



Customer service agent Jorja Jones, left, assists transit riders at the North Hollywood station, where Division 5 operators Chriss Williams and Danetta Patton, right, are also helping to coordinate rush hour crowds.

Metro Operators Pressed into Service to Help Crowds Using NoHo, Universal City Stations

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 13) Transit Operations this week pressed into service a team of Metro operators and customer service agents to help handle crowds of commuters flocking into the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood and Universal City stations during morning rush periods.

Five bus operators worked as Metro ambassadors at the two stations from 6 a.m. until 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. They familiarized passengers with the ticket vending machines (TVMs), answered questions and distributed informational brochures and maps of the Metro system. Two were stationed at Universal City and three at North Hollywood.

MTA Revenue assigned a customer service agent to each of the stations, from 6:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, to sell one-way, round-trip and one-way tickets with transfers. Agents also may be assigned next week, if warranted, says Jim Cudlip, assistant director, Revenue.

Crowds overwhelmed TVMs

This weekend, Metro operators with portable fareboxes will be positioned at the North Hollywood and Universal City stations to sell Metro Rail tickets. Officials say weekend crowds have overwhelmed the TVMs at times, delaying patrons. There are five machines at each station.

Cudlip has assigned maintenance personnel to special duty at the three new stations, including Hollywood/Highland, to ensure that the TVMs operate properly and that cash boxes are emptied promptly to prevent machine jams.

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"We're keeping the machines running and keeping people flowing

through," he said. "It's moving better now and that has a lot to do with passengers getting used to a new system."

During several hours spent observing passenger flow at the two northernmost stations this week, Cudlip saw unusually large numbers of commuting workers and tourists using the subway following the normal morning rush period.

Five-hour rush period

"Instead of a three-hour morning rush, it's more like a five-hour rush period at Universal City and North Hollywood," he said.

"Then there's a late-night crowd of workers and tourists that uses the subway and buses." The Universal Studios theme park closes at 10 p.m., about the same time that theater performances are ending in the NoHo area.

Customer Service Agents Fanny Ortiz and Jorja Jones were assigned to sell tickets at the two northernmost stations. The five operators assigned to the North Hollywood and Universal City stations this week are Jean Dykes of Division 7 and Hilda Bostick, Kevin Davis, Danetta Patton and Chriss Williams, all of Division 5. Patton and Williams earlier assisted as Metro ambassadors during the introduction of Metro Rapid service.

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