

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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