

Metro Report Archives

September 2000 Articles

MTA System Pass Holders Will Get Credit Following Strike (Sept.

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UPDATE No Breakthrough in Negotiations; MTA Still Talking with

UTU, TCU (Sept. 6) Contract talks were scheduled to continue, Wednesday, between the MTA and negotiators for the UTU and TCU. No further sessions have been scheduled with the ATU.

Division 7 Aces Annual CHP Inspection; Manager Cites

Teamwork (Sept. 7) For the second time this year, a Transit Operations division has ached a California Highway Patrol inspection. This time, it was the Division 7 maintenance team that impressed the tough-minded inspectors.

UPDATE Bargaining Teams Communicating; Work Expected to

Continue Through Monday (Sept. 8) With the "cooling off" period extension due to expire on Saturday, negotiators for the MTA were in communication, Friday, with bargaining teams for the UTU, ATU and TCU. None have indicated they intend to call a strike.

MTA Ends FY 2000 on High Notes by Marking Departments'

Accomplishments (Sept. 8) The MTA ended Fiscal Year 2000 on a high note - actually many high notes - as demonstrated in reports presented, Thursday, to top management.

MTA Planning College-Level Courses, Expanded Training for

Employees (Sept. 8) Taking guidance from a recent survey of MTA Headquarters and operating division employees who want to earn undergraduate or graduate college degrees, the Human Resources Development and Training Department is working with area colleges to set up after-hours courses.

UPDATE More Bargaining Talks Scheduled; Labor Federation Sets

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Operator Evelyn Davis Witnesses Miracle on 7th Street: A Baby

Boy (Sept. 12) Operator Evelyn Davis set out on her first Line 20 run Tuesday morning thinking it would be just another day. But, at 7:30 a.m. at the corner of 7th and Hill streets, she witnessed the miracle of birth and held a vital new life in her hands. Suddenly, the day turned from ordinary to extraordinary.

Major Harbor Transitway Service Expansion Set October 1 (Sept.

12) The MTA is preparing for an increase of more than 18,000 hours of passenger service on the Harbor Transitway beginning Sunday, Oct. 1 - a major expansion that's in keeping with the extension of Metro Rail service to North Hollywood and the start of two Metro Rapid bus lines earlier this year.

'Bus Baby' and Mother Resting After [Brush with Celebrity](#) (Sept. 13) Susana Millan and her new-born son, Juan Jose, became instant LA celebrities on Tuesday after local media learned about the birth aboard a Metro Bus.

MTA Activates [Strike Contingency Plan](#); Negotiators Working to Avert Walkout (Sept. 14) The MTA activated its Strike Contingency Plan as of noon, today. With barely 12 hours to go before a possible work stoppage, employees with strike contingency duty were directed to report to their strike work assignments, some of which begin as early as 11 p.m., Thursday.

Headquarters, Division [Computers to be Upgraded with Microsoft Office 2000](#) (Sept. 14) Beginning in October, the MTA will start a six-month project to upgrade some 3,000 computers at Headquarters and in the operating divisions with new Microsoft Office 2000 software.

Strike Averted for 24 Hours; [Bargaining Talks Continue](#) (Sept. 15) Negotiators for the MTA and the UTU, which represents bus operators, reached agreement just past midnight, Thursday, to extend bargaining talks for another 24 hours. Bargaining resumed at 11:20 a.m., Friday. The next strike deadline is set for midnight.

Construction [Crews Closing Gap](#) on Imperial Highway Overcrossing (Sept. 15) Construction crews are closing the final 110-foot gap in a massive four-lane bridge being built to span the Metro Blue Line tracks directly north of the Imperial/Rosa Parks station.

MTA Returns to [Bargaining Table](#); UTU Negotiators are No-Shows (Sept. 18) MTA negotiators returned to the bargaining table at 10 a.m., today, in hopes of rekindling negotiations with the UTU, ATU and TCU. By noon, union leaders had not responded, although a state mediator urged them to do so through phone calls to union headquarters.

Retail Complex Proposed at [Westlake/MacArthur Park Station](#) (Sept. 18) The MTA is in the early stages of approving a plan to build a mixed-use retail complex on the 3.65 acres it owns adjacent to the Metro Red Line's Westlake/MacArthur Park station. The agency also will request development proposals for properties at the Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/Vermont stations.

Negotiators [Back at Bargaining Table](#); Full Negotiations to Begin Wednesday (Sept. 19) Negotiators for the MTA and UTU met across the bargaining table, today, for the first time since late Friday. No actual negotiations took place, but the two sides agreed to resume negotiations at 10 a.m., Wednesday. The UTU said its bargaining team will be at the table.

[Other Developments](#) in Today's Strike News Headlines (Sept. 19) Only two regular MTA lines were in operation again Tuesday. Lines 96 and 167, which serve the San Fernando Valley, were being operated by an MTA contractor.

[Bargaining Talks Resume](#); CEO Burke, UTU's Williams Optimistic (Sept. 20) Negotiators for the MTA and UTU were back at the bargaining table at 10 a.m., Wednesday, for a negotiating session that continued after a lunch break. It was the first substantive discussions since union leaders called a strike, Sept. 15. Later, officials on both sides reported some progress, although there was no possibility of reaching a settlement today.

Was a [Regional Blackout Averted](#) When the Trains Stopped

Running? (Sept. 20) Did the MTA help save Los Angeles from a blackout on Monday? With bus and rail operators on strike and trains out of service, the agency had no problem complying when California Edison requested cutbacks in electrical power to Metro Rail lines.

Strikers Rally at MTA Headquarters; Board Members Call News Conference (Sept. 21) Striking MTA workers and their AFL-CIO supporters gathered at MTA Headquarters, Thursday morning, for a rally aimed at bolstering the unions' contract demands.

Volunteers Keeping Things Running During Strike; Learning Lots about Unfamiliar Areas of MTA (Sept. 22) If it has accomplished nothing else thus far, the strike against the MTA has given many non-contract employees a look at areas of the agency they may not have been familiar with.

Bargaining Talks Moving in Fits and Starts; But Negotiators Were at the Table Friday (Sept. 22) Bargaining talks between the MTA and UTU inched forward in fits and starts, Friday, interspersed with caucuses by one side or the other.

Bargaining Talks in News Blackout as MTAlink Shuttle Adds Service (Sept. 25) With negotiations between the MTA and UTU continuing under a news blackout in Pasadena, Monday, the agency added new Hollywood service to the MTAlink Shuttle. And, while Metro Buses and Metro Rail were idle, the MTA's three contract carriers rolled out 122 buses.

UPDATE UTU Quits Bargaining Talks; Burke Urges Union to Send Operators Back to Work (Sept. 26) In a development that caught local news media by surprise, Tuesday, labor leaders announced that the UTU had walked away from negotiations with the MTA. In a news conference at the Pasadena Hilton, union negotiators said they are planning a rally, Friday, probably at City Hall.

Tina Arellano, Barbara Lorenzo are Admin Backbone of MTA's Negotiating Team (Sept. 25) For 117 days - with only an occasional weekend break - Tina Arellano has spent a major part of her waking hours in a cluttered room at the Pasadena Hilton. As secretary for the MTA's labor negotiating team, she has played a key role in keeping the administrative side of things humming.

Tagger Gang Hits Division 10 Buses; Two Days' Effort to Clean Up Mess (Sept. 26) They apparently came over the fence at Division 10 sometime after 2 a.m., Sunday. An unknown number of taggers bent on vandalizing as many buses as possible with gang-style graffiti.

Injury to Bus Operator Walking Picket Line Serves as Safety Reminder to Drivers (Sept. 27) An injury to a bus operator walking a picket line outside MTA Headquarters, Tuesday morning, is a stark reminder that safety should be paramount in the minds of employees driving into or out of any MTA facility.

Board Chair Burke Calls for 'Seasoned Federal Mediator' to Intervene in Bargaining Talks (Sept. 27) MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke today called for a "seasoned federal mediator who is experienced in transit issues" to intervene in bargaining talks between the MTA and the UTU. Her proposal was announced during a pre-noon news conference at the Hall of Administration.

MTA, UTU in Contact, but No Talks Scheduled (Sept. 28) Although

negotiations between the MTA and UTU are stalled, the two parties have been in contact, but no timetable has been set for resumption of across-the-table talks.

Strike in 14th Day as MTA Continues Effort to Restart Talks;

UTU to Work on Counterproposal (Sept. 29) As striking UTU bus operators and AFL-CIO supporters demonstrated at City Hall on Friday - the 14th day of the work stoppage - the MTA continued its efforts to restart bargaining talks with union negotiators. A negotiating session is scheduled Saturday afternoon.

IN THE EVENT OF A WORK STOPPAGE:

Things You Need to Know

(Sept. 1) The Employee Handbook, just released to department heads for use in the event of a work stoppage, includes a number of provisions of immediate concern to MTA non-represented employees who would be affected by a strike.

At press time, Friday, the MTA and its three major unions - UTU, ATU and TCU - were still at the bargaining table. The "cooling off" period expires at 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 5. The MTA will notify local media immediately over the Labor Day weekend should there be a breakthrough in negotiations or if there is the possibility of a work stoppage next week.

[Read previous metro.net reports:](#)

["Cooling off period"](#)

["MTA Urges Patrons."](#)

Here's a list of things employees should know if a strike occurs:

- The Strike Emergency Hotline number is 213-680-1531. The Hotline will be updated periodically to reflect negotiating or strike-related activities.
- LADOT and other municipal bus lines will continue to operate. Metrolink trains will run. Metrolink also has contingency plans for "Red Line Special" buses that would stop at each Metro Red Line station between Union Station and Westlake/MacArthur Park.
- All scheduled vacations must be approved by the employee's executive officer.
- Alternate work schedules may be suspended. Employees on alternate schedules should check with their department heads.

Strike Coordinators

- Each executive officer has a coordinator who is responsible for assigning employees to special strike assignments. These coordinators are: Transit Operations, Josee Larochelle; Countwide Planning, Ilda Licon and Jackie Bobo; Construction, Pauline Lee; Management Audit, Patti Jacobs; Administration, Suzanne Lauver; Finance, Shawn Lowe; Procurement, Ted Montoya; and Office of the CEO, Safety, Government Relations, Ira Trachter.
- Employees who must report to work at an alternate location will be eligible for mileage compensation under the MTA's mileage reimbursement policy.
- Employees who use an MTA vehicle during a strike will be responsible for refueling it at an MTA fueling station, if possible. Employees who must use a commercial filling station may submit the fuel receipt for reimbursement.

Headquarters parking

- Employees who wish to park in the Headquarters parking structure must use the east and west entrances on Vignes Street. The Cesar Chavez entrance will be closed. Employee parking will be allowed only on P-4 to provide better security. Access to the parking structure elevators will be by card key, only.
- Visitors must enter the parking garage through the "neutral" gate at the intersection of Vignes and Ramirez (adjacent to the bus entrance). MTA employees may not use this entrance.
- The Building Services Help Desk on the 15th floor will be open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. for parking validations and other

services. Employees who carpool with two or more per vehicle may receive a parking validation. Parking tickets must show two or more employees' signatures and badge numbers to be eligible.

Mail Room hours

- The Mail Room will be open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Employees responsible for a mail stop must pick up and deliver mail on the following schedule: P-1 to Floor 5, 3 to 3:30 p.m.; Floors 6 to 10, 2:30 to 3 p.m.; Floors 11 to 15, 2 to 2:30 p.m.; Floors 16 to 20, 1:30 to 2 p.m.; Floors 21 to 25, 1 to 1:30 p.m. Interoffice mail will be available the day after pickup.
- The ITS Help Desk will be open from 7 a.m. until 5 p.m. Due to personnel limitations, Help Desk calls will be prioritized first by severity, then in the order received. Employees should back up critical information onto a diskette or zip disk.
- Records Management requests will be delayed by one day.

Copying and printing

- The Copy Center on the 15th floor will be open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.
- The Print Shop on P-2 will be closed. Mike Kennedy at extension 24353 will arrange for outside printing, as necessary.
- The Metro Café will be open for normal business hours - 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Limited menus, including a hot entree, will be served.

Public meetings, visitors

- Public meetings may only be held on the 3rd floor of Headquarters. A list of attendees must be given to MTA Security at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
- Employees will be required to escort their visitors from the Security desks on the Plaza and 3rd floor levels.
- Conference room setups and reconfigurations will be eliminated in the event of a strike. Employees who need to reconfigure a room for a meeting may check out equipment from the 15th floor Help Desk.

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Metro System Pass Holders Will Get Rebate Following Strike

(Sept. 1) In the event of a transit strike, Metro System pass holders will be eligible for a credit against the purchase of future passes. The MTA sells six types of passes ranging from the \$11 weekly pass to the \$42 monthly pass.

The amount of the credit, which will be based on the length of any work stoppage and type of pass, will be applied toward passes purchased for November and December. The MTA will not give a cash rebate.

Should a strike occur, the MTA is advising Metro pass and token sellers to immediately discontinue sales of the fare media. Patrons affected by a strike must surrender their passes in order to receive a credit.

Pass credits will be available at all Metro Customer Service Centers, Metro Mailout and at participating pass and token sales outlets.

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NO BREAKTHROUGH IN NEGOTIATIONS MTA Still Talking with UTU, TCU

UPDATE (Sept. 6) Contract talks were scheduled to continue, Wednesday, between the MTA and negotiators for the UTU and TCU. No further sessions have been scheduled with the ATU. For periodic updates on labor negotiations, call the MTA Strike Emergency HotLine at 213-680-1531.

(Sept. 5) Negotiators for the MTA and its three major unions worked through the Labor Day weekend without achieving a breakthrough. Bargaining talks are continuing.

Two unions - UTU and TCU - have agreed to extend the "cooling off" period through Saturday, Sept. 9. Should talks break down, union leaders pledged to give the public five business days' warning before striking. Meanwhile, Metro Bus and Metro Rail service continues as scheduled.

The ATU, which remained in bargaining talks with the MTA until 3 a.m., Tuesday, has not agreed to that plan. It is believed that a work stoppage by one union would involve all three.

The MTA Board convened at 10:30 a.m., today, for a briefing on progress at the bargaining table.

Strike would cripple region

Prior to the meeting, Board Chair and County Supervisor Yvonne Burke and Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky issued a statement warning that a transit strike "would cripple our region" and would cost the Los Angeles area "more than \$2 million a day in lost productivity."

The statement said that, while the MTA must take certain measures to trim operating costs, the agency has assured union employees it "is prepared to provide reasonable wage increases" and does not intend to cut benefits or lay off union workers.

"Our goal must be to find a balance that treats our employees fairly while building a financially stable world-class regional transit system," the statement said.

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DIVISION 7 ACES ANNUAL CHP INSPECTION

- **Manager Cites Teamwork**



**CLICK ON LOGO TO
VISIT DIVISION 7'S
HOME PAGE**

(Sept. 7) For the second time this year, a Transit Operations division has aced a California Highway Patrol inspection. This time, it was the Division 7 maintenance team that impressed the tough-minded inspectors.

In May, Division 1 passed its CHP inspection with flying colors.

Slated to give a thorough going-over to 20 Division 7 coaches, the CHP crew halted after inspecting 16 vehicles and finding only minor flaws - mostly burned-out light bulbs. An excellent result, according to division maintenance manager Mike Bottone, since half the coaches were 10 years old.

"We have a pretty good maintenance team out here and we really push teamwork," he says. "Our mechanics and service attendants speak up if they see a defect. If they find an easier or quicker way of doing something, we'll try it."

One of the best

The CHP also found no violations during the inspection of Division 7 operator training records, driving logs and pay journals. "They said our division was keeping good records," says division transportation manager Sonja Owens. "One of the best in the MTA."

The CHP inspectors selected 10 new NABI CNG coaches and 10 older TMC coaches to inspect. Starting at 9:30 a.m., Aug. 29, the inspection concluded at 11:45 a.m. and the buses were back on the street for their 2 p.m. runs.

Scoring high on CHP inspections is nothing new for Division 7, says Bottone, who has been at the division for seven years. In 1999, CHP inspectors pulled only one of the inspected buses. They pulled two in 1998 and one in 1997.

Division 7 has a maintenance team of 68 mechanics and 40 service attendants. The division operates a fleet of 246 coaches of which 158 are new NABIs and 88 are 10-year-old TMCs. Sixty-eight of the new coaches are assigned to the Metro Rapid fleet.

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BARGAINING TEAMS COMMUNICATING

Work Expected to Continue Through Monday

UPDATE (Sept. 8) With the "cooling off" period extension due to expire on Saturday, negotiators for the MTA were in communication, Friday, with bargaining teams for the UTU, ATU and TCU. None have indicated they intend to call a strike this weekend.

The MTA will operate weekend service hours on Saturday and Sunday and expects to operate normally on Monday. Employees also should expect to report to their usual work locations on Monday. The MTA Strike Emergency Hotline (213-680-1531) will be updated as appropriate.

Once the cooling off period expires, the UTU and TCU have pledged to give the public five days' warning in advance of a work stoppage. The ATU has not agreed to this plan.

Strike 'would cripple region'

Earlier this week, Board Chair and County Supervisor Yvonne Burke and Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky issued a statement warning that a transit strike "would cripple our region" and would cost the Los Angeles area "more than \$2 million a day in lost productivity."

The statement said that, while the MTA must take certain measures to trim operating costs, the agency has assured union employees it "is prepared to provide reasonable wage increases" and does not intend to cut benefits or lay off union workers.

"Our goal must be to find a balance that treats our employees fairly while building a financially stable world-class regional transit system," the statement said.

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SURVEY SHOWS NEED...

MTA Planning College-Level Courses, Expanded Training for Employees



(Sept. 8) Taking guidance from a recent survey of MTA Headquarters and operating division employees who want to earn undergraduate or graduate college degrees, the Human Resources Development and Training Department is working with area colleges to set up after-hours courses.

The target is to begin classes in January, 2001, says Marion Colston-Fayyaz, Development and Training manager. Top schools on the list as indicated in the survey: University of Phoenix and Cal State LA, although others are being considered.

The goal is to contract with one college whose course fees would fit within the parameters of the MTA's current tuition program. Tuition reimbursement levels are based on average fees charged by the California State University system.

Tuition reimbursement

Under the current tuition reimbursement program, the MTA reimburses non-contract employees up to \$1,755 per fiscal year for tuition assistance. The agency reimburses union employees at a rate of \$175 per undergraduate course completed and \$325 for each graduate course completed.

The survey also indicated strong employee interest in additional in-house training courses stressing business, management and computer skills.

According to the 456 employees who responded to the survey conducted last March, 60 percent said they would likely pursue a bachelor of science degree in information technology. Another 68.5 percent said they want to earn an MBA.

Most of those surveyed, 81.4 percent, preferred an 18-month program, while 45.8 percent said they would participate in a 27-month program.

Preferred Headquarters classes

The survey indicated that 79.3 percent preferred to attend classes at Headquarters, although 48.9 percent said they would attend classes in another downtown location. The preferred time slot for classes was 4:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

Survey respondents also confirmed their interest in five categories of subjects to be offered by Human Resources Development and Training (HRDT). They are business processes, including problem solving and strategic planning; management and supervision, including decision-making and executive writing; employee business skills, including public speaking and research; and computer software training, including PowerPoint presentations.

The fifth category of interest, an HRDT learning resource center, would prepare employees for the tests required for enrollment in MBA, teaching and graduate school programs.

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MTA Ends FY 2000 on High Notes by Marking Departments' Accomplishments

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(Sept. 8) The MTA ended Fiscal Year 2000 on a high note - actually many high notes - as demonstrated in reports presented, Thursday, to top management.

"If the MTA were a publicly traded company, I'd buy the stock," Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky told department heads during a recap of performance reports for the fiscal year's fourth quarter, which ended June 30.

Ranking among the fiscal year's top accomplishments were the extension of the Metro Red Line to North Hollywood six months ahead of schedule and under budget, the start of Metro Rapid bus service, improvements in transit service and fleet performance, the purchase of hundreds of new buses and the hiring of almost 1,000 new operators.

Bus service costs reduced

Also noteworthy was a dramatic reduction in the cost per hour of bus revenue service. Originally budgeted at \$105.23 per hour for the fiscal year, Transit Operations was able to reduce the cost to \$99.65 per bus revenue service hour.

Other highlights of the quarterly reports included the MTA's problem-free response to Y2K, completion of the Long-Range Transportation Plan update and a \$180 million rail vehicle lease package that earned the MTA \$15 million.

In addition, departments reported completing construction of new CNG fueling facilities at Divisions 5 and 7, the opening of Metro Green Line Division 22, and the success of a four-quadrant crossing gate demonstration on the Metro Blue Line.

Here are some specific departmental achievements for the year:

Transit Operations improved bus on-time pullouts from an average of 98.44 percent to 99.33 percent. Miles between road calls increased by 47 percent to 1,363 miles from 927 miles in 1999. Customer complaints dropped by more than 10 percent for the year. Bus cleanliness improved from a 5.6 rating to a 6.7 rating and rail cleanliness from an 8.2 rating to a 9.0 rating.
Countywide Planning was instrumental in planning and implementing the Metro Rapid bus demonstration project. It also took the lead in Consent Decree mitigation programs aimed at reducing bus overcrowding and adding new service. The department secured more than \$450 million in federal and state grants for MTA projects and programs, while managing \$14 billion in regional transportation funds for LA County.
Engineering and Construction completed the North Hollywood segment of the Metro Red Line on budget and six months ahead of time. The department started construction on a maintenance-of-way building for the Metro Green Line, as well as Metro Blue Line platform extensions.
Risk Management recovered a total of \$1.2 million in workers compensation and property damage claims. It also increased participation in the transitional duty program for employees injured on the job to an average of 80 employees.

Accounting reported that 100 percent of properly approved invoices were paid on time, while some 90,000 invoices totaling \$1.2 billion were processed during the fiscal year. The department converted the MTA to a new payroll system "with minimal hiccups" and processed all 26 payrolls during the year on time.

The Revenue Department completed installation of new ticket vending machines in the subway stations. All transit pass vendors now are enrolled in the agency's electronic fund transfer payment system. Vendors also can use Revenue's new automated voice ordering system when requesting fare media.

Procurement awarded contracts during the fiscal year for 370 new buses.

Management Audit completed 251 audits of contracts that totaled \$266 million.

Human Resources hired 969 operators to drive the MTA's growing fleet of buses. HR also revised grievance and discipline policies and created a special unit for non-represented employee issues. It established a Disciplinary Action Review Committee and an Alcohol and Drug Disciplinary Review Committee.

Strategic Planning completed the MTA's Strategic Business Plan with revised mission, vision and goals and developed 14 agency-wide objectives.

The Office of Security and Safety conducted a successful trial of four-quad crossing gates at a major Metro Blue Line intersection. OSS also organized an APTA peer review of MTA bus operator training. Under the OSS wing, LAPD detectives cracked major bus transfer theft and counterfeit rings.

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At a Monday afternoon news conference, Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky urged MTA unions to return to the bargaining table. PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

More Bargaining Talks Scheduled; Labor Federation Sets 'Strike Sanctions'

UPDATE (Sept. 11) Bargaining talks were scheduled Monday between MTA negotiators and leaders of the UTU and ATU, but were not expected to get under way until after an early afternoon news conference called by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

At the media event, the Federation - which represents 350 unions with a total of 800,000 members - expressed support for the MTA's unions by granting "strike sanction" to unions not directly involved in the MTA negotiations. Under such sanctions, other unions would be authorized to honor picket lines at MTA locations.

GO TO
[statement by MTA Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky released during a news conference, Saturday, Sept. 9.](#)

During a news conference at MTA Headquarters, Monday afternoon, Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky urged the UTU, ATU and TCU to return to the bargaining table.

UTU sets strike date

The UTU issued a news release, Saturday, Sept. 9, announcing that "a strike date has been set for 12:01 a.m. on Friday," Sept. 15.

Attorneys for the MTA, in a letter to the UTU, pointed out that a strike any earlier than Saturday, Sept. 16, would violate an earlier announced agreement. Under that agreement, the union had pledged to give the agency and its patrons five business days' notice before a strike.

At a news conference, Saturday, Lipsky challenged the unions to work with the MTA in hammering out an agreement by 5 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 13. Lipsky also welcomed the assistance of state mediators in the bargaining process.

Meantime, MTA employees should continue to report to their normal work locations for their usual assignments. The MTA Strike Emergency

Hotline at 213-680-1531 will continue to be periodically updated as new information becomes available.

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PHOTOS BY JOSE UBALDO



PACIFIC COAST HWY
STATION NORTHBOUND



PACIFIC COAST HWY
STATION SOUTHBOUND



PACIFIC COAST HWY
STATION NORTHBOUND



CARSON STREET STATION
SOUTHBOUND



CARSON STREET STATION
NORTHBOUND

Major Harbor Transitway Service Expansion Set October 1

(Sept. 12) The MTA is preparing for an increase of more than 18,000 hours of passenger service on the Harbor Transitway beginning Sunday, Oct. 1 – a major expansion that's in keeping with the extension of Metro Rail service to North Hollywood and the start of two Metro Rapid bus lines earlier this year.

During a three-month demonstration, which will run through December, Metro Express Line 445 will operate on 30-minute headways during peak hours and one-hour headways during off-peak. The expanded service will run from 5 a.m. until 10 a.m., seven days a week.

Thanks to a convergence of five bus lines - 444, 445, 446, 447 and 550 - at the Harbor/105 Freeway station, service will be available on an average of every eight minutes for passengers commuting to and from downtown LA. Cash fares on all Transitway bus lines will be reduced to \$1.35 – no freeway zone charges will be in effect.

The MTA currently serves about 2,500 daily Transitway riders. For Metro Green Line passengers, expanded bus service will make the Transitway a viable alternative to the crowded Metro Blue Line.

"With the improved frequency of service and by reducing fares, we'll give passengers a fresh look at the Transitway," says Rod Goldman, the Operations planner coordinating the demonstration.

Media event and marketing

The MTA and Caltrans, which constructed the Harbor Transitway and built the eight bus stations, plan to hold a news conference and ribbon-cutting, Sept. 29, to inaugurate the new Pacific Coast Highway and Carson Street bus stations and to announce the enhanced service.

MTA Marketing is planning to promote ridership on the Transitway by sending 50,000 direct-mail pieces to nearby homes. Billboard ads will be placed near the Carson Street bus station and newspapers ads are in the works. Pass and token sales outlets will get window posters. New timetables showing the service expansion also are being prepared.

The cost of operating the expanded service is estimated to be \$1.26 million. The MTA will monitor Harbor Transitway service during the demonstration to determine whether it meets at least 50 percent of the minimum standard for boardings per revenue service hour for express services.

The Harbor Transitway was completed in August, 1996. It runs along the median of the Harbor Freeway between Artesia Boulevard in Gardena north to Adams Boulevard in Los Angeles.

At present, Metro Bus lines 445 and LADOT Line 448 are the only express lines operating on the Transitway. Expanding service was a key recommendation of the MTA's South Bay/Gateway Transit Restructuring Study.

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Operator Evelyn Davis, being interviewed here by Leo Stallworth of KABC, Channel 7, told her story first to metro.net, then to seven TV stations, three print outlets and two radio stations, including a live interview on KFWB. DIVISION 6 PHOTO

Operator Evelyn Davis Witnesses Miracle on 7th Street: A Baby Boy

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 12) Operator Evelyn Davis set out on her first Line 20 run Tuesday morning thinking it would be just another day. But, at 7:30 a.m. at the corner of 7th and Hill streets, she witnessed the miracle of birth and held a vital new life in her hands. Suddenly, the day turned from ordinary to extraordinary.



Davis was boarding passengers when she was asked to call paramedics. A woman on her bus - later identified as Susana Millan - was having labor pains. She had hardly hung up from notifying Bus Operations Control when the woman had her first contraction.

Davis cleared the bus, offering passengers transfers. Two women, one Asian and one Hispanic, stayed aboard to assist the soon-to-be mother, who spoke only Spanish.

By this point, Millan was on the floor of the bus, ready to deliver.

'I just had to react'

"I saw her water break and then I saw the baby's head coming," said Davis, a grandmother of five. "I didn't have time to think about what to do - I just had to react."

Suddenly, the baby was resting in her hands. She placed the child, a healthy little boy, on the mother's stomach.

"He looked beautiful," Davis recalls. "His mom was fine and had a smile on her face. I gave her a hug and told her I was the godmother!"

Mother, child doing well

A few minutes later, City Fire Department paramedics arrived, checked mother and child and whisked the pair away to California Hospital Medical Center. The hospital reports Millan and her baby boy are doing well.

"It was the most amazing thing that ever happened to me," said Davis, still somewhat stunned at the event. "I felt ecstatic and very honored."

Nevertheless, by 10 a.m., Davis, a 16-year operator who drives out of Division 6, was back on her route picking up passengers – but still thinking about the special little passenger who came briefly into her life at the corner of 7th and Hill.

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BORN IN THE MTA Susana Millan and her new-born son, Juan José.

Meet Juan José!

'Bus Baby' and Mother Resting After Brush with Celebrity

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 13) Susana Millan and her new-born son, Juan José, became instant LA celebrities on Tuesday after local media learned about the birth aboard a Metro Bus.

California Hospital Medical Center was crowded all afternoon with TV cameras and reporters interviewing Millan and photographing the baby, who weighed in at 6 lbs, 6 oz. MTA Operator Evelyn Davis, who midwifed the birthing, also described her experiences to members of the press.



Operator Evelyn Davis visited Tuesday evening.

The media attention was somewhat overwhelming for the 19-year-old mother, who has two other infant children. But, Juan José - once he calmed down from his unusual debut into life - seemed to be taking things in stride, snoozing quietly at his mother's breast.

Operator Davis visited mother and child Tuesday evening, bringing flowers for the bedside. Millan had previously been a passenger on Davis' bus when she traveled to her maternity clinic. Neither expected, however, that they would have such an intimate experience on Tuesday.

Gifts from the MTA

At noon, Wednesday, Helen Ortiz of Public Affairs, representing the MTA, delivered a basket of gifts decorated with balloons to Millan and Juan José.

"I was very tired yesterday," Millan said,

recalling the frantic birth and media attention.

"Today, I feel

a lot better." In addition to Juan José, she is mother to José Isabel, 2, and Maria del Rocio, 1.

The gift basket was created by Diane Delaney-Talton, courtesy of MTA Employee Activities. Two dozen cookies for the nursing staff were provided by Metro Café manager Rob Byrd.

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Helen Ortiz of Public Affairs, representing the MTA, delivered a basket of gifts.

- [READ
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- PHOTOS BY
BILL HEARD
- PHOTO OF
OPERATOR
DAVIS'
VISIT
COURTESY
OF
KATREENA
SALGADO,
CALIFORNIA
HOSPITAL
MEDICAL
CENTER



Headquarters, Division Computers to be Upgraded with Microsoft Office 2000

(Sept. 14) Beginning in October, the MTA will start a six-month project to upgrade some 3,000 computers at Headquarters and in the operating divisions with new Microsoft Office 2000 software.

During the project, Information Technology Systems (ITS) technicians also will add any other upgrade "patches" required to bring each computer up to the latest software versions, says Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett. Agency computers currently use Microsoft Office 95.

"Our goal is to keep the MTA current with the latest Microsoft software," says Bennett. "We haven't had a major upgrade in five years."

More artificial intelligence is built into the Office 2000 software, according to ITS engineers, allowing the program to anticipate what the user wants to do and helping to accomplish it. Menus, for example, highlight a user's frequently used commands. It also provides better control over documents that may go through multiple changes by several employees.

Program more compatible

The upgrade will improve use of the Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint programs. It will allow users to save documents in html computer language, making it easier to place a document on a web site. Office 2000 also will be more compatible with other computer data bases, word processing and spread sheet programs.

Six ITS digital technicians, just over half the technician staff, will be assigned to the Office 2000 upgrade project. The cost of the project is estimated at \$750,000 to \$800,000.

In conjunction with the software upgrade, ITS and HR's Development and Training department will offer training in the Office 2000 program. A training workbook will be available for those who want to become familiar with the program's features.

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MTA ACTIVATES STRIKE CONTINGENCY PLAN

- **Negotiators Working to Avert Walkout**

GOVERNOR ISSUES STATEMENT

Governor Gray Davis, in a statement issued Thursday afternoon, urged the MTA and union negotiators "in the strongest possible terms" to continue bargaining talks. Noting that he had dispatched state mediators to Los Angeles, Davis said he is "ready to assist the parties in a negotiated solution.

"This is a local dispute and must be resolved locally," the governor said, "however the Los Angeles economy impacts every Californian and a strike hurts the entire state."

(Sept. 14) The MTA activated its Strike Contingency Plan as of noon, today. With barely 12 hours to go before a possible work stoppage, employees with strike contingency duty were directed to report to their strike work assignments, some of which begin as early as 11 p.m., Thursday.

In hopes of preventing a work stoppage, the MTA gave a comprehensive contract proposal Wednesday evening to the ATU – a meeting is scheduled Sept. 19. Thursday morning, the MTA exchanged contract proposals with the UTU. Agency negotiators also were in talks with TCU leaders Thursday afternoon.

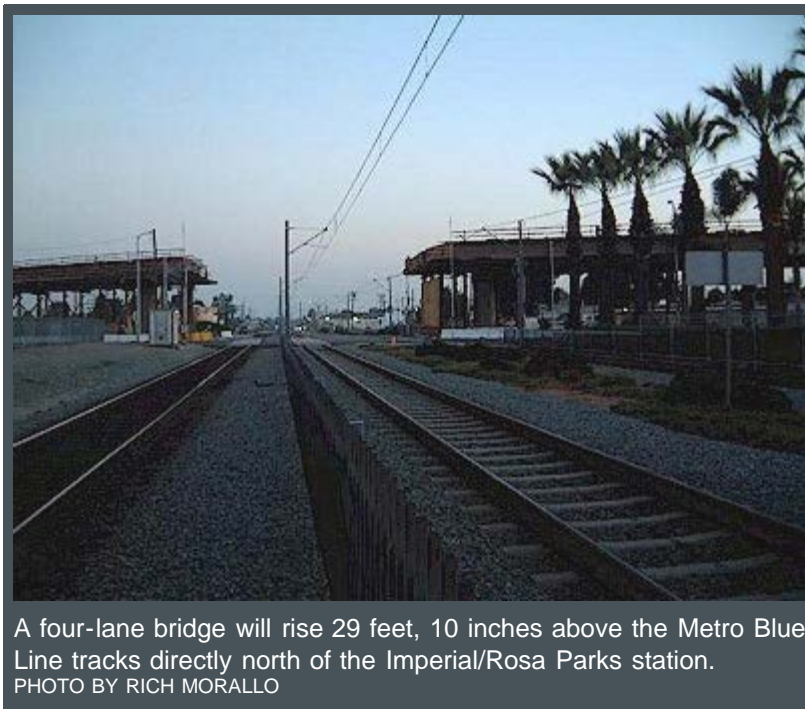
STRIKE EMERGENCY HOTLINE
213-680-1531

Wednesday afternoon, a group of nine MTA Board members led by Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke and Mayor Richard Riordan urged the unions to continue bargaining talks.

Unless there is a breakthrough in negotiations, a strike by union employees is likely to occur at 12:01 a.m., Friday, Sept. 15. In the event of a work stoppage, UTU leaders have instructed bus operators to complete their runs after the strike deadline and avoid stranding passengers.

The MTA Strike Emergency Hotline will be updated as more information becomes available.

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MAJOR SAFETY IMPROVEMENT

- **Construction Crews Closing Gap on Imperial Highway Overcrossing**

(Sept. 15) Construction crews are closing the final 110-foot gap in a massive four-lane bridge being built to span the Metro Blue Line tracks directly north of the Imperial/Rosa Parks station.

The vehicle flyover, scheduled to be completed by mid-2001, will be a major safety improvement in an area where commuter and freight trains, cars, trucks and buses all meet.

The Rosa Parks station, where the Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line connect, is the busiest on the light-rail system. The station complex includes a large bus zone and patron park and ride lot. It also is the location of the MTA's Rail Operations Center and a Sheriff's station.

The MTA, the state, the county, and the City of Los Angeles are sharing the \$16.1 million cost of the project. Caltrans is responsible for construction of the 3,000-foot bridge, which will carry four lanes of east- and westbound traffic. The bridge will rise 29 feet, 10 inches above the Metro Blue Line tracks, providing room for trains and electrical power lines.

To accommodate the placement of girders and precast concrete beams, Thursday night, the tracks between the 103rd Street and Compton stations were taken out of service. A bus bridge was set up for patrons between 9 p.m. and 3:30 a.m., Friday.

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STRIKE AVERTED FOR 24 HOURS

- **Bargaining Talks Continue**

(Sept. 15) Negotiators for the MTA and the UTU, which represents bus operators, reached agreement just past midnight, Thursday, to extend bargaining talks for another 24 hours. Bargaining resumed at 11:20 a.m., Friday. The next strike deadline is set for midnight.

Employees with strike duty should be prepared to assume their assignments again tonight. Some assignments begin as early as 11 p.m.

Contract negotiations continued between the MTA and UTU today. Miguel Contreras, executive secretary treasurer of the LA County Federation of Labor, helped broker last night's bargaining talks extension agreement.

Negotiators for the ATU, representing operations maintenance workers, and the TCU, representing clerical employees, aren't due to meet with the MTA until Tuesday, Sept. 19.

In the event of a strike, Metrolink officials said the rail service would honor MTA monthly, semimonthly and weekly passes, as well as passes for seniors, disabled riders and students. LADOT's DASH, Community Connections, Commuter Express, and Smart Shuttles; Foothill Transit; Long Beach Transit; Norwalk Transit; Torrance Transit, and Santa Monica Big Blue Bus also offered to honor MTA passes.

Metrolink plans to add four midday trains to the Antelope Valley Line to Sylmar/San Fernando and four midday trains on the Ventura County Line to Chatsworth. Metrolink also would provide service on "Red Line Special" buses from Union Station to downtown stops.

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STATEMENT FROM YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE
Chair, MTA Board of Directors
September 16, 2000

The MTA calls upon the bus drivers' union to get our employees back to work and to get back to the bargaining table. That's what the MTA wants and that's what the public deserves. The MTA management is empowered to negotiate and is ready to resume negotiations immediately.

The MTA shares the public's outrage and frustration that the union has chosen to break off negotiations and leave Los Angeles' bus and rail riders stranded. The union walk out is unnecessary and terribly harmful to hundreds of thousands of poor and middle-class people who rely on public transportation to get to work, school, medical appointments and other essential needs.

It's time for the union to get serious about working with the MTA to find solutions and savings that will allow us to continue to expand our bus and rail service to meet the needs of our community. We have made multiple proposals to the union, all of which have been rejected, without any union alternatives proposed. It's time to get back to work.

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STATEMENT FROM YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE
CHAIR, MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS
September 17, 2000

As many Los Angeles residents who depend on MTA buses and trains prepare to return to work or school on Monday, they face an unwelcome and unnecessary challenge: finding alternatives to public transportation. This problem is caused by one thing and one thing only – the bus drivers union walked out of negotiations with the MTA on Friday and called a strike, leaving hundreds of thousands of people stranded.

I am here with other members of the MTA Board to reiterate the MTA's call to the union to get our employees back to work and get back to the bargaining table. This strike is unnecessary, unreasonable and unconscionable. It should stop and it should stop now.

The bus drivers union is doing a terrible disservice to MTA customers, employees and all Los Angeles residents and taxpayers...

- By going out on strike and picketing our contractor sites, the union is refusing to allow even lifeline bus service to operate in our community. That leaves Los Angeles' poorest and most needy residents without any means of getting to work, school, doctor's appointments and other critical destinations. And, tomorrow, if this strike continues, all Los Angelenos will be impacted by what we expect to be a significant increase in traffic.
- By refusing to negotiate and rejecting the numerous contract proposals presented by the MTA – proposals that included wage increases, protection of benefits and a variety of ways of reducing MTA costs with minor impacts on employees – the union is thumbing its nose at the MTA and taxpayers, who understand that MTA must find efficiencies and cost savings in order to expand much-needed transportation services.
- By refusing to return to the bargaining table and refusing to offer any proposals, the bus drivers union is preventing us from reaching any possible solution to this crisis.

Today, I urge the bus drivers union to do three things:

- First, call an end to this strike. Stop holding our city's poor and middle-class residents hostage. Let the buses and trains run.
- Second, return to the bargaining table with a new commitment to find solutions and savings. The MTA must reduce its operating costs in order to continue to expand transit services to our community. We have already dramatically reduced overhead, but we need to find efficiencies in the labor costs covered by union contracts, which represent 70 percent of our operating costs.
- Third, immediately end your picketing at our contractor's sites and allow the MTA to operate the lifeline service that provides transportation to the poorest of the poor and the area's most needy residents.

We must find solutions and savings. We call on the unions to do just that.

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Statement from Zev Yaroslavsky

Member, MTA Board of Directors
September 17, 2000

It is time to dispel some of the myths around these contract negotiations:

First, this strike is not simply about overtime. This strike is quite simply caused by a union that is unwilling to address critical issues to the MTA's future...and a union that refuses to work with us to reduce our operating costs, which are the highest of any transit agency in the region.

Let's look at the facts:

The MTA has made more than dozen proposals on how to reduce our operating costs by finding efficiencies, including reducing overtime, expanding our entry-level wage category and increasing the use of part-time workers in peak times. They have all been rejected without a single meaningful alternative offered by the union.

The MTA has asked for information on how the \$75 million in taxpayers' money we've given the unions over the last three years for health coverage is spent, to see if we could find efficiencies without impacting our workers. The unions have refused to provide that information - despite the fact they are legally obligated to do so. We want to know what they're doing with the taxpayer's \$75 million.

Second, our negotiators are fully empowered to reach an agreement. To suggest otherwise is simply to create a smoke screen and avoid the real issues.

Third, it is fully within the union's power to send out employees back to work and begin bargaining again. To suggest that a mediator is the only one with authority to re-start the negotiations is ridiculous. Our negotiators will be at this hotel ready to bargain at 10 a.m. on Monday. We hope the union will be, too.

I call upon the unions to start dealing with the issues, stop creating a smoke screen and get back to work.

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NEGOTIATORS BACK AT BARGAINING TABLE

- **Full Negotiations to Begin Wednesday**

(Sept. 19) Negotiators for the MTA and UTU met across the bargaining table, today, for the first time since late Friday. No actual negotiations took place, but the two sides agreed to resume negotiations at 10 a.m., Wednesday. The UTU said its bargaining team will be at the table.

LINK TO: [Other Developments in Today's Strike News Headlines](#)

CEO Julian Burke told media gathered at the Pasadena Hilton that he is pleased with today's meeting. UTU General Chairman James Williams agreed with Burke's assessment of the talks.

The MTA asked the UTU to bring written responses to the agency's earlier contract proposals, but union leaders would not commit to that, according to an MTA spokesman.

ATU Talks Tentative

Negotiations between the MTA and ATU are tentatively scheduled for Wednesday. The two sides were making progress when the talks adjourned, Sept. 14. The MTA and the TCU, which represents clerks, continued negotiations today.

In another development, the head of the LA County Federation of Labor announced that 8,000 to 10,000 AFL-CIO members plan to march in front of MTA Headquarters at 11 a.m., Thursday.

Meanwhile, picketing continued at MTA Headquarters and at the operating divisions.

"Things seem to be quiet and orderly at the divisions. There have been very few problems," said Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner. "The volunteers helping at the divisions have been diligent about working their shifts. We appreciate that."

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Artist's rendering of mixed-use complex proposed for MTA properties adjacent to Metro Red Line's Westlake/MacArthur Park station.

Retail Complex Proposed at Westlake/MacArthur Park Station

(Sept. 18) The MTA is in the early stages of approving a plan to build a mixed-use retail complex on the 3.65 acres it owns adjacent to the Metro Red Line's Westlake/MacArthur Park station. The agency also will request development proposals for properties at the Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/Vermont stations.

The proposed Westlake/MacArthur Park development would span an area reaching from the subway station plaza, east along both flanks of the kiss 'n ride lot and across Westlake Avenue to include a large right-angled property that also fronts on Bonnie Brae and 7th streets.

350-student middle school

The project envisions 43,000 square feet for restaurants and retail kiosks and a 52,000 square foot market and possibly a 350-student charter middle school.

The stores would open onto the subway station plaza and kiss 'n ride. Across the street, the developer's preliminary plan shows a possible three-story structure built around a mall with shops, restaurants and the market. The plan indicates space for second-level parking and, on the third level, the middle school.

The Board will consider a staff recommendation at its Sept. 28 meeting that would authorize the CEO to enter an exclusive six-month negotiation agreement with the Macleod Partnership of Santa Monica for development of the Westlake/MacArthur Park properties. If the negotiations are successful, the staff will return to the Board for approval of a development agreement.

Following Board approval, Transportation Planning Manager Ray Sosa estimates actual construction might not begin for up to a year and a half. The MTA issued requests for proposals to a list of 300 developers and consultants and received four development proposals for the station site.

Generate income, improve area

The agency also wants to develop 2.8 acres at the Wilshire/Western station and about 8 acres around the Wilshire/Vermont station. Requests for proposals will be issued later this month. The agency's goals are to generate investment income from the developments and to improve the environment around the stations.

Developers have recently expressed interest in the Wilshire/Western site, which will be developed in conjunction with the Community Redevelopment Agency. The MTA owns 1.7 of the 2.8 acres, part of which is used as a layover zone for Metro Buses. Any development must include parking for the buses.

At the Wilshire/Vermont station, the MTA owns the entire block on Wilshire between Shatto Place and Vermont Avenue, plus several other abutting parcels of land east of Shatto Place. Given the current real estate market, proposals could include commercial retail development and perhaps housing.

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SEPTEMBER PASSES FOR NON-CONTRACT EMPLOYEES:

MTA Revenue Director Agapito Diaz has announced that September monthly passes will be issued to non-contract employees. These passes will be honored by Metrolink, all LADOT bus lines, Foothill Transit, Long Beach Transit, Norwalk Transit, Torrance Transit and Santa Monica Big Blue Bus. The passes are being issued only for employees, not for dependents. Passes also will be made available to employees working strike duty at outlying locations. To obtain a September pass, contact Wendy Davis at 922-4624 by 3 p.m., each day.



UTU pickets march Saturday outside of Division 18.

PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD



Division 18 Transportation Manager A.J. Taylor shows Kwesi Annan of Equipment Engineering what needs to be done to keep bus batteries charged during the strike.



Division 18 Transportation Manager A.J. Taylor talks with, from left, Kwesi Annan of Equipment Engineering, Jean Belvin of Purchasing and Anthony Chua of ITS, who were on strike duty Saturday.

MTA RETURNS TO BARGAINING TABLE

• UTU Negotiators are No-Shows

(Sept. 18) MTA negotiators returned to the bargaining table at 10 a.m., today, in hopes of rekindling negotiations with the UTU, ATU and TCU. By noon, union leaders had not responded, although a state mediator urged them to do so through phone calls to union headquarters. Meantime, picketing continued outside MTA Headquarters and operating divisions.

County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, joined by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and four other Board members, held a news conference Sunday morning at which they called on union leaders to resume negotiations and order their members back to work. The MTA Board scheduled a closed-door meeting at 12:30 p.m., today, the Hall of Administration to discuss the labor situation.

Link to MTA Statements

- [MTA Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke: 9/17](#)
- [MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke: 9/16](#)
- [MTA Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky: 9/17](#)

In two statements issued Sunday, Burke said, "The bus drivers union is doing a terrible disservice to MTA customers, employees and all Los Angeles residents and taxpayers." She said the union should end the strike, return to negotiations "with a new commitment to find solutions and savings," and stop picketing MTA contractors trying to operate "lifeline" services.

In a separate statement, Supervisor and Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky emphasized that the strike "is not simply about overtime" and noted that the MTA "has made more than a dozen proposals on how to reduce our

operating costs...." He added that ..."our negotiators are fully empowered to reach an agreement."

Pickers blocked entrances

With union members blocking entrances at MTA Headquarters and operating divisions, non-contract employees usually had to wait several minutes for the picketers to part so vehicles could enter. Security guards were stationed at entrances and the MTA is coordinating with the LAPD to avoid lengthy backups on city streets around the Gateway Building.

MTA officials appealed for patience and understanding on the part of all employees to avoid any problems at the entrances to agency buildings and facilities.

The strike, which began at 12:01 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 16, also has disrupted service on all but two regular Metro Bus lines. Contract Line 96, from Sherman Oaks and Burbank to downtown Los Angeles, was in operation today, along with contract Line 167, from Northridge to Studio City.

Another MTA contractor was running bus service between Union Station and Metro Red Line stops as far west as Westlake/MacArthur Park.

None of the five "lifeline" bus routes the MTA had hoped to operate to serve passengers during the strike were in operation. Union picket lines at the contractor's yard prevented Teamsters union members from driving.

First Transit, a contractor that operates 10 Metro Bus lines in the mostly eastern and southern areas of the county, said it would go to court today to seek an injunction to prevent picketing at its facility. Union drivers for the company have refused to cross the UTU picket lines.

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OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN TODAY'S STRIKE NEWS HEADLINES...

(Sept. 19) Only two regular MTA lines were in operation again Tuesday. Lines 96 and 167, which serve the San Fernando Valley, were being operated by an MTA contractor.

Metrolink and a second MTA contractor were providing service on Line 888, the "Red Line Emulator," for commuter rail passengers arriving at Union Station. The line is divided into two routes, with 22 20-foot buses assigned to the "A" route, which serves subway stops as far west as Westlake/MacArthur Park. The "B" route, with eight full-sized buses, takes passengers as far as the 7th and Metro station.

LINK TO:
[Negotiators](#)
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[Table](#)

"Reaction from riders has been positive so far," says Martha Butler, a transportation planning manager who is coordinating Line 888 service. "Most are grateful they have transportation to get them downtown." Butler is out each morning at 5 a.m. to oversee the bus service and the activities of some 20 MTA Ambassadors.

Board committees cancelled

The MTA Board cancelled its September committee meetings, originally scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, and forwarded all items to the full Board meeting, Thursday, Sept. 28.

Employees responded enthusiastically to the offer of free September monthly passes. Revenue Director Agapito Diaz announced that the passes will be issued at the Customer Relations desk on the Plaza Level between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. each day. Wendy Davis is in charge of distributing passes.

In addition to calling 1-800-COMMUTE for information, employees and passengers also can call 1-800-286-RIDE. By phoning this number, operated by the Southern California Association of Governments, a caller can get information about alternatives to MTA service.

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Metrolink commuters board "Red Line Emulator" buses, Wednesday morning, on Patsaouras Plaza. Alicia Grondin, right, of Risk Management, directs commuters. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD.

Bargaining Talks Resume; Continue into Afternoon

- **CEO Burke, UTU's Williams Optimistic**
- [AFL-CIO Rally Planned for Gateway](#)
- [City Council Calls for Strike's End](#)
- [Paychecks Friday for Strikers](#)

(Sept. 20) Negotiators for the MTA and UTU were back at the bargaining table at 10 a.m., today, for a negotiating session that continued after a lunch break. It was the first substantive discussions since union leaders called a strike, Sept. 15. Later, officials on both sides reported some progress, although there was no possibility of reaching a settlement today.

In a brief meeting with local media prior to today's meeting, CEO Julian Burke characterized Tuesday's preliminary meeting with the UTU as "cordial and a beginning." Asked about today's bargaining session, he said, "Hope is my gut instinct."

Echoing Burke's optimism, UTU General Chairman James Williams said, "We are prepared to start negotiations...We'll be there as long as it takes. Things are going to move forward."

Some tentative agreements

Prior to the breakdown in contract talks, the MTA had submitted a comprehensive written proposal to the UTU. The two sides had negotiated a number of tentative agreements.

The MTA is asking the UTU to provide responses to contract items still at issue. These include wages, pensions, benefits, operator scheduling and work rules.

Meanwhile, MTA negotiators are in communication by phone with ATU negotiators. No face-to-face meeting has been scheduled.

A meeting has been scheduled Tuesday, Sept. 26, for negotiations with the TCU. The MTA and TCU are already in agreement on many contract issues.

AFL-CIO Rally Planned for Gateway

MTA Security officials are preparing for a protest rally by AFL-CIO members sometime between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Thursday, at MTA Headquarters. Some 3,000 to 6,000 protesters are expected.

Security officials warn that streets around MTA Headquarters may be

blocked. Although the rally is expected to be peaceful and orderly, MTA staff, they advise MTA staff to avoid scheduling travel from the building during the rally period. Staff members should be prepared to remain in the building between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., or until the area clears of protesters.

Council calls for strike's end

The Los Angeles City Council adopted a motion, Tuesday, calling on the MTA and UTU to "return to the bargaining table immediately to resolve the strike." The motion said the strike is affecting the poor, seniors, students, city employees and others, resulting in "massive disruption in the workplace, in the economy and in the education system...."

An amendment to the motion requested Governor Gray Davis "to negotiate with the (MTA) and the (UTU) to bring this strike to an end."

Paychecks Friday for strikers

Paychecks for the pay period of Sept. 3 - 16 will be distributed to strikers starting Friday and continuing through Monday. At most operating divisions, the staff will set up a table near the front entrance to distribute checks.

Paychecks for bus division employees will be distributed between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Paychecks for rail division and ROC employees will be distributed between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

For union employees who work at MTA Headquarters, the Payroll Department is making arrangements for distribution of paychecks at the Customer Relations desk on the Plaza level from 8:30 a.m. until 3 p.m., Friday. Employees should use the double door entrance to Customer Relations. Pay envelopes not picked up by 3:00 pm will be placed in the mail.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: (Sept. 20) National Labor Relations Board regulations and California state law protect employees who are on strike and provide a number of free-speech and public-assembly rights for those walking a picket line. The MTA supports these rights. The MTA Safety and Security Department explains those rights in this document.

Activities on Picket Lines

- The MTA supports the right of unionized employees to engage in a lawful work stoppage (strike) or other lawful job actions (information pickets, informational campaigns etc.)
- Personnel on any picket line, and all management personnel, must obey all federal, state and local laws and ordinances. Any violation of the California Penal Code or the California Vehicle Code may result in arrest or citation as appropriate.
- When on strike, unionized employees have the right to establish a "Picket Line" in public areas such as sidewalks, public plazas, and other such areas that are generally open to the public.
- Personnel on the picket line may film or take photos as they see fit.
- Personnel on the picket line may use a bull horn within reasonable noise restrictions.
- Picket lines may only be established in the area of the employer's facilities or near the facilities of any firm or agency that is engaged in "Replacement Work."
- Picket lines may not be established near firms or agencies that are not engaged in replacement work.
- A picket line may be established with persons walking on a public sidewalk in front of the employer's driveway.
- Personnel on the picket line may hold placards, signs, banners and other such materials.
- The picket line may not "block" vehicle or pedestrian traffic in or out of the employer's property.
- The picket line may walk in front of vehicle or pedestrian traffic for a reasonable amount of time. This time period will vary depending upon the total circumstances at each location. If the location is in an isolated area, and delaying traffic in the area of the driveway (facility entrance) will not cause a traffic problem, then a delay of about two minutes may be reasonable. If the location is on a busy roadway, then a delay of only a few seconds may be allowed as any further delay could cause a traffic safety problem.

[\(Click here to read about crossing a picket line safely.\)](#)

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SAFETY AND COURTESY NEEDED WHEN CROSSING PICKET LINES

(Sept. 20) With UTU pickets walking the line at the entrances of MTA buildings and operating divisions, employees should "exercise extreme caution" when crossing the lines in a vehicle, the Office of Safety and Security advises.

Drivers attempting to cross a picket line are obligated under state law to do so safely, remembering that pedestrians - even picketers - always have the right of way on sidewalks. Drivers must wait until the road or driveway is clear of pedestrians prior to moving forward.

"We all recognize," the Safety Department notes, "that personnel on the picket lines will occupy the area for a certain amount of time, from several seconds to a few minutes."

The Department asked drivers to be patient and wait until the area is clear. "Please understand that it will take some time to get through the picket line. When the line opens up for you, then proceed safely."

[\(Click here to read about picketers' rights.\)](#)

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Was a Regional Blackout Averted When the Trains Stopped Running?

Other Notes from Metro Rail
[Hot Boxes at Rail Crossings](#)
[Squatters in the Subway?](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 20) Did the MTA help save Los Angeles from a blackout on Monday? With bus and rail operators on strike and trains out of service, the agency had no problem complying when California Edison requested cutbacks in electrical power to Metro Rail lines.

Monday's heat was edging toward a record when the power company instituted a "rolling brownout" to reduce power usage in the region. The MTA cooperates with Edison in such circumstances by taking certain Metro Rail traction power substations off-line.

"When Edison called and asked us to shut down four traction power stations, we said, 'No problem,'" said Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. No trains had run since the strike began at midnight, Friday, and power had been shut off since early Saturday.

Later, as the power situation worsened, Edison called again and asked the MTA to shut down its entire Metro Rail power grid.

Again, the answer was, "No problem."

Other Notes from Metro Rail

Hot Boxes

The heat that plagued the region this week was especially hard on the electrical control boxes that operate the Metro Blue Line crossing gates.

The boxes normally are cooled by the frequent up and down movement of the red-and-white-striped arms. But, with no light-rail service in operation - and only an occasional Union Pacific freight train passing through an intersection - the control boxes were overheating.

"Our people were running around like one-armed paperhangers opening the boxes to ventilate the controls," said de la Cruz. "For public safety, it was important to keep the crossing gates in working order."

Squatters in the Subway?

With no Metro Red Line trains in operation, will the subway tunnels become home to squatters? Not if the MTA and the LAPD can help it.

On Sunday, de la Cruz and Safety Chief Paul Lennon walked the tunnel between Union Station and 7th and Metro to check the tracks and look into cross-passages. They found no one.

Since then, several "intrusion alarms" - which could indicate someone attempted to force their way through an emergency hatch - have been recorded.

But, LAPD officers are conducting a clean sweep of the entire subway system to check for unauthorized "inhabitants."

"It's a matter of safety," said de la Cruz. "Even though the power to the tracks is shut off, it would be unsafe for anyone to be in the system. They also could damage equipment that's vital to the safe operation of

the trains."

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Union rally drew an estimated crowd of 1,700 to 2000 to Patsaouras Plaza at MTA Headquarters Thursday morning.

STRIKERS RALLY AT MTA HEADQUARTERS

SCENES FROM THE CROWD

Strikers pose as "Barney," umbrellas and "mini-buses" at Thursday's rally.



Board Members Call News Conference

Talks to Resume Friday

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(Sept. 21) Striking MTA workers and their AFL-CIO supporters gathered at MTA Headquarters, Thursday morning, for a rally aimed at bolstering the unions' contract demands.

The LAPD Incident Command Post estimated the crowd at between 1,700 and 2,000 at the height of the rally. Throughout the day, the crowd was upbeat and noisy, but peaceful. The LAPD reported no incidents during the event.

The MTA Board of Directors, meanwhile, called a news conference for 2 p.m. at the Hall of Administration, to respond to the union rally and to discuss the status of negotiations.

No bargaining talks were set for today, although negotiators for the MTA and UTU are scheduled to meet at 10 a.m., Friday. Negotiations also are to be held, Tuesday, with the TCU. No face-to-face meetings have been scheduled with the ATU.



Lined the sidewalks

Waving strike signs and American flags and wearing their blue uniform shirts and pants, MTA bus and rail operators began lining the sidewalks along Cesar Chavez and Vignes streets about 10 a.m.



PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

Congregated in a parking lot just north of the Gateway building, some line-danced to music that blared from huge speakers set up at the street corner. Two operators circulated through the crowd wearing miniature buses around their waists. Another, dressed as the Barney cartoon character, waved a picket sign at passing cars.

As the time approached for the noon march to Patsaouras Plaza, speakers - including City Council members, Assembly members and mayoral candidates - stood on the bed of a sound truck to harangue the crowd. The strikers roared approval and chanted strike slogans.

Just before noon, the demonstrators began moving toward Patsaouras Plaza where they heard more rallying speeches. Holding picket sign overhead, they then circled the plaza, then began to disperse and had cleared the plaza by 1 p.m.

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BREAKING NEWS...

CEO Announces 'New Process' for Labor Talks

(Sept. 22) CEO Julian Burke announced late Friday afternoon that a new process is being initiated to help the labor negotiations along.

The new effort was discussed Friday morning during a conference call that involved the CEO, Board Chair Yvonne Burke, Assembly Speaker Robert Hertzberg, Mayor Richard Riordan and Miguel Contreras of the County Federation of Labor.

As a result, Speaker Hertzberg put together a fact-finding team whose members include Assemblyman Herb Wesson of Los Angeles, a retired California Supreme Court Justice and, possibly, others. Wesson was expected at the Pasadena Hilton Friday evening to meet with MTA and union negotiators. In the meantime, further negotiations have been suspended.

The CEO called the development one that "can only be helpful, not harmful, for negotiators to get a clearer picture of both sides' positions."

"This is a start of another process so we can communicate better," Burke said.

**Bargaining Talks Moving in Fits and Starts;
But Negotiators Were at the Table Friday**

(Sept. 22) Bargaining talks between the MTA and UTU inched forward in fits and starts, Friday, interspersed with caucuses by one side or the other.

The original meeting time of 10 a.m. came and went, but during the noon hour, the negotiating teams reassembled at the bargaining table. Those on-scene for the talks included CEO Julian Burke, Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky and Chief Financial Officer Dick Brumbaugh, along with members of the MTA labor relations team.

In the early afternoon, UTU General Chairman James Williams told media assembled at the bargaining site to stand by for an important announcement at 4 p.m. - a statement reporters took to be a positive sign. It seemed very unlikely, however, that a contract settlement would be announced.

Meanwhile, out on the streets

On the streets, meanwhile, municipal bus lines and Metrolink were bearing the brunt of getting transit-dependent commuters to their destinations.

However, MTA contractor First Transit managed to roll 55 of the 89 buses it provides to serve 12 Metro Bus lines, mostly in the South Bay, South Central and Harbor areas. Pickets that had been patrolling First Transit bus yard entrances were absent Friday. In the Valley, Coach USA continued to provide its 18 buses for lines 96 and 167.

And, in downtown LA, the "Red Line Emulator" continued to ferry passengers from Patsaouras Plaza to subway station stops as far west at Westlake/MacArthur Park.

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Benita Horn and Rudy Chairez of Human Resources and Mary Jane West of Countywide Planning are among 90 Customer Information volunteers.

PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

Volunteers Keeping Things Running During Strike; Learning Lots about Unfamiliar Areas of MTA



Supervisor Andrea Smith helps Doreatha Roberts of Management Audit.



Supervisor Wil Beard works with Lisa Martinez of Countywide Planning.



Elmo Ju of Internal Audit fields a customer call.

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 22) If it has accomplished nothing else thus far, the strike against the MTA has given many non-contract employees a look at areas of the agency they may not have been familiar with.

Take Mary Jane West, a transportation planning manager who's assigned to Customer Information. She and some 90 other volunteers are handling almost 5,000 calls a day

They're attempting to steer frantic commuters through an intricate network of municipal bus lines and commuter shuttles. And they're doing it while coping with an



unfamiliar computer program and poring over well-thumbed Thomas Guides.

West, who even dreams at night about helping callers, has heard lots of sad stories from people who just can't "get there from here." Others will put up with almost any circuitous routing to reach their destinations.

"One man needed to go to Santa Monica to attend a trade show," she remembers. "I routed him from Long Beach to Del Amo and then to LAX where he caught a Santa Monica bus. He didn't mind spending the three hours to get there, he was so grateful to be able to do it."

Dusting and sweeping

Or take Jeff Hadge, a systems analyst at the RRC who's been assigned to maintenance at the Arthur Winston Division. He and his fellow volunteers have dusted and swept out idled buses. They've kept the batteries fresh by starting up the coaches every day or so. They've removed graffiti, inspected tires and made coolant checks.

"We've done various things to keep the fleet ready for when the strike is over," says Hadge.

Over on the transportation side, TOS Laureen Lemon has been correcting payroll errors and making scheduling assignments. She misses her operator friends who are walking the picket line. "We have a great group of people here," she says.

Out at Division 15 in Sun Valley, John Takahashi, a Transit Operations administrative analyst, had just come in from starting up three rows of buses. Every day, he and his five colleagues rotate through the fleet.

Crossing the picket line

Takahashi, who lives in West Hills, has had a quicker commute these past few days and has experienced little problem getting through the picket lines and onto the Division 15 property. "I've noticed that they let you through in a couple of minutes if the division manager's there... otherwise you might have to wait longer."

TOS Barbara Maycott, whose regular daily assignment is to work in the Division 15 transportation office, has caught up on all her usual work of recording operator missouts and attendance, researching customer complaints and filing workers' comp reports. Now, she's helping the division's instruction department update Vehicle Transit Trailing records. "It's real quiet here," she says. "We're loving it."

John Neal, a TOS at Division 9, also is up-to-date on his normal work as the log keeper. So, he's using the time to "catch up on a lot of little things...it's sort of a refresher."

Despite the idle bus yard, Neal is happy to point out that Division 9 "made Number One in the system with the best on-time performance. It wasn't easy because we have the oldest fleet in town, but we also have excellent mechanics."

The 'real heroes'

Back in Customer Information, Supervisor Andrea Smith is one of those Mary Jane West calls "the real heroes. The supervisors are here when we arrive and when we leave and they're always cheerful with us and our questions."

Smith, who has been in Customer Information for 17 years and dates from SCRTD days, describes this past week as "hectic." She says callers want whatever routing that will get them close to their destinations. "If

we can just get them into the area, they're happy with that...even if they have to walk, they're willing to do it."

As for the volunteers staffing Customer Information, Smith says, "Everyone we have working with us has dug right in with minimal training."

And she notes that callers appreciate the volunteers' efforts. "The people who call realize the volunteers are doing the best they can. They thank us for trying to help them, even if we can't do anything for them."

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Bargaining Talks in News Blackout as Metrolink Shuttle Adds Service

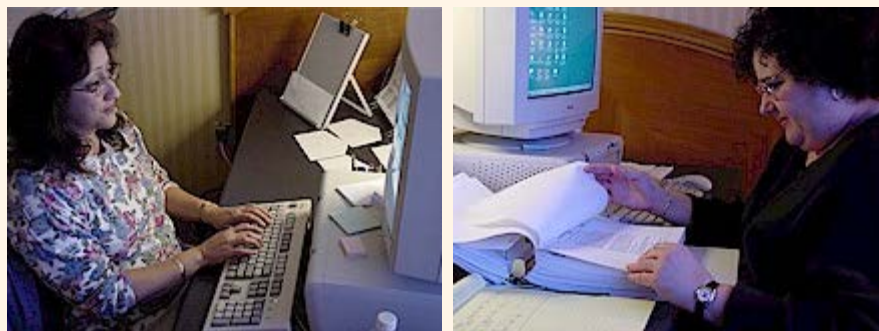
(Sept. 25) With negotiations between the MTA and UTU continuing under a news blackout in Pasadena, Monday, the agency added new Hollywood service to the Metrolink Shuttle. And, while Metro Buses and Metro Rail were idle, the MTA's three contract carriers rolled out 122 buses.

Beginning today, Metrolink Shuttle buses will transport passengers to subway stops between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont before turning north to serve Vermont/Beverly, Vermont/Santa Monica and Vermont/Sunset. At the intersection with Hollywood Boulevard, the route loops back for a southbound run on Vermont.

Ridership on the Metrolink Shuttle extension, Monday morning, was reported to be light. The announcement of the new service came late Friday.

MTA employees who need assistance finding alternative means of getting to work can contact Stacy Alameida, employee transportation coordinator, at 922-7110. Programs she is responsible for include carpool matching, vanpool coordination and the TransitChek program.

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INSIDE STORY - Tina Arellano, left, and Barbara Lorenzo transform a Pasadena Hilton hotel room into temporary headquarters for MTA bargaining team. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

Tina Arellano, Barbara Lorenzo are Admin Backbone of MTA's Negotiating Team

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 25) For 117 days - with only an occasional weekend break - Tina Arellano has spent a major part of her waking hours in a cluttered room at the Pasadena Hilton. As secretary for the MTA's labor negotiating team, she has played a key role in keeping the administrative side of things humming.

Across the desk from Arellano sits her supervisor, Barbara Lorenzo, a veteran of 111 days as the bargaining team's recorder. In this role, she takes notes during negotiations, prepares spread sheets of the proposals being exchanged, performs research and tracks the status of negotiations.

After commuting 45 minutes on the 210 Freeway from her home in Azusa, Lorenzo often spends 12 to 15 hours a day - sometimes seven days a week - in the negotiators' temporary headquarters. "I've never done this before and I don't know what you could possibly do to prepare for something like this. It does take a toll on you."

Arellano, who lives in Covina, is normally a document control assistant in the Office of Labor Relations. She also is getting her first experience at providing full-time support to a bargaining team.

Slow days, busy days



LABOR CAMP-Arellano and Lorenzo make do in cramped suite.

"It has its days," she says of a job that veers between hours of tedium and moments of tension. "Some days are slow, some are super-busy. If I were here by myself, that would be hard."

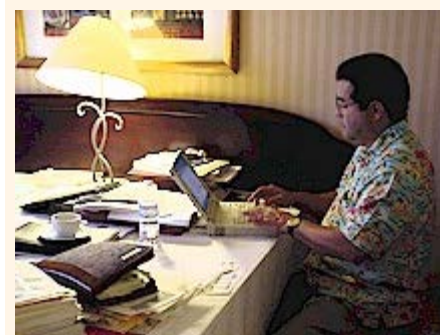
Lorenzo agrees. "The toughest part is having patience. This is not fun. It's a whole lot of hard work."

"Organization is important here and both Barbara and Tina do a good job with that," says Rudy Lipscomb,

assistant director of Employee Relations and a veteran of three MTA labor negotiations.

"Tina keeps us organized, keeps track of the negotiating rooms and tells everyone where to go," he explains. "Barbara's work is essential because she keeps a chronology of the negotiations. Knowing we have this kind of support keeps our minds at ease."

Supporting the negotiators, however, is work that takes place under less than optimal circumstances. The cramped suite where the group has set up camp is an assembly area for bargaining teams that form up, disappear for an hour or more into other rooms, then straggle back to regroup. The place long ago ceased to look like a hotel room.



MTA Operations DEO Dan Ibarra

Where beds should be, desks have been set up. Computer tables, fax machines and a copier crowd the floor.

Papers - some stacked neatly, some not - are everywhere. Coffee-stained cups and saucers are piled on a hotel cart. A scrap of paper taped to one bathroom door restricts its use to women only.

A sandwich in the room

Bags and bowls of Oreos, M&Ms, Jolly Rancher candies and potato chips provide quick-energy - if fattening - snacks for nervous negotiators. Regular mealtimes are a thing of the past. Team members eat when and where they can. Sometimes in the hotel coffee shop, but more often than not, it's a sandwich in the room.

"I think I've gone through the restaurant's whole menu and eaten everything on it," says Arellano. "Every once in a while we get a change of pace, but usually it's room service for me because I need to be here to answer the phones."

What does Arellano want her fellow employees to know about what's going on in Pasadena?

"The team has really been working hard," she says. "We're on top of each other because the room is small, but everyone has given all their effort to this. Sometimes you think, 'I'm going crazy!' but I would do it again."

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TAGGER GANG HITS DIVISION 10 BUSES

- **Two Days' Effort to Clean Up Mess**

(Sept. 26) They apparently came over the fence at Division 10 sometime after 2 a.m., Sunday. An unknown number of taggers bent on vandalizing as many buses as possible with gang-style graffiti.

Before the division's next perimeter patrol came by at 5 a.m., the vandals had disappeared. But, as evidence of their destructive intent, some 35 coaches sat defaced with black, white and multi-colored scrawling.

For two days following the tagger hit, Division 10 Maintenance Manager Howard Shelter worked to clean the buses. First spraying the graffiti with a special chemical compound, he then had to scrub the marks with a broom-like brush before the coaches could be run through the bus washer.

MTA Security and LAPD officers investigated the incident, which appears to have been the work of a local tagger gang. Photos of the graffiti were forwarded to the LAPD's anti-graffiti GHOST team for further investigation.

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UTU QUILTS BARGAINING TALKS

- **Burke Urges Union to Send Operators Back to Work**

(Sept. 26) In a development that caught local news media by surprise, Tuesday, labor leaders announced that the UTU had walked away from negotiations with the MTA. In a news conference at the Pasadena Hilton, union negotiators said they are planning a rally, Friday, probably at City Hall.

In a follow-up meeting with the media, CEO Julian Burke expressed regret that the union had broken off talks. He urged UTU General Chairman James Williams to allow bus operators to return to work. The CEO said union negotiators have not responded to any of the MTA's proposals.

Earlier, Assemblyman Herb Wesson and Steve Smith of the state Department of Industrial Relations presented a proposal to the two sides. At their own news conference, Wesson described the proposal as a framework for discussion, but said it had not worked.

Smith encouraged both parties to return to the bargaining table sooner than later. Smith, who expressed frustration with the lack of progress in the talks, said he and Wesson will be on call to help in any way. One media report said the union would not come to the table until the mediators returned.

Burke called the mediators' proposal a good effort, adding that the MTA Board had never accepted nor rejected it. The CEO told the media he isn't sure where the negotiations will go from this point.

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MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke, flanked by Board members, addresses media at Wednesday news conference.

PHOTO BY JOSÉ UBALDO

Board Chair Burke Calls for 'Seasoned Federal Mediator' to Intervene in Bargaining Talks

(Sept. 27) MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke today called for a "seasoned federal mediator who is experienced in transit issues" to intervene in bargaining talks between the MTA and the UTU. Her proposal was announced during a pre-noon news conference at the Hall of Administration.

Burke also raised the possibility that negotiations are at an "impasse." She called on UTU negotiators to provide a written description of their contract demands.

**READ
STATEMENT
MTA Board Chair
September 27**

"If they give us that written response," she said, "we will be back at the table at any point and any time."

"They walked away from a package that was worth \$43 million more in wages and benefits than the MTA is currently paying," Burke said. "They walked away from a 2.7 percent annual wage increase...that amounts to 8.1 percent over the course of three years."

Urged a return to table, work

Burke was joined by fellow Board members and the top leadership of the MTA. Board members appealed for UTU negotiators to return to the bargaining table and to send striking employees back to work.

"Sit down with us and we will give you a fair contract," Mayor Richard Riordan offered the UTU during the news conference. "(A contract) that gives the average bus driver a higher income and one that improves on the efficiency of the MTA so that we can put more buses on the road and give the transit-dependent a much, much better transportation system."

With striking UTU members picketing MTA Headquarters and operating divisions for the 12th day, no new negotiating sessions have been

scheduled. The UTU said it plans a rally, Friday, probably at City Hall.

Meantime, the Board has cancelled its September meeting, having already postponed monthly committee meetings. The next regular meetings are scheduled in October.

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**Injury to Bus Operator Walking Picket Line
Serves as Safety Reminder to Drivers**

(Sept. 27) An injury to a bus operator walking a picket line outside MTA Headquarters, Tuesday morning, is a stark reminder that safety should be paramount in the minds of employees driving into or out of any MTA facility.

Although police are still sorting out details of the incident, it happened just before 11 a.m. when two vehicles were attempting to cross through the picket line at the Vignes Street parking entrance.

The employee - John M. Ellis, a Division 8 operator - was transported to White Memorial Hospital for treatment. The extent of his injuries is not known.

"Drivers should always remember that pedestrians have the right of way and shouldn't proceed until their path is clear," said Dan Cowden, MTA director of Security. "That's a fundamental rule of operating a motor vehicle."

Tom Jasmin, superintendent of Bus Operations, and George Trudeau, assistant manager, Vehicle Operations, visited with Ellis' family at the hospital to express the MTA's concern.

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Read metro.net
Safety and Courtesy Needed When Crossing Picket Lines.
Picket Line Activities: What rights do strikers have on the picket line?

LABOR UPDATE

- **MTA, UTU in Contact, but No Talks Scheduled**

(Sept. 28) Although negotiations between the MTA and UTU are stalled, the two parties have been in contact, but no timetable has been set for resumption of across-the-table talks.

"We're looking forward to resumption of negotiations," MTA officials said. On Wednesday, Board Chair Yvonne Burke called for the intervention of a "seasoned federal mediator who is experienced in transit issues."

MTA and ATU negotiators met briefly on Wednesday, but no talks are scheduled for the remainder of the week. Further negotiations with the TCU also are pending.

Meanwhile, First Transit, the company contracted to run a dozen MTA bus lines, rolled out 75 of its 84 buses today. Coach USA, which is under contract to run two lines in the San Fernando Valley, had all 18 buses in operation.

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Read metro.net

Board Chair Burke Calls for 'Seasoned Federal Mediator' to Intervene in Bargaining Talks (Sept. 27)

EDITOR'S NOTE: (Sept. 29) This letter from MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke was presented to UTU General Chairman James Williams on Thursday, Sept. 28.

Dear Mr. Williams,

During the last five months, the MTA has submitted more than 50 proposals to the United Transportation Union in our attempt to negotiate a new contract for bus and train operators. To date, we have not received a reasonable response that addresses UTU's concerns about our proposals or an offer to settle the strike.

On behalf of the MTA Board and on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of MTA customers who have been stranded by this strike, I formally request the following:

1. That the UTU submit a comprehensive proposal outlining what the union leadership requires to end this strike. The Board believes that with a comprehensive offer before us, we can work with our management and UTU to fashion a solution to this strike.
2. That the UTU agree with the MTA to call in a federal mediator. We believe a seasoned expert in mediation, with a background in the transit industry, can help move these negotiations along before we reach an impasse.
3. Allow our employees to come back to work while these negotiations continue.

I urge you to act on our request immediately. Our employees and our customers deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,
Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

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Strike in 14th Day

- **MTA Continues Effort to Restart Talks**
- **UTU to Work on Counterproposal**
- **Bargaining Session set Saturday**

(Sept. 29) As striking UTU bus operators and AFL-CIO supporters demonstrated at City Hall on Friday - the 14th day of the work stoppage - the MTA continued its efforts to restart bargaining talks with union negotiators. A negotiating session is scheduled Saturday afternoon.

[READ LETTER](#)
from Board
Chair Burke to
UTU's Williams

A union spokesman told media, Friday, that UTU General Chairman James Williams "indicated he would work on a comprehensive proposal." It was the first indication since negotiations began that the union would present a full-scale counterproposal to the MTA's contract offer.

In a letter presented Thursday to Williams, MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke stressed three major points, including a request that the UTU "submit a comprehensive proposal outlining what the union leadership requires to end this strike."

The letter also asked Williams to allow strikers to return to work and requested that "the UTU agree with the MTA to call in a federal mediator." However, the MTA is not insisting upon the involvement of a mediator as a condition for reopening bargaining talks.

The UTU spokesman said Williams "absolutely refused" the intervention of a federal mediator or sending strikers back to work "during this period."

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