



## 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. **See metro.net June 7: ["Shuttle Bus Service from Hollywood/Vine...."](#)**
- 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. **See metro.net May 31: ["Metro Green Line's Division 22 to be Fully Activated."](#)**

- Effected a transition of companies on six bus lines operated under contract to the MTA.

### **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."

PHOTO GALLERY	
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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.	Ishmael Munoz, an MTA traction power inspector, gave lessons on the use of a ticket vending machine.
	
"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 & Arts Festival.

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