



MTA's First Technology and Innovation Forum Showcased New and Exciting Technologies

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 7) The MTA's first Technology and Innovation Forum showcased new and exciting technologies, including state-of-the-art electronic devices and computer programs as well as an array of electric vehicles that include electric and hybrid cars, scooters and bicycles.

"The advances in technology over the past 10 years have transformed the way we get things done," said Board Chair Yvonne Burke, addressing forum participants. "It's clear to the MTA and its Board that as technology has changed the way we communicate, it is also changing the way we travel."

"We have a requirement to keep our air clean," said Burke. "We're also under federal orders to reduce traffic on our freeways and streets. But, most of all, we need to look at alternative fuels and the only way we're going to get them is to have new transportation technology."

As she spoke, exhibitors from a number of energy-related companies displayed high-tech products on the 3rd floor mezzanine and on the Plaza. These included electric cars, bicycles and scooters.

Looking at the future

The day-long conference, whose speakers included science fiction author Ray Bradbury, academics and transportation experts, looked at the future of LA County and how the transportation infrastructure may be impacted by new technology and innovations.

"As we look toward the future, there are really no magic bullets in terms of transportation solutions for the region," said James de la Loza, executive officer, Countywide Planning. "It is clear that we are not going to be able to build our way out of congestion. We need to make better use of what we already have, target our resources and use our infrastructure more efficiently."



From the top: **Edison** banners fly in plaza; Marketing's **Joe Simpson** takes off, and science fiction author **Ray Bradbury** addresses the forum. Below, MTA Board Chair and County Supervisor **Yvonne Brathwaite Burke** gets a charge out of her scooter and keeps on going and going....



and going.

Special technical presentations were provided by Ford and General Motors, which now produce hybrid and electric cars. Other companies displayed computer and electronic devices, fuel cells and micro-turbine engines.

Improving efficiency in the current systems is the charge of the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) planning efforts and one of the reasons for Thursday's forum.

The MTA currently is drafting a 25-year Long-Range Transportation Plan as the blueprint for transportation planning and investment in the county. The draft plan should be available to the public in January and will be considered for adoption by the Board next spring.

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