the honorary mayor of North Hollywood, will share the stage with MTA Construction Chief Charles Stark, Wednesday morning, to announce the entertainment lineup for the June 24-25 opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood segment.

The subway's opening weekend will be held in conjunction with NoHo International Theatre & Arts Festival 2000. Local media have been invited to Wednesday's announcement, which will include a subway ride to the new Hollywood/Highland station.

Music, theater and cuisine
Entertainment slated for the subway opening weekend includes music, dance, theater, arts,

culture and cuisine from around the world. Visitors can see the "Theatre of the enchanted Forest" at Kid's Court, the "Magic of Television" display in the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Hall of Fame Plaza and stunt-performing skydivers.

Joining Garland and Stark will be Festival chairman Joe Hooven, Dr. Earl Sherburn of the city's Cultural Affairs Department and Mimi Gramatky of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Board of Governors.

Highlighting the media event, Wednesday, will be the first performance of the official NoHo Festival song to be sung in Spanish and English. A 10-year-old magician - El Magnifico - also will perform during the event, with his two six-year-old assistants.

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Board Meeting to Discuss Labor, Award Contracts for Bus Services

(UPDATE: June 7) Lacking a quorum at Wednesday's meeting, the Board has postponed until June 22 any action on the motion to award contracts for bus services.

(June 6) The MTA Board has scheduled a special meeting for 10 a.m., Wednesday, June 7, to consider a short agenda that includes an update on labor negotiations and a motion to award contracts for bus services.

Agenda items include a conference concerning negotiations with the UTU, representing bus and rail operators; the ATU, representing maintenance employees; and the TCU, representing clerical employees.

The MTA recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the AFSCME, which represents operations supervisory personnel and others.

Contract awards appealed

Also on the agenda is a motion that would authorize CEO Julian Burke to award contracts for bus services to First Transit, Inc., and Coach USA. Laidlaw Transit Services protested the awards, but the protest was denied in April for lack of merit. The CEO also denied the company's appeal. Laidlaw has now appealed the contract award to the Federal Transit Administration.

During the meeting, the Board also is scheduled to receive an update of Phase 1 of the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

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Shuttle Bus Service from Hollywood/Vine to Link Subway with Hollywood Bowl

By GARY WOSK

[\(June 7\)](#) A new Hollywood Bowl shuttle bus funded and operated by the MTA will make its debut June 25 ³/₄ one day after the Metro Red Line begins servicing the San Fernando Valley.

The demonstration project will operate throughout the Hollywood Bowl season from the Hollywood/Vine station. It's purpose is to provide patrons with quicker access to the Bowl and to reduce traffic congestion in the area of the outdoor theater.

Concert-goers can board the shuttle for free with proof of round-trip cash fare on the Metro Red Line, Metro Blue Line or Metro Green Line.

Service until 12:05 a.m.

The shuttle buses will begin carrying passengers to the Hollywood Bowl three hours before scheduled performances. The last bus to the Hollywood Bowl will leave 30 minutes before show-time. Return trips will start 20 minutes after the show and continue until the last train leaves Hollywood/Vine at 12:05 a.m.

The Hollywood/Vine Metro Red Line station was chosen as the site for the shuttle because, even though the new Hollywood/Highland Metro Red Line station is closer to the Hollywood Bowl, the area experiences greater traffic congestion, making the trip longer. The route of the shuttle will include a short southbound trip on the Hollywood Freeway.

If enough people take advantage of the shuttle the MTA will consider making the service permanent.

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(June 8) MTA Marketing added an exciting animated feature to the agency's Internet web site, Thursday, that promotes the new Metro Rapid bus service scheduled to go into operation, June 24.

The animated feature shows a Metro Rapid bus "in action" and displays the advertising campaign theme of "new, faster service, same fare." It includes access to a map detailing Metro Rapid stops along the Ventura Boulevard and Wilshire/Whittier corridors.

The animation can be accessed at this address:

http://www.mta.net/corporate/depts/marketing/rapid_bus/metro_rapidf.htm. The site also provides access to a Flash software "plug-in" that can be installed if your computer won't play the animation.

NoHo brochure posted

Marketing also has posted the Metro Red Line North Hollywood extension brochure, which includes the system map in gif or pdf formats. The main page features the rail extension logo which alternates with views of the three new subway stations.

The brochure can be accessed at this address:

<http://www.mta.net/metro/construction/northhollywood/default.htm>.

Elizabeth McGowan, a Marketing senior communications officer, managed the project. Computer graphics were designed by Joe Simpson, senior communications officer and Internet webmaster, and Communications Officer Jessica Ho.

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MTA's Metro Rapid System Featured at Sacramento Rally

(June 8) The MTA's fledgling Metro Rapid bus system was a major feature, recently, at a rally in Sacramento. The event was sponsored the California Transit Association to support Governor Gray Davis' transportation funding initiatives.

George Karbowski, equipment engineering supervisor, and Mechanic John Mirabal drove the bright red and white bus to the state capitol for the rally.

The purpose: to urge state legislators to be more aware of the needs of public transit riders and operators in California.

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**Police Arrest Metro Bus Operator
as Suspect in Stolen Transfer Case**

(June 8) The LAPD's ongoing investigation of fare evasion resulted, Wednesday, in the arrest of two men - one of them a Metro Bus operator - on suspicion of selling stolen bus transfers.

A team of officers arrested Operator Guillermo Munoz, 55, of Canoga Park, a 19-year MTA veteran, when he stopped his bus at the intersection of Olympic and Hill.

LAPD Det. Tim Gipson said the officers recovered seven books of transfers when they arrested Munoz. The team also arrested a suspect who gave his name as Luis Hernandez Rodrigues, 30, of Los Angeles.

Booked for embezzlement

Police booked Munoz Wednesday afternoon for embezzlement, a violation of Section 504 of the state penal code. Rodriguez was booked for receiving stolen property, a violation of Section 496(A)e. Both men were being held at Parker Center.

[See May 2 story:](#) **LAPD Investigation of Transfer Theft.**

It was the second time since late April that the team has arrested suspects alleged to be involved with selling stolen transfers. On April 20, officers arrested Laura Santos, 36, who already was on probation for a similar offense. Police do not link the Santos case with the Wednesday's arrests.

Participating in the investigation were LAPD officers Jose Martinez, Andy Woods and Joe Hopkins, under the supervision of Det. Douglas Raymond. Roy Romero of the MTA's Office of Systems Safety and Security assisted in the investigation.

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Groundbreaking Ceremonies to Mark Start of LA-to-Pasadena Light-Rail Construction



Link here for full project description: www.la-pasblueline.org/

(June 8) A groundbreaking ceremony Friday morning in Chinatown will mark the beginning of construction of a 13.7-mile light-rail line that will run from LA's Union Station to Sierra Madre Villa in East Pasadena.

The groundbreaking, scheduled from 9:30 until 11 a.m. at the intersection of Alameda and College streets, will kick-off the first leg of the route -- construction of a \$21 million elevated structure that will run approximately one mile from Union Station to just beyond Chinatown.

The groundbreaking will be held below the future site of the Chinatown Station, which will stand some 33 feet above street level.

Local officials to attend

Los Angeles City Council Member Mike Hernandez, who also serves as Chair of the Pasadena Metro Blue Line Construction Authority Board of Directors, will be joined by Mayor Richard Riordan, County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard and other Pasadena-area officials.

Others scheduled to attend are State Sen. Adam Schiff, whose sponsorship of SB 1847 allowed the project to go forward; State Sen. Richard Polanco; Assemblyman Antonio Villaraigosa; and State Secretary of Business Transportation and Housing Maria Contreras-Sweet.

Also present will be Roelof Van Ark, CEO of Siemens Transportation Systems, whose firm will build the state-of-the-art light-rail vehicles under contract to the MTA. The new Siemens rail car will be on display at the groundbreaking.

Passenger service in mid-2003

The first phase of the Pasadena Blue Line will stop in Lincoln Heights,

Highland Park, South Pasadena and Pasadena, in addition to Chinatown. The line is scheduled to begin carrying passengers between Los Angeles and Pasadena in July 2003. Phase two of the project is planned to continue on to Claremont.

Thirteen new stations will be constructed along the initial route, six in Los Angeles, including the Chinatown stop, one station in South Pasadena and six stations in Pasadena.

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Dual Ad Campaigns Promote New Metro Rail and Metro Rapid Service

(June 9) As the simultaneous launch of Metro Rapid and the Metro Red Line extension to North Hollywood approaches, the MTA is rolling out dual advertising campaigns to promote these important new transit services to the public.

"Coupled with all the preview events and positive media attention that Metro Rapid and Metro Rail are getting, we think this advertising will help ensure that our customers are well aware of these new services and are eager to use them," said Warren Morse, deputy executive officer, Marketing and Customer Relations.

The first stage of promotion for Metro Rail's three new stations appeared in early April, when ads on the sides of 600 buses and posters inside all Metro Red Line cars began touting the extended service as "A New Way to Express Yourself."



Offering free rides

Now, brochures are being distributed on all Metro Buses and Metro Rail trains detailing the attractions of the grand opening weekend and inviting customers to "Come Ride Free."

That effort will be supported by a final blitz of grand opening advertising in 21 newspapers during the week of June 19, plus a similar flyer in four languages that will be delivered, June 20, to some 400,000 households along the rail corridors.

Meanwhile, Metro Rapid is being introduced with one of the most extensive advertising campaigns MTA has ever developed for new bus service. Giant billboards featuring a fast-moving Metro Rapid bus seemingly jumping off the billboard will appear in seven strategic locations on or near the Wilshire-Whittier and Ventura routes.

Brochures and maps

The billboards proclaim Metro Rapid's key selling points: "New, Faster Service...Same Fare!" Other highlights of the campaign include brochures with a similar look that will be distributed on Metro Buses and Metro Rail trains starting the week of June 12.

The brochures describe the service and feature a distinctive map of the two lines, clearly showing how they connect with Metro Rail. Matching newspaper ads and posters inside Metro Red Line cars also are being used, along with a flyer that will be delivered, June 13, to approximately 300,000 households near the two routes.

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Four-Legged Riders Have a a Doggoned Good Time on Metro Rail

Story and [Photos](#)
by JOSÉ UBALDO

Saturday, June 10, was a nice dog day - or we should say a nice puppy day - when a dozen pooches from the South Bay Guide Dog Puppy Raisers boarded the Metro Rail System with their handlers as part of the group's annual training on public transportation.

The trip, which was very instructive for puppies who - as mature dogs - one day will serve as eyes for the blind, began at the Long Beach Metro Blue Line Transit Mall and ended at Union Station.

The puppies and their handlers met other members of the South Bay Guide Dog Raisers at Olvera Street where they held a demonstration and had a grrreat lunch before riding Metro Rails back home.

This was the Fifth Annual Puppy Walk, but for some it was the first time using public transportation. Bob Johnson, a Metro Blue Line supervisor, led the group and helped to coordinate the adventure with Daphne Easton, project leader for the Puppy Raisers.



**Click image
to view.**
Photos by
José Ubaldo



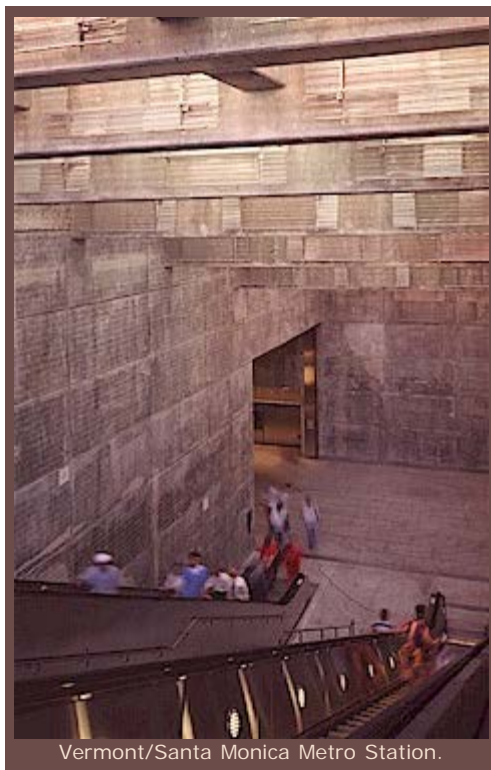
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2000

...a Banner Year for MTA Architectural Design, Art Awards

(June 12) The Year 2000 has been a banner year in architectural awards for the MTA, thus far, as honors pour in from a variety of national and international design and art competitions. In the past five years, the agency has achieved a total of 14 such awards.

To date in 2000, the Metro Red Line's Vermont/Santa Monica station has received four awards, the 101 Freeway pedestrian bridge design has been cited and the MTA's Metro Art program has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Transportation.



Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Station.

The Vermont/Santa Monica station - designed by artist Robert Millar and architect Mehrdad Yazdani - was awarded the DOT's Merit Award for Design Excellence, the Los Angeles Business Council's Urban Beautification Award and the Portland Cement Association's "Concrete in Transit Award." The criteria for these awards emphasize the winner's design standards, creativity and contributions to the area.

Exhibitions in Greece, Italy

The Chicago Athenaeum's American Architecture Award, presented to the Vermont/Santa Monica station by the nation's only museum of architecture and design, honors new architecture by U.S. firms. The project design will be exhibited in Chicago and will then travel to museums in Greece and Italy.

The MTA's 10-year-old Metro Art program received the DOT Merit Award for Design Excellence. The highly competitive national honor is awarded every five years to agencies that "develop, foster or sustain design excellence...and have made an outstanding contribution to the nation's transportation systems and the people they serve."

The design for the 101 Freeway pedestrian bridge by architect Thom Mayne of Morphosis and Jenny Holzer received the Progressive Architecture Award Citation. The annual international award "honors design excellence in unbuilt work" that "pushes the limits of invention and originality." The project also is featured in LA's Museum of Contemporary Art exhibition "At the End of the Century: 100 Years of Architecture."

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Dejá Vu



All Over Again



The "Red Car" team: from left, Mitch Trivanovich of Sumitomo and the MTA's Bob Ogus, Brian Montalbano, Lee Hetherington and Larry Mosqueda. **photos by rick jager**

Pacific Electric 'Red Cars' Will Return for 10th Anniversary of Metro Blue Line

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(June 13) Patrons of the Metro Blue Line have a surprise in store for them beginning July 14: many will take a step back in time and board what appears for all the world to be a Pacific Electric Red Car.

Dejá vu? No, just a very clever disguise created by an enthusiastic and dedicated crew at Division 11 that has converted two Sumitomo P-865 light rail cars to look very much like the historic trolleys. The cars will be introduced to the public next month during the celebration of the re-introduction of intercity rail service in Los Angeles County.

"There's a lot of nostalgia associated with the Red Cars and we wanted to commemorate that history," says Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner. "This is a 'Thank You' to the people along the corridor who have made the Metro Blue Line such a success and have supported it with

their patronage."

For use in regular service

The new "Red Cars" will be used frequently in regular service, but also will be displayed at special events starting with the anniversary celebration.

Earlier this year, with the Metro Blue Line cars due for repainting, the Division 11 crew designated cars No. 109 and 148 to be refitted

as Red Cars. The red coat of paint was applied by Sumitomo as part of an agreement to repaint the entire fleet of cars. But MTA employees were responsible for the exterior detail work and interior fittings.

Division 11 employees involved in the project included Michael Enis, service attendant; Lee Hetherington, paint and body specialist; Russell Homan, rail instructor; Brian Montalbano, paint and body specialist; Larry Mosqueda, supervisor; and Bob Ogus, division maintenance manager.

Providing assistance and historical information was John Heller, an architect who designed the paint and decal scheme for the revamped cars. Heller is a member of the Electric Railway Historical Association, which was closely involved in the project.

Symbol of the heritage of rail

"The maintenance crew translated this 'Thank You' to our patrons into a tangible symbol of the heritage of rail in our community and of the service we provide to the public," says Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. "They did a great job, and that's reflected in the quality of the work they did on these Red Cars."

The exterior of the two cars will bear the gold "butterfly wings" and center headlamp of a 1940-style Red Car. On the sides above the windows in gold letters will be the words "Pacific Electric."

The most challenging part of the historical design, according to Ogus, the Division 11 maintenance manager, was making a replica of the 1914 Pacific Electric whistle with its famous E-flat tone - a sound so admired by railroad buffs that it was licensed to Westinghouse for use on trains nationwide.

Whistle matches the tone

"The slightest detail was very important," says Ogus, who notes that the first attempt to replicate the whistle out of stainless steel was a dismal failure - it just didn't have the right tone. "So, we made one of brass cut almost like the pipe of a pipe organ, then rolled it in mud to artificially age it. Now, the whistle matches the sound on old recordings of the Red Cars."

The interiors of the two converted cars also will have a strikingly different appearance. Walls will have a light mint green wainscot with cream above. Seats were changed from light blue to forest green. The Historical Association will provide a set of 24 special posters that will include modern safety information along with

photos and facts about the Red Cars.

And, finally, to maintain the historical perspective, the MTA will issue a series of six special Metro Blue Line timetables designed with covers similar to those on timetables used by Pacific Electric. The redesigned timetables will be rotated in use throughout the year.

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Whittier Daily News staff photographer Josh Estey's photo of Mario Ruedas, Jr., training for the AIDS Ride appeared with a front page story on May 16.

California AIDS Ride's Youngest Is Son of Division 10 Employee

(June 14) The youngest Los Angeles-area biker to challenge the California AIDS Ride 7 was Mario Ruedas, Jr., the 17-year-old son of MTA Division 10 employee Mario Ruedas.

A junior at Whittier High School, the younger Ruedas raised a total of \$4,200 to qualify for the event. The Transportation Communications Union helped out with a \$500 donation and a biker friend contributed \$1,200.

Made him a man

"Mario had a really good ride and finished in the middle of the riders," says a proud Mario, Sr. "It was tougher than he thought it would be and I think it changed him. It made him a man."

[MORE](#) on
MTA Riders

At school, Mario, Jr., is involved in music, playing the drums, piano, guitar and bass. Last summer, he received a scholarship to participate in a camp sponsored by a musical organization at the University of California, Berkeley.

Mario, Sr., is a 14-year MTA veteran. He and his wife, Cynthia, have two children, Mario, Jr., and a daughter, Cynthia, 19.

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"When I was feeling tired or down, it didn't last long. As I was passing Dave, a legless rider who completed the ride by pedaling with his hands, it put things in perspective for me."



MTA's Haim Geffen Faced Challenges on San Francisco-to-Century City AIDS Ride

(June 14) On the third day of the 560-mile California AIDS Ride 7 the MTA's Haim Geffen - an experience biker and tri-athlete - faced his toughest challenge.

It was a 75-mile stretch of highway between King City and Paso Robles on the Central Coast. Crabbing into blast furnace crosswinds, he and 2,700 other cyclists struggled up "The Quad Buster," a steep slope in Salinas National Park.

"It was a very tough workout for the quad muscles in our thighs," recalls the 53-year-old transportation planning manager. At the end of that day, the hot shower provided by event organizers was bliss and even the hard ground beneath his pup tent didn't prevent a sound sleep.

"Riders carried a photo or name of a loved one who had died of AIDS, but they also wore costumes with decorated helmets that created a party atmosphere."



Every day, a sea of bicycles and tents.

Poignant opening ceremonies

AIDS Ride 7 began June 4 with poignant opening ceremonies at San Francisco's Fort Mason. "But, at the same time, it was a festive occasion with lots of color and excitement in the air," Geffen says.

To qualify for the AIDS Ride, he raised \$3,000 - of which \$800 came from MTA donors - to



support the Jeffery Goodman Special Care Clinic at the Gay & Lesbian Center of Los Angeles. In total, the event garnered more than \$11.25 million for housing and medical support of people with the AIDS virus.

Following the ceremony, the two-wheeled throng rode through the city in triumph as cheering thousands turned out, waving photos of loved ones who had died of AIDS. Similar scenes were repeated at many of the communities the bikers passed through enroute to the finish line in Century City.

"There was a sense of community that bound us together to accomplish a goal and have fun at the same time."

Life on the road pedaling 65 to 100 miles a day during the seven-day ride was hard, but Geffen made a number of new friends among the group he found himself riding with each day. And there were rest stops every 10 to 20 miles with food, energy drinks and massage therapists, as well as mechanics to fix an ailing bike. There was entertainment some nights, including a talent show.



At the end of the ride, Geffen is greeted by his son Yoni, 14; and daughter Talia, 16.

Mayor Riordan joined the ride

On the event's final day, Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and his wife, Nancy, joined the ride into Century City for closing ceremonies. Geffen enjoyed his own reunion with his wife, Leslie; daughter, Talia, 16; son Yoni, 14; and father-in-law Dr. Norman Mirman.

"Looking back, It was a great experience and I'm really happy I did it," the road-weary biker says. "If I do it again, I'll have a better idea of how to pace myself. I'll be more relaxed and able to socialize more with the other riders."

Geffen's next challenges: the Malibu Triathlon in September and the LA Marathon next March. And maybe a couple of other triathlons in between, who knows.

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See "MTA's Haim Geffen Starts California AIDS Ride June 7" and "Youngest Rider is Son of MTA Division 10 Employee"

Division 15 Sponsors Educational Fund for Granddaughter of MTA's Karl Downs

(June 15) Division 15 has established a special educational fund for five-year-old Tiana Downs-Lyons, whose mother was killed recently in an Ohio traffic accident. The woman, Aisha Downs-Lyons, was the daughter of Division 15 Transportation Manager Karl Downs.

Employees may make contributions to the "Karl Downs/Tiana Downs-Lyons Fund" through the MTA Federal Credit Union. Donations are accepted in cash, by check or by transfers from Credit Union accounts. For more information, contact Mayra Castillo of the Credit Union at 922-6180.

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DEO Gary Spivack

Gary Spivack Named Deputy Executive Officer, Transit Operations

(June 15) Gary S. Spivack, an 18-year MTA veteran, has been named a deputy executive officer of Transit Operations. In that post, he will be responsible for operations budgets, system performance and monitoring, Quality Assurance, Stops and Zones and the Scheduling and Planning Services Department.

Previously, Spivack served as director of Transit Operations Support. In that position, his 85-member staff was responsible for performance reporting and contracted services, quality assurance, and for maintenance of bus stops and other functions.

From January, 1997, to January, 1999, Spivack was service operations director and then transportation manager at Division 3. He also has served as director of General Services and acting manager of Operations Planning. From July, 1993, to June, 1995, he was deputy executive officer for Facilities and Procurement. For a short period in 1993, he was an executive assistant to the CEO.

Former SCRTD executive

During his tenure at the SCRTD, Spivack was director of Planning and then assistant general manager for Planning and Public Affairs. One of his major achievements as assistant general manager was to provide direction for construction of the \$300 million MTA Headquarters and Patsaouras Plaza.

Prior to joining the SCRTD in March, 1982, Spivack was a member of the staff for five years at the Metro Dade Transportation Administration in Dade County, Florida.

Spivack is a 1970 graduate of Temple University, where he earned a double major in political science and economics. He received a master's degree in civil engineering and a master's degree in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania in 1972.

Spivack and his wife, Linda, live in Valley Village with their two daughters, Abby, 24, a graduate student at the University of Judaism, and Allison, 13, a seventh grader.

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Local Media Take a Metro Rapid Ride

(June 16) The MTA took the media for a ride Wednesday. A Metro Rapid ride down Ventura Boulevard that illustrated how the agency's newest bus line will save passengers as much as 25 percent in travel time beginning June 24.

With the opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood segment, Metro Rapid will provide "rubber-tire railway-style" service along the 16-mile Ventura Boulevard route and the 26-mile Wilshire-Whittier line. Metro Rapid headways will vary from 3 minutes to 10 minutes, depending upon time of day.

From June 24 to June 30 bus patrons can try the new bus service for free. New features include priority signals at intersections, low floor for better and quicker access for the disabled and fewer bus stops.

Metro Rapid already is having an impact along the two demonstration corridors where residents and business owners are commenting on the red and white buses as they whisk by during their pre-revenue training runs.

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'Ambassadors' Will Hit the Streets with Information about MTA Service Changes

(June 16) Some 40 MTA "ambassadors" will be dispatched, June 19, to bus stops along the Ventura Boulevard and Wilshire/Whittier transit corridors. For the next two weeks, they'll be primed with information about the June 24 opening of the North Hollywood subway extension and the start of Metro Rapid bus service.

The group completed its training Friday morning. On Monday, they'll hit the streets with brochures, timetables and plenty of advice for riders concerned about the many service changes scheduled over the next couple of weeks.

Reaching lots of people

"They'll be located at stops along the Metro Rapid bus lines where the major changes will take place," said Martha Butler, a transportation planning manager who helped coordinate the ambassador program. "Some of these stops have 1,000 or more boardings a day, so we'll be able to reach a lot of people."

The ambassadors will be at the bus stops on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 6 a.m. until noon and on Thursdays and Fridays from noon until 6 p.m. Four transit operations supervisors will oversee the ambassadors' work and will transport them two and from their assignments.

Although 11 of the ambassadors will be temporary workers, the majority - a total of 31 - will be Metro Bus operators assigned to a transitional duty program while recovering from worker's comp injuries.

Shows value of the program

"We're very excited about this," said Lucille Van Der Heyden, MTA Risk Management claims manager. "It's a good opportunity to show the value of the transitional duty program." Currently, a total of 81 employees are assigned to transitional duty.

In addition to the ambassadors, the MTA has placed temporary information signage at some 1,000 bus stop and has printed brochures about service changes.

"With the bus stop information, the service change notices, the ambassadors and the other promotions we're doing," said Warren Morse, deputy executive officer, Marketing and Customer Relations, "we're making an intensive effort to notify our passengers how their service will change."

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Crews Extending Metro Blue Line Platforms at 19 Stations

(June 19) Construction work is under way to extend passenger platforms at the Metro Blue Line's Grand Avenue station and Washington station – the first of 19 that will be lengthened over the next 14 months to accommodate longer trains.

The current 190-foot platforms are only long enough for two-car trains. Lengthening the stations to 280 feet, however, will permit the operation of three-car trains.

Boost passenger capacity

The increase in the number of daily boardings on the Long Beach-to-Los Angeles line already has required the MTA to shorten the interval between trains. As a next step, the agency plans to boost passenger capacity by adding more cars.

In April, the Metro Blue Line recorded more than 61,000 daily boardings, an increase of almost 10,000 over April, 1999. Extending the Metro Red Line into the Valley also could further encourage Metro Blue Line ridership as more rail destination open up.

Adding a third car to Metro Blue Line trains requires - in addition to longer platforms - the installation of new traffic control equipment at rail crossings in the downtown area, according to Tom Lee, Metro Construction project manager.

Intersection adjustments

The equipment, which will be provided by LADOT later this year, will be installed by the MTA's contractor and should be operational in early 2001. Similar intersection adjustments also will have to be made in Long Beach as the project moves toward its conclusion.

Lee expects the work on the Grand Avenue station to be completed July 15, with work on the Washington station finishing up by July 30. The next in line for lengthening is the San Pedro station.

The entire platform extension project is scheduled for completion in mid-August, 2001.

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Trains: A Kid's Hobby Turns into Career for MTA's Jess Díaz



By JOSÉ UBALDO

(June 20) Jess Díaz began playing with trains as a kid. Nowadays, the MTA rail transportation superintendent still plays with trains, not only because he enjoys it, but also because he gets paid to do it.

The trains Díaz runs today are the Metro Rail subway and light-rail lines that crisscross Los Angeles County from downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach, El Segundo to Norwalk, and from Union Station to North Hollywood.

Díaz' affair with trains began at an early age when his family traveled twice a year by train from Philadelphia to visit family in upstate Pennsylvania. "We were a poor family and didn't have a car during those years, so we traveled by train in summer and around the holidays," Díaz says.

Hooked on steam trains

As a kid, Díaz says he was hooked on the powerful steam engines that pulled coaches traveling upstate Pennsylvania. "The dimension, the weight and power of those things fascinated me from the time I was 6 or 7."

Around 1950, Díaz received his first train set, a Lionel train, for Christmas. He spent hours playing with it. "We really had a fun

time. I didn't have a lot of money but the neighbor kids and I put our train sets together and played," he recalls.

Nowadays, Díaz spends countless hours working with the start-up team in charge of testing trains for the June 24 opening of the Metro Red Line North Hollywood extension.

Díaz was born in Philadelphia 57 years ago. His father was a Mexican immigrant from Zacatecas and his mother an Italian-American. His mother still lives in Philadelphia.

Became a trolley operator

After graduating from high school, Díaz started working as a bus operator and later became a trolley operator for the South Eastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority in Philadelphia. But, his daughter suffered from an asthma condition so her doctor suggested that Díaz move the family out West. They moved to Los Angeles in 1972.

Díaz applied for a job at the SCRTD and was hired as a bus operator, a position he held for two years. Later he became a bus instructor and spent almost 14 years hiring and teaching operators until the SCRTD

began looking for light-rail operators to start the Metro Blue Line.

"Back in Philadelphia I drove trolley cars for a while so, with that experience, I applied for the position in 1989," he says. "Ten of us were picked and we were sent to Calgary, Canada, for training on their light rail system."

Those were hard times for Díaz, who practiced operating the trains seven days a week for a month on an all-night schedule with snow and temperatures of 18 degrees -- very different from those days when he exchanged toy train parts and played with his buddies.

Helped open Metro Blue Line

Back in Los Angeles, Díaz helped to open the Metro Blue Line in the summer of 1990. After that he took a position as manager at Division 11 where he stayed for two years. He worked at the Metro Red Line from 1993 until he was named rail superintendent for the three Metro Rail lines in 1998.

Although he's excited about his job as rail superintendent, Díaz isn't forgetting his responsibilities in opening the Metro Rail North Hollywood extension. And, there is nothing more rewarding than to look at the faces of the people riding the trains.

"It's really hard work, but I feel good knowing the MTA offers the best service for the community," he says. "I like seeing people use the system, taking public transportation to get where they need to go - whether it be work, medical appointments, school, or shopping - and using the trains because they know they are reliable," says Díaz.

Gone are the days when Díaz played with toy trains in Philadelphia.

"I dreamed of trains but never about running trains, I mean real life trains," he says. "Dreams come true, but you have to work hard and go after them to make them happen."

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Rampaging Lakers Fans Vandalize 8 Metro Buses, No Employees Hurt

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 20) Fans who turned a celebration of the Lakers' NBA championship victory into a destructive rampage, Monday night, severely damaged one Metro Bus and broke windows in seven others in the downtown area. No MTA employees were hurt, but one Transit Operations official gave a preliminary estimate of \$5,000 to \$10,000 in damage to the buses.

Bus service was suspended from 11 p.m. until about 2 a.m. in a downtown area bounded by Sunset on the north, Jefferson on the south, Alameda on the east and Alvarado on the west.

Rail Operations Control stopped northbound Metro Blue Line service into downtown at 9:14 p.m., halting trains at San Pedro station. A southbound train was allowed to depart 7th and Metro Center at 11:48 p.m. with an eight-member team of Sheriff's Deputies aboard for security. Another team of deputies was stationed at San Pedro station.

Trains sustained only superficial damage from rocks and no passengers or operators were injured, officials said. At Pico station, however, vandals damaged one of two closed circuit TV cameras.

Division 1 bus heavily damaged

The most heavily damaged Metro Bus was No. 1171 assigned to Division 1, according to John Roberts, maintenance superintendent. Vandals smashed both windshields, broke 10 side windows, pulled out the radio and burned a seat. The bus had been standing at a layover zone at 11th and Hope, not far from the Staples Center.

Vandals also broke windows in three Division 3 buses, three Division 9 buses and one Division 2 bus, Roberts said. The undercarriage of one bus was damaged when it ran over a trash can thrown into the street. Two runs were cancelled because the operators feared for their safety and that of their passengers.

"I'm embarrassed for Los Angeles," Sheriff's Lt. John Witt commented on the night's disorders. "I had hoped we could show Detroit and some of the other cities how we could conduct ourselves."

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Metro Blue Line Adds Trains to Transport Fans to Lakers Parade

- **Vandals Cause Problems Following Parade**

(June 21) With thousands of fans headed into downtown Los Angeles for the Lakers' NBA championship parade, Wednesday morning, MTA Rail Operations scheduled six extra Metro Blue Line trains with a total capacity of approximately 3,000 riders.

The trains were added beginning at 8:30 a.m. to help alleviate crush loads. They were expected to continue in operation until around 2 p.m. The parade was scheduled to begin at 11 a.m.

The trains were scheduled "to assist in the effective movement of fans," said Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. "We'll do whatever is necessary to handle this unscheduled, but happy event."

Southbound run experienced delays

Trains departing downtown following the parade experienced some difficulties when passengers became impatient with service delays. Passengers apparently disabled the doors of one car and prevented the train from leaving the Grand Avenue station, causing a backup on the line. There was no damage to the trains and no passengers or operators reported injuries.

De la Cruz, who spent several hours observing rail operations Wednesday, estimated that all three rail systems transported more than twice as many passengers as the 154,000 carried on a normal weekday. Load figures could reach 308,000 or more for the day, he said.

Meanwhile, a Division 3 bus and a Division 18 bus were reported vandalized on Figueroa south of Staples Center following the parade. Vandals swarmed the Division 3 bus, pulled off body panels and tore out computer wires, according to Bus Operations Control. A Transit Operations supervisor got the bus running again so it could transport passengers out of the area.

Earlier, the MTA provided four buses to transport LAPD officers to the area of the parade.

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MTA Appoints Brenda L. Diederichs Chief Labor Relations Officer



**Brenda L.
Diederichs**

(June 21) The MTA has appointed Brenda L. Diederichs, an attorney who has specialized in public sector labor law, as the agency's new chief labor relations officer.

Diederichs, who assumed her new post Tuesday, June 20, joins the MTA at a time when the agency is in negotiations with its three major labor unions. Contracts with the UTU, ATU and TCU expire June 30. The talks are being conducted by the MTA's labor consultant and chief negotiator, Tom Webb.

As chief labor relations officer, Diederichs is responsible for a department of 16 employee relations specialists whose activities include labor relations and arbitration, grievance reviews, discipline appeal reviews, implementing and interpreting labor contracts and training other departments on labor relations matters.

Ten years in labor law

Diederichs has spent the past 10 years practicing labor and employment law with the law firms of Richards, Watson & Gershon and with Burke, Williams & Sorenson. She served as chair of the labor and employment law practice groups for both firms.

Her practice included labor negotiations, arbitration, grievances, employee discipline, training and development. She also worked with such administrative agencies as the U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

She served in the early 1990s as director of personnel for the City of West Covina.

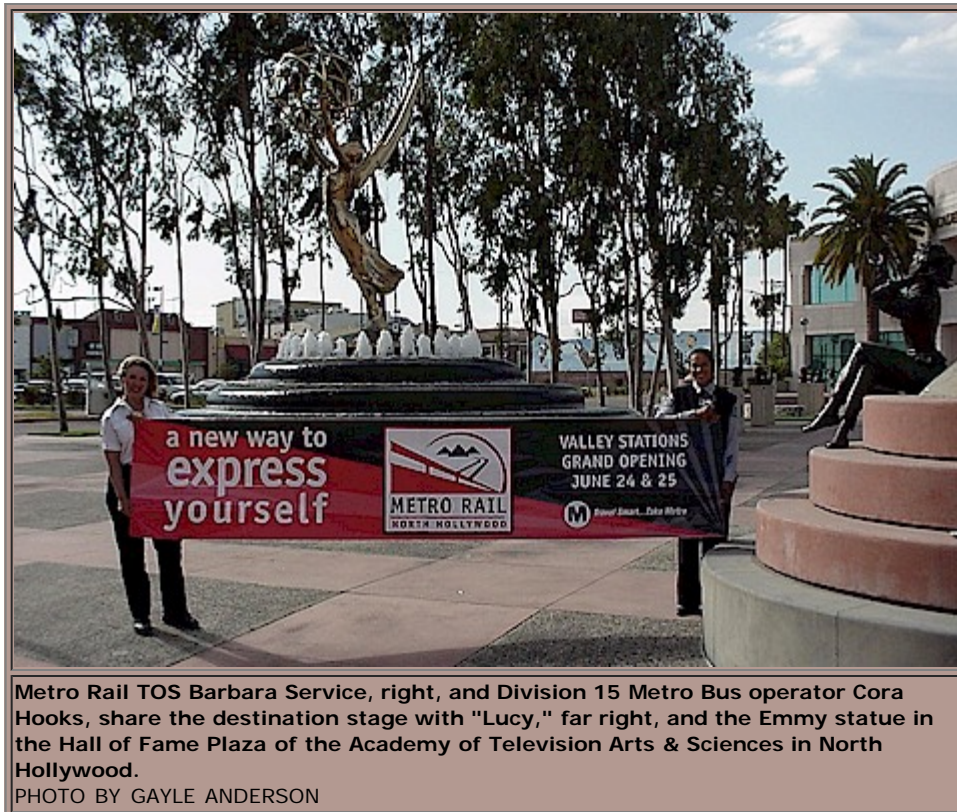
Returns to transportation roots

By joining the MTA, Diederichs is returning to her transportation roots. For almost 10 years beginning in October, 1980, she was employed by the SCRTD.

As an employment manager, she was responsible for employee recruiting, testing and classification and served as a member of the SCRTD's collective bargaining team. From 1982 to 1990, she was the District's labor relations manager and chief negotiator.

Diederichs is a 1979 graduate of Cal Poly Pomona, where she earned a BA in political science. She received her law degree from Loyola Law School in 1989. A resident of Chino, she enjoys hiking, cycling, gardening and interior decorating.

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North Hollywood Extension to Link Riders to Growing List of Major Tourist Attractions

Editor's Note: This is one in a series of news releases prepared for the June 24 opening of the North Hollywood Extension.

By ED SCANNELL

(June 21) The number of major Southland tourist attractions accessible by rapid rail is about to grow with the June 24 opening of the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood extension.

The 6.3-mile addition will expand the Metro Rail system to nearly 60 miles and extend the reach of millions of Southern Californians and tourists to a host of "must see" attractions located within walking distance of three new Metro Red Line stations at Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and North Hollywood.

Located in the center of Hollywood, the Hollywood/Highland station sits at the doorstep of TrizecHahn's multi-million dollar entertainment and retail complex. When construction is completed, it will be the permanent site of the annual Academy Awards presentation, movie theaters, a hotel, stores and restaurants.

Chinese Theater and other venues

Nearby, stand Mann's Chinese Theatre, Egyptian Theater, El Capitan Theater, the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, Hollywood Wax Museum, Hollywood Entertainment Museum, CrossRoads of the World and the Hollywood Bowl.

The entertainment value of the new subway extension doesn't stop there. The Universal City station is located across the street from the entrance to the Universal Studios complex which will

make Metro Rail a preferred mode of travel for many visitors to Universal Studios & Tours, CityWalk and the Universal Amphitheater.

Footsteps away from Universal City station is Campo de Cahuenga, the historic site where a Mexican commander signed documents capitulating to U.S. forces in 1847. A museum is located on the site.

The third in the trio of new Metro Red Line stations is the North Hollywood station which counts among its neighbors the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, the Lankershim Art Center and the NoHo Arts District, which includes more than a dozen live theaters, restaurants and coffee houses.

Dozens of tourist attractions

Metro Rail already has proven to be an attractive way to access dozens of other tourist attractions in the Los Angeles area. The Metro Red Line provides convenient access to the Pantages Theater, Doolittle Theater, The Palace, Barnsdall Art Park, and the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Other popular destinations include the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles Central Library, the Bradbury Building, Garment District, Jewelry District, Little Tokyo, the Ahmanson Theater, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, the Mark Taper Forum, Angels Flight, Los Angeles Children's Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art, Grand Central Market, Chinatown, Olvera Street, Koreatown, and the Wiltern Theater.

Mapping out a trip is as easy as using the interactive Metro Trip Planner located on the MTA's web site at www.mta.net.

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BOARD ACTION UPDATE: JUNE 22

Board Items to Watch

Free Fares, Transit Corridor Recommendation Approved by MTA Board at June Meeting

(June 22) A free fare demonstration for disabled passengers and transit services for the Eastside, Mid-City and San Fernando Valley corridors were two of the measures approved by the MTA Board at the June meeting, Thursday.

Free Fare Demonstration, Item 45: APPROVED by full Board. The motion asks approval for a two-year demonstration project, beginning Sept. 1, 2000, that would allow persons eligible to use Access Services to ride all Metro Bus and Metro Rail lines without paying a fare. The motion also covers the personal care attendants of the eligible riders.

Transit Corridor Projects, Item 48: APPROVED AS AMENDED by full Board. The motion includes recommendations to approve light rail as the preferred mode of transportation for the Eastside corridor and to discontinue consideration of the busway alternative. It also recommends Bus Rapid Transit for the San Fernando Valley and Wilshire Boulevard corridors.

DBE Annual Goal, Item 37: APPROVED by full Board. The motion calls for the committee to adopt a DBE (disadvantaged business enterprise) goal of 20 percent for the federal fiscal year of 2001. The MTA's current DBE goal is 23 percent. The move to change the goal to 20 percent comes with the reduction in MTA rail construction activity and changes in federal DBE requirements.

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CEO Burke Asks Gov. Davis for 'Cooling Off' Period to Prevent Strike

(June 22) CEO Julian Burke has asked Governor Gray Davis to invoke a "cooling off" period to prevent a strike by the United Transportation Union, the largest of the MTA's unions.

The labor agreement between the MTA and the UTU expires at midnight, June 30. In a vote, June 19, UTU members gave their leadership authority to call a strike. No strike date has been set.

In a letter dated Wednesday, Burke said a work stoppage "would significantly disrupt public transportation services...." He said a strike would cause traffic congestion, add tons of emissions to the air and cost the county's economy "as much as \$16 million per day."

Calls for independent board

The CEO asked the governor to appoint an independent board, effective June 30, to "investigate the issues involved in the labor dispute...."

"With your leadership and an independent board of investigation," he wrote, "we are hopeful that a paralyzing and costly transit strike can be avoided."

Click here for the [full text of Burke's letter](#) to Governor Davis.

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North Hollywood Extension Opening Features Weekend Family Festivities

(June 22) The MTA will officially throw open the doors of the Metro Red Line's San Fernando Valley line on Saturday morning with family-oriented festivities at the North Hollywood and Universal City stations.

Although free subway service to and from the Valley rolls out at 4:30 a.m. Saturday and Sunday, public events will be held from mid-morning until 5 p.m. both days.

Some 400 employees have volunteered to provide crowd control over the weekend, but, says Denise Charles of Public Affairs, "We still need 50 more people to work on Sunday." To volunteer, call Charles at 922-7408.

Brochures and souvenirs

Meanwhile, another 60 employees and 19 "ambassadors" will work with MTA Marketing to staff booths and distribute brochures and souvenirs at the three new subway stations. Giveaways include puzzle cubes, pens, fold-up trains and a new cartoon map of the Metro Rail system.

Scheduled events at Universal City station include celebrity characters, live entertainment and Fun Family photo ops. Actors in period costume at the adjacent Campo de Cahuenga will recreate the 1948 treaty signing that ended the Mexican-American War.

At Hollywood/Highland, the Knitting Factory nightclub will sponsor a jazz festival from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

At the North Hollywood station, guests can see stunt skydivers, the children's TV variety show, Children's Court; the NoHo International Theatre & Arts Festival, a "Magic of Television" industry showcase in the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Hall of Fame Plaza and a "Wheel of Fortune" contestant recruiting mobile.

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VIP Ceremony to Kick Off North Hollywood Metro Red Line Opening Weekend

(June 22) Actress Vicki Lawrence and a host of VIP guests will kick off the opening weekend of Metro Red Line service to the San Fernando Valley, Friday morning, with a ceremony and inaugural train ride.

Lawrence, known for her comic performances on the "Carol Burnett Show," will preside as mistress of ceremonies, heading a list of invited speakers who include U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater, FTA Administrator Nuria Fernandez, Congressmen Julian Dixon, Howard Berman and Brad Sherman, California Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg, Mayor Richard Riordan and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke.

CEO Julian Burke is scheduled to welcome the guests. Other scheduled speakers are Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, California Secretary of Business, Transportation and Housing Maria Contreras-Sweet, State Sen. Richard Alarcon, Assembly Member Tony Cardenas, Los Angeles Council Member Joel Wachs, MTA Board Member Jim Cragin and Academy of Television Arts & Sciences President Jim Chabin.

Operator tapped for Pledge

Division 8 Metro Rapid Bus Operator Danny Ennis has been tapped to lead guests in the Pledge of Allegiance. An LAPD Honor Guard will present the colors.

Following the 10 a.m. ceremony, guests and media will board trains for the inaugural ride from North Hollywood to the Universal City station where they will be entertained by various cartoon characters and movie lookalikes.

Rail Operator Tu Phan, 37, winner of the MTA's 2000 Rail Roadeo and a 13-year MTA veteran, has been chosen to operate the inaugural train. Operators Rogelio Chacon, Patricia Mayes and William Smiley also will operate VIP trains during the event.

"This is one of the most significant days not only for the MTA, but also for transportation in Los Angeles," Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky said at Thursday's Board meeting. "We'll not only be opening the final leg of the subway, we'll be introducing rapid bus service in the Valley and along the Wilshire/Whittier corridor."

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600 VIPs, Guests and Media Welcome Metro Red Line to San Fernando Valley

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 23) More than 600 guests and perhaps 60 reporters and photographers turned out on a sunny Friday morning to welcome the Metro Red Line to the San Fernando Valley.

The event began with VIP speeches under a huge white tent set up on the North Hollywood station plaza. It continued underground with an inaugural train ride to Universal City station. There, the VIPs were greeted in pure Hollywood style by Bullwinkle Moose, Rocket J. Squirrel, a Marilyn Monroe impersonator and other character lookalikes.

[PHOTO GALLERY](#)

"Congratulations to all the people who have supported this project," said actress Vicki Lawrence, doing duty as mistress of ceremonies. "My biggest hope for those of us who live in Los Angeles is that, instead of hopping in our cars next time, we'll give public transit a chance."

Celebration of the future

Welcoming the guests on behalf of the MTA, CEO Julian Burke declared that, "This is not just today's celebration. It's a celebration of the future of rail transit in Los Angeles County."

Burke earned applause from the VIPs and guests, when he finished his remarks by reminding them that, "Earlier this week we cheered the Lakers. Now, I'd like you to cheer the MTA. **GO MTA!**"

Among the first of a lengthy list of speakers, Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke called the opening of the North Hollywood Extension "...a move forward and a new direction for the people of Los Angeles."





Mayor Richard Riordan echoed her remarks, adding, "Today, we make history by connecting the Valley and downtown Los Angeles. To all of you, congratulations! We did it!"

A system of our dreams

U.S. Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater said the Metro Red Line "represents a strong foundation on which we can build a system of our dreams." He said the subway is "about additional opportunity and those things that give a community life."

California Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg, announcing that the state's 2001 budget has just passed, said it contains a total of \$245 million for San Fernando Valley transportation. The funds include \$145 million for an east-west transit corridor and \$100 million for a north-south corridor. And, he said, "This is only the beginning."

The morning's final speaker, Merle Marshall, CEO of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, put the MTA's achievement into a Hollywood perspective. "We in the entertainment industry know how difficult it is to create illusion," she said. "It is extraordinarily difficult to create reality."

PHOTO GALLERY	
Click on image to view	PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD
	
Channel 7 reporter interviews Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky	Rapid Transit fans greet Mayor Richard Riordan and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater
	
"Lucy" leads official exit at Universal City station.	Media frenzy at Universal Station includes Rocky and Bullwinkle.

	
<p>"Marilyn" entertains the troops on arrival of the VIP train at Universal City station.</p>	<p>Metro Construction Chief Charles Stark talks with Rail Operations Chief Ralph de la Cruz and Segment 3 Project Manager Dennis Mori</p>
	
<p>Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner and Rail Operator Rogelio Chacon.</p>	<p>Metro Rapid operators (from left) Jesus Vargas, Jose Lopez, Danny Ennis and Alex Bermudez.</p>

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NoHo Opening Weekend Sets Record in Ridership as MTA Chalks up Handful of Achievements

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 26) What a weekend! The North Hollywood segment opens with a record 500,000 boardings over two days of celebration that - for the first time - got Valley residents excited about the Metro Red Line.

[PHOTO
GALLERY](#)

The fanfare over the subway's final link may have been the most talked about event of the weekend, but it was perhaps only the most prominent in a handful of important achievements. Here's what else happened:

- The inauguration of Metro Rapid bus service in the Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard transit corridors.
- Kicked off the Hollywood Bowl shuttle service. Buses carry concert-goers from the Metro Red Line's Hollywood/Vine station to the Bowl.
- Transit Operations activated Metro Green Line Division 22 fully a week ahead of time by moving rail operators and a fleet of P-2020 rail cars into the Hawthorne maintenance facility. The maintenance staff had occupied the yard the previous weekend.
- Made a total of 25 Metro Bus line changes without a hitch.
- Effected a transition of companies on six bus lines operated under contract to the MTA.

See metro.net June 7: ["Shuttle Bus Service from Hollywood/Vine...."](#)

See metro.net May 31: ["Metro Green Line's Division 22 to be Fully Activated."](#)

Riders zipped among stations

It was a carnival atmosphere at all three new Metro Red Line stations as crowds gathered to try out the new service. Smiling riders zipped from one station to the another sampling hot dogs, popcorn and sodas and

browsing among a host of booths that offered everything from sparkly costume jewelry to theater tickets to aroma therapy.

At Hollywood/Highland, two giant Dalmatian puppy balloons nodded at passersby outside the El Capitan Theater. At Campo de Cahuenga - adjacent to the Universal City station - costumed dancers entertained visitors with the Mexican Hat Dance and other folk dances. At the North Hollywood station, visitors could spend a quiet moment gazing at a display of paintings by local artists.

"We started early before the crowds," said Westlake Village resident Donald Dove, who along with his friend, Ed Boyer, planned to take the subway all the way to Union Station. "The only way we're going to be able to get more public transportation like this is for people to use it."

As Dove and Boyer headed off for Union Station, above ground the new Metro Rapid buses were disembarking load after load of passengers at the Universal City station. Observers reported frequent standing loads on buses all along both demonstration corridors.

Metro Rapid a new experience

MTA Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky rode a Metro Rapid bus from Wilshire/La Brea to Wilshire/Vermont to catch the subway north to the Valley. "It's a great experience, a new experience riding those buses," he said. "It'll take people a couple of weeks to get things sorted out, but overall it's going to be a tremendous improvement in service on Wilshire and Ventura."

Hugh Cooper, a Division 10 operator, agreed. "A lot of people are still looking for the 320 line, but we've advised them to ride Metro Rapid because it's faster. Most of the response has been favorable. A lot of people are figuring they can now meet their schedules because they won't have as many stops."

Meanwhile, at the Metro Red Line's Hollywood/Highland station, Ishmael Munoz, an MTA traction power inspector, had posted himself next to a ticket vending machine. "I've talked to a number of people, today, who have never used the subway before. They're surprised and amazed with the wonderful work we've done with rail...especially bringing it to North Hollywood."

Three members of the Kwan family - Lily, her brother, Quon, and his wife, Rebecca - volunteered to help out at the MTA's Hollywood/Highland booth, passing out souvenirs and brochures to visitors. The Kwans, who aren't even MTA employees, just wanted to be a part of the excitement.

A memorable event

"I remember riding the Red Cars when I was 7 or 8," said Quon, an environmental engineer who lives in the Washington, D.C., area. "This is a memorable event: to have mass transit through my home town." The editor of a transit newsletter in Montgomery County, Md., Quon and his sister, Lily, also had volunteered during the Hollywood opening event.

Alice San Andres-Calleja, community liaison for the NoHo Business Owners Group, was staffing a booth not far from an old Red Car station that sits across from the new Metro Red Line station.

"It's mind-boggling to have the whole span of subway that lets you access different parts of LA," she said. "We're looking forward to making NoHo the sparkplug for North Hollywood. And, with the Metro Rail here, we know that we're in a very strategic place as the gateway to the Valley."

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"Lucy" continues the celebration at the Universal City station.	COO Allan Lipsky with dancers at Campo de Cahuenga.
	
Tom Jasmin of Bus Operations Control maps out the Rapid Bus route.	Metro Rapid Bus was a big hit on opening weekend.
	
MTA employees distributed Metro "goody" bags to transit riders.	A team of ten daring skydivers from the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences industry showcase made spectacular entrance to NoHo International Theatre

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Assembly Restores 3-Person Carpools on El Monte Busway

(June 27) The California assembly has passed a measure that will once again require three-person carpools on the El Monte Busway. And an Assembly committee approved a bill concerning transit zones.

In passing AB-769 (Margett) on Monday, lawmakers acted to end a CalTrans experiment that permitted two-person carpools on the Busway. Drivers had complained that the experiment had led to overcrowding in the diamond lane, a slowdown in traffic and a per-hour falloff in the actual numbers of people who transited the Busway during rush periods.

The Busway measure now goes to the governor and can become effective upon his signature.

Meanwhile, the Assembly Appropriations Committee approved SB-1101 (Murray), a bill that requires newly formed transit zones to provide certain protections to MTA employees whose jobs would be affected. Committee approval allows the bill to be considered by the full Assembly at any time.

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Training Exercise in Chinatown Leads to Arrest of Pickpocket

(June 27) It was an LAPD training exercise that turned into the real thing. And resulted in the arrest of an alleged pickpocket in Chinatown.

Earlier this month, Officers Refugio Garza, Lorena Alcaraz and George Oto of the Transit Bus Division's Pickpocket Detail were training two officers from the LAPD's Airport Crimes Unit. They chose Chinatown as their training area in response to complaints that pickpockets were preying on elderly residents.

Just before noon, June 13, the detail noticed suspicious behavior by a man waiting with other passengers at a bus stop at Broadway and Ord Street. The suspect carried a newspaper in his left hand and a brown plastic bag in the other. He boarded a Line 81 bus and sat near the rear.

The three Pickpocket Detail officers, posing as passengers, also boarded the bus. Alcaraz sat directly in front of the suspect with her purse over her shoulder.

Removed a wallet

"As the bus traveled westbound on Ord Street, then northbound on Hill Street," said an LAPD report, "the suspect reached over the seat and removed a wallet from Alcaraz' purse. The suspect immediately (concealed) the wallet...and exited the bus...."

Officers arrested Steve Megliorino, 32, and charged him with grand theft. Police said he had prior arrests for grand theft, robbery, assault with a deadly weapon and vandalism.

Formed in April, 1999, to concentrate on the identification, apprehension and prosecution of professional pickpockets who prey on Metro riders, the Pickpocket Detail has arrested 17 pickpockets and 16 sexual predators. The team has become the LAPD's experts in pickpocket-related crimes and has trained officers from other divisions.

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MTA Board Approves 13 Contracts for Freeway Service Patrol Operators

By GARY WOSK

(June 28) The MTA Board of Directors has approved 13 contracts totaling \$13.2 million which will be allocated to tow truck companies that are part of the MTA-funded Metro Freeway Service Patrol (FSP).

Metro FSP is credited with aiding some 300,000 stranded drivers annually and reducing the duration of traffic congestion. The program, which receives a total of \$16 million each year from the MTA for more than 20 tow truck companies, has been in operation since 1991 and is the largest program of its kind in the nation.

Metro FSP consists of 41 beats (designated patrol areas) serviced by 150 tow trucks that patrol 400 miles of congested Los Angeles freeways during weekday peak hours and on selected beats during weekday midday and weekends.

Fill radiators, provide gas

Besides towing, service includes changing flat tires, jump-starting stalled vehicles, refilling radiators or providing a gallon of gas. The trucks are easily identifiable by the MTA and FSP logos.

Metro FSP provides an average of 30,000 vehicle assists per month. Data show that the wait time for FSP is less than five minutes on 72 percent of all vehicle assists.

Metro FSP service hours are typically Monday through Friday, 6-10 a.m. and 3-7 p.m.; reduced service during mid-day, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; and on weekends, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

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Funds Budgeted, but Pay Raise on Temporary Hold during Labor Talks

(June 28) While assuring employees that the money is in the MTA budget for a pay hike in FY 2001, Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky says implementation of the raise is on hold during labor negotiations.

"In approving the FY 2001 budget, the Board included funds for a cost-of-living pay raise," said Lipsky. "The MTA is committed to paying reasonable and competitive wages and maintaining our excellent employee benefits."

"The money is budgeted," he added, "but we should be evaluating wage increases for all our employees - union and non-union - at the same time. That's why we're asking non-contract employees to wait until labor negotiations are concluded before implementing the raise."

Lipsky said the raise will be given to non-contract employees, retroactive to the start of the new fiscal year, July 1, 2000, as soon as possible after labor contract settlements.

All regular and temporary regular employees in active service - including employees who are at the top or above their pay band - will be eligible for the raise. Newly hired employees must complete their six-month probationary period to be eligible for the raise.

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Introducing: The 'Smart Bus' Web Page on MTA Intranet

(June 28) "Smart Bus" - a special project that is expected to deliver the next generation of transit buses to the MTA - debuts today on METRO.NET with its own Intranet web page.

The page can be accessed from the Intranet home page via the ["MTA Projects Information" link](#) found on the right side of the navigation bar.

It will provide a description of high-tech computer controls and monitors that will be a major feature of "Smart Bus."

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Bus](#)

Also called ATMS (Advanced Transportation Management System), the devices are expected to increase operating efficiency and help improve passenger service. The MTA will begin installing ATMS on its buses in 2002 and anticipates having the system on every bus in the fleet by 2004.

Project overview

The Smart Bus web page, developed by Rodger Maxwell, an MTA schedules systems supervisor and member of the ATMS team, includes an overview of the project and its elements.

Navigation buttons link the user to brief explanations of such integral parts as the Transit Radio System, the Universal Fare System and systems for vehicle location, voice annunciator, video surveillance and passenger counting. Users also can access FAQs, frequently asked questions about Smart Bus.

With the Smart Bus to remain under development for some time yet, the new web page will be updated periodically to bring Intranet users the latest information about the project.

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MTA to Provide 100 Buses for Democratic National Convention

(June 29) The MTA plans to provide 100 of the 275 buses that will be needed to transport more than 20,000 delegates and officials who will be coming to Los Angeles for the Democratic National Convention, Aug. 13-17. The buses will be chartered to the LA Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The MTA Board, which already has approved a request for 75 buses will be asked to boost the number to 100 to meet the convention's needs. The plan calls for designating 70 CNG buses and 30 diesel buses for the convention. The MTA also plans to reassign some 122 operators, four supervisors and several mechanics to provide the service.

Some buses to be reassigned

According to Tom Jasmin, Transit Operations project manager, a number of CNG buses arriving from the factory in July and August will be assigned to convention service instead of immediately being allocated to operating divisions. Other buses will be reassigned from regular service. To fill the gap, some buses slated for inactivation will be held in service until after the convention.

In March, the Board authorized the MTA's support of the convention. A report prepared for the Board's July 20 meeting notes that it is important to "ensure that MTA involvement in the Democratic National Convention does not impact regular service and is cost-neutral to the agency."

Buses assigned to the convention will provide free shuttle service for delegates and others between hotels and the Staples Center convention site. Service will start prior to the opening of business each day and continue until an hour or more after the closing gavel.

Special phone number for visitors

The MTA has contacted convention hotels about selling MTA tokens and passes for using bus and rail service in their free time. The MTA will set up a special phone number convention visitors can use Aug. 5-20 to call the Customer Relations/Metro Information Center for information about bus and rail service.

Metro Bus lines operating in the vicinity of Staples Center will be rerouted during the convention. Police plan to block off streets for convention activities.

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New Subway Segment Boosts Ridership 49% to 59% in 2 Days

(June 29) Figures from the Metro Red Line's first two days of operation following the opening of the North Hollywood segment show a 49 percent to 59 percent increase in ridership.

The Metro Red Line averaged 65,000 weekday boardings during the month of May, prior to the addition of the three new stations – Hollywood/Highland, Universal City and North Hollywood.

On Monday, June 27, checkers recorded 103,500 boardings – up 59 percent over May's average weekday boardings. On Tuesday, June 28, checkers estimated 96,900 boardings – 49 percent more than an average weekday in May.

More visitors at Universal Studios

Officials at Universal Studios Hollywood reported that trams transported 30,000 visitors up the hill from the Universal City station over the grand opening weekend. Revenues at various fast food restaurants in the theme park increased between 35 percent and 100 percent.

Meanwhile, many buses on the new Metro Rapid lines are traveling with full loads, although no firm ridership figures are available. Metro Rapid Line 720 serves the Wilshire/Whittier corridor, while Line 750 serves the Ventura Boulevard corridor.

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MTA Welcomes Governor’s Appointment of Fact-Finding Board in Labor Negotiations

(June 30) Gov. Gray Davis moved late Thursday to appoint a fact-finding board to assess the state of labor negotiations between the MTA and its unions. The action is the first step in a process established by the state’s Lockyer legislation, which includes provisions for a 60-day “cooling off” period.

Contracts between the MTA and the UTU, ATU and TCU expire at midnight, Friday, June 30. The MTA issued the following statement to the media late Thursday:

<p style="text-align: center;">MTA STATEMENT: Gov. Davis’ Intervention in MTA Labor Talks</p>
<p>The MTA welcomes the appointment of a board of investigation by Governor Gray Davis that will prevent interruption of Metro Bus and Metro Rail service for at least seven days. The board will have one week to review the issues surrounding MTA labor contract negotiations and the current status of those talks, then report back to the Governor.</p> <p>Based on the board’s report, the Governor will then decide whether or not to seek a full 60-day cooling off period, as permitted under state law, to allow bargaining to continue. During those two months, MTA labor unions could not strike. Their current contracts, which expire at midnight Friday, June 30, would be extended without disruption in Metro Bus or Metro Rail service.</p> <p>The MTA is hopeful that it can reach new contract agreements with its major labor unions, representing bus and rail operators, mechanics and clerks and avert a work stoppage this summer.</p> <p>MTA is committed to working with its labor unions to develop mutually agreed solutions to all significant problems. These include rising workers compensation costs, lost time and absenteeism, and customer scheduling and service issues. Combined, these problems cause MTA to have the highest operating costs of any public transit company in the region.</p> <p>The MTA’s goals in these labor negotiations are to ensure a qualified and experienced workforce is in place; provide more and better customer service; operate more competitively and efficiently; and use public funds wisely. The MTA believes that these benefits can be achieved through meaningful negotiations without layoffs, with reasonable increases in wages and while maintaining equivalent employee benefits.</p>

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Zimmon Transfers from MTA Assignment; Hansohn to Head LAPD's Transit Group



Capt. Robert
Hansohn

(June 30) After almost three years as head of the LAPD's Transit Group, Cmdr. Garret Zimmon is being transferred from his assignment at the MTA to head the police department's Detective Services Group. Assuming command of the Transit Group, July 5, will be Capt. Robert Hansohn, currently commanding officer of the Rampart Division.

In his new position at Parker Center, Zimmon - who served as a detective earlier in his career - will oversee the activities of several hundred detectives assigned to the robbery, homicide, financial crimes, burglary, auto theft and bomb squads.

Involved in police transition

At the beginning of Zimmon's tenure at the MTA, he was involved in the transition of policing services from the MTA Police to the LAPD and the Sheriff's Department. Since then, the Transit Group has grown from 208 sworn officers to 233. It now has an administrative staff of 33. LAPD officers patrol the Metro Red Line and provide security for Metro Bus lines and MTA facilities within the City of Los Angeles.

"It was a great experience and I got to work with some wonderful people at the MTA and in the Sheriff's Department," Zimmon said. "I was happy that my time at the MTA culminated with the excitement of opening the North Hollywood segment and starting Metro Rapid service,"

"We've worked hard to improve security and reduce crime aboard the trains and buses," he added. "The partnership between the LAPD and the Sheriff's Department has worked very well."

A committed team builder

"Garret Zimmon represents the very best of the men and women in the LAPD," said Paul Lennon, whose Office of Systems Safety and Security oversees the MTA's contracts with law enforcement agencies. "He's been a team builder who has shown his commitment to the partnership of the MTA, the LAPD and the Sheriff's Department. We anticipate that Bob Hansohn will maintain that course and build upon the successes that the LAPD's Transit Group has achieved."

Hansohn, now an LAPD captain, is in line for promotion to commander on July 30. He was assigned to the Rampart Division in 1998 and was responsible for getting the division back on course following revelations about illegal activities there.

A police officer for 28 years, Hansohn has served as a detective, as a supervising sergeant at the 77th Street Station and at the Southeast Station. He also taught physical fitness and self defense at the Police Academy. Promoted to lieutenant in 1989, he served as watch commander at the 77th Street Station and as an aide to the chief of the South Bureau.

Hansohn was promoted to captain in 1991 and served as commanding officer of the 77th, the Hollywood Station and the Harbor Area Station, before being transferred to Rampart.

About his new assignment with the MTA, Hansohn said, "It will be an interesting challenge. I know many officers and supervisors in the Transit Group and you have some good people working there. I've also worked with the Sheriff's Department in some of my assignments and I'm looking forward to doing that again. We may wear different uniforms, but underneath, we're pretty much alike."

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