

## Metro Report Archives

### January 2001 Articles

**MTA Expanding [Commuter Incentive](#) Program to Cut Vehicle Miles, Emissions** (Jan. 2) The MTA hopes to eliminate 24 million vehicle miles and 190,000 pounds of emissions over the next four and a half years with the expansion of two successful commuter incentive programs.

**Expanded [Saturday-Style](#) Service Planned for Martin Luther King Jr. Day** (Jan. 4) Instead of the usual weekday service it has offered on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in past years, this Jan. 15 the MTA will operate an expanded Saturday-style Metro Bus and Metro Rail service.

- **Want to Know When You'll Get Paid This Year?** (Jan. 4) You'll find a calendar of MTA pay periods for 2001 on the Human Resources Intranet pages. Click [here](#), or, at the HR home page, click on "HR Forms & Stuff," then click on "[Payroll Calendars](#)" under the Table of Contents. HR also expects to post a revised 2001 holiday calendar once all the collective bargaining agreements have been ratified.

**[Richard Davis](#) Named Director of Budget** (Jan. 4)

- **LAPD Transit Group Offers [Explorer Post](#) Training Academy to MTA Youth** (Jan. 5) Does your son or daughter want to be a police officer when he or she grows up? Here's a fun and exciting way they can learn about law enforcement and acquire some of the skills that will serve them a lifetime.

**[Spiraling Fuel Prices](#) Could Impact MTA Operating Budget** (Jan. 5) The price of diesel fuel and natural gas - vital commodities for the MTA's 2,300-bus fleet - has skyrocketed the past 12 months as demand has outrun supply during an unusually cold winter.

**SPECIAL REPORT 2000 Was a 'Banner Year,' Says [CEO Burke](#), Who Looks Ahead with Confidence at 2001** (Jan. 8) "In 2000, I felt as though we - for the first time - turned the corner to looking forward rather than trying to cure the past."

- **SEARCH FOR A CEO** CEO Julian Burke has selected a recruiting firm and has the Board's approval to begin the search for a new CEO.

**MTA Adding [Bike Racks, Lockers](#) for Two-Wheeling Commuters** (Jan. 9) Bicycle commuters are being increasingly welcomed on the Metro system, thanks to the growing number of bike racks installed on Metro Buses and increased bike parking at rail stations.

**Division 10's [Pete Garcia](#) Saves a Woman from Drowning** (Jan. 9) When he took a Red Cross CPR class several years ago, it never occurred to Division 10 Storekeeper Pete Garcia that he'd actually have to use the skill. But, today, a Hacienda Heights woman owes her life to his quick response.

**MTA Celebrates LA's History, Helps Dedicate Second Phase of [Angels Walk](#)** (Jan. 11) The rich history of Los Angeles took center stage today

with the dedication of the second phase of Angels Walk, the self-guided walking tour of downtown LA historic sites.

**Rain Storm Caused Only Minor Service Delays** (Jan. 11) The storm that swept through Los Angeles overnight caused only minor delays in Metro Rail service and some juggling of equipment. Flooding early today in the Sepulveda Basin forced street closures and Metro Bus detours in Sherman Oaks.

**Division 1's Martinez in Stable Condition After Being Hit by Car** (Jan. 11) One of the MTA's most senior bus operators, Alex Martinez, is hospitalized today after being struck by a pickup truck as he crossed a street near Division 1 during Wednesday night's rain storm.

**FIRE! HQ Roof in Flames as Employees Evacuate; Five Minor Injuries, Some Offices Water Damaged** (Jan. 12) A fire that apparently started in lighting equipment and rapidly spread to insulation on a parapet above the 25th floor of the Headquarters building, Friday morning, forced employees to evacuate the high-rise and sent firefighters scrambling to reach the source of the flames.

**Toastmaster General:** (Jan.12) Olympic Gold Medallist Terry McCann's encounter with a whale three years ago off the California coast taught the accomplished athlete, daily surfer and business executive a profound lesson in life.

**Metro Rail Prepared to Keep Service Moving During Power Shortages** (Jan. 12) Emergency infusions of electrical power from Canada narrowly averted "rolling blackouts" in the Los Angeles area, Thursday evening, but those areas served by Southern California Edison remained under a Stage Two power alert Friday.

**Forensics Firm Assessing Headquarters Fire Damage; No Estimate Yet on Repair Costs** (Jan. 16) A forensic investigation firm retained by the MTA began an analysis, today, of the smoky blaze that destroyed lighting equipment atop Headquarters last Friday, caused minor water damage to floors beneath and prompted an evacuation of the building.

- **TRANSITION TEAM**—(Jan. 16) As an estimated 1,400 employees began an evacuation in the Headquarters stairwells last Friday, six remained behind in BOCC to transfer communications to emergency mobile unit stationed at RRC.

**MTA 'Backfeeding' Power to Metro Blue Line as Shortages Continue** (Jan. 17) The MTA's Rail Operations Center "backfed" electrical power into an eight-mile stretch of the Metro Blue Line, today, to keep service operating normally as power shortages continued to plague the region.

**MTA, Crystal Park Casino Open Metro Blue Line Crossing in Compton** (Jan. 17) The MTA and the Crystal Park Casino Hotel held festivities at the nearby Metro Blue Line Artesia station today to mark the opening of a pedestrian crossing. The crossing will greatly improve access to one of the City of Compton's largest private employers.

**New Billboards Promote Metro Rail Ridership** (Jan. 17) A series of billboards began to appear in select areas of the county over the past weekend as part of a new advertising campaign to encourage Metro Rail ridership.

## **Commuters to See [New Buses](#) on Lines Operated by First**

**Transit, Coach USA** (Jan. 18) Commuters on Metro Bus lines operated by First Transit and Coach USA this week saw the first of 120 brand new coaches the two companies are purchasing for revenue service.

**COMMITTEE ACTION UPDATE, JAN. 18... [Board Workshop](#) on Long-Range Transportation Plan, Committee Meetings Scheduled** (Jan. 16) The MTA Board has scheduled a workshop at 11 a.m., Wednesday, Jan. 17, to discuss the county's 25-year Long-Range Transportation Plan and to consider authorizing release of the Plan for a 45-day public comment period.

- **Electronic System May [Ease Tax-Time](#) Headaches This Year** (Jan. 19) MTA employees who plan to complete their federal and state income taxes electronically, this year, may find the process a little easier, thanks to the Payroll Department.

## **[Plastic Sheeting](#) Replaces Stone Parapet Atop MTA Building**

(Jan. 22) Pedestrians crossing the Transit Plaza today could see an odd sight at the top of MTA Headquarters: billowing plastic sheeting where there once was a stone parapet.

## **MTA's Prototype '[Second Train Coming](#)' Sign Warns**

**Pedestrians of Danger at Rail Crossings** (Jan. 23) The MTA is evaluating the effectiveness of a fibre optic sign designed to warn pedestrians at Metro Blue Line grade crossings that more than one train is approaching. It is the first warning sign of its kind in the United States.

## **Oropeza to Chair [Assembly Committee](#) Responsible for MTA**

**Oversight** (Jan. 23) Assemblywoman Jenny Oropeza, until recently a member of the MTA's Board of Directors, will chair a committee that will oversee the agency's activities.

- **[Division 3 Storeroom](#) Named Top Shop** (Jan. 24) The storeroom at Division 3 in Cypress Park was named Storeroom of the Quarter for the last quarter of 2000. The staff consists of Larry Magee, storekeeper, and stock clerks Armando Gonzales, Dante Ronquillo, Ervin Leib and John Autry.
- **Transit Operations Clocks are [Atomically Correct](#)** (Jan. 24) A report in the Sunday edition of the Westside Weekly section of the Los Angeles Times cited *another* transit system from a certain beach community for running buses two minutes fast. But unlike that flyaway service, the report noted, MTA's bus operations system is connected to the nation's official time.

## **'[Pay-for-Performance](#)' Proposal Approved; Board Chair Burke**

**Calls for Input from Employees** (Jan. 25) The MTA Board approved a motion, Thursday, authorizing implementation of a Performance-Based Compensation Program for non-represented employees. Implementation of the "pay-for-performance" program is expected to begin in July, 2001.

## **Metro [Rapid Bus](#) Program Meeting Goals: Ridership, Customer Satisfaction are Up**

(Jan. 25) The Metro Rapid Bus demonstration program has met its initial goals, the program's manager told the Board, Thursday, reducing travel times by 25 percent and boosting ridership by 26 percent.

### **Metro Bus Passenger Complaints Continue 28-Month Decline**

(Jan. 26) A downward trend in customer complaints by Metro Bus passengers has now been sustained for 28 months, according to figures in a just-released MTA report.

### **MTA Goes to Head of Line for Bus Rapid Transit Funding**

(Jan. 29) The MTA just got a boost from the Federal Transit Administration that now ranks the agency at the head of the line for funding of Bus Rapid Transit projects.

### **Pasadena Blue Line Making Progress on Aerial Guideway to Chinatown**

(Jan. 29) Big blue cranes and yellow front-end loaders can be viewed from the north windows of MTA Headquarters busily constructing an elevated guideway that in 2003 will be the first leg in a 13.7-mile light-rail line to Pasadena.

### **SAVE THE DATE CEO Julian Burke will speak at an all-staff meeting at 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, Jan. 30, in the Board Room.**

The Gateway and Union Station conference rooms on the 3rd floor also will be available to employees. During his talk, the CEO is expected to touch on the staff's accomplishments in 2000 and what can be expected in the year ahead.

### **MTA in 'Better Position Today' for Transition to New CEO,**

**Burke Declares in Staff Meeting** (Jan. 30) The MTA "is in a much better position today to have a change in its CEO than it has ever been," Julian Burke declared, Tuesday, in his first all-staff meeting of the year.

## **MTA Expanding Commuter Incentive Program to Cut Vehicle Miles, Emissions**

(Jan. 2) The MTA hopes to eliminate 24 million vehicle miles and 190,000 pounds of emissions over the next four and a half years with the expansion of two successful commuter incentive programs.

Since Rideshare Rewards and Club Metro began in March, 1998, more than 6,000 commuters have signed up for the incentive programs. This year, the agency - working in partnership with SCAG and several business groups - will expand the programs into the central and southern areas of Los Angeles County.

Between today and June 2005, the MTA and its partners hope to enroll 8,300 more Rideshare Rewards participants and 3,600 Club Metro members. The programs currently are offered in southeast portions of the county, the South Bay, the San Gabriel, San Fernando, Antelope and Santa Clarita valleys.

Rideshare Rewards and Club Metro are intended to encourage drive-alone commuters to switch to carpooling, vanpooling, using Metro Bus, Metro Rail or Metrolink, bicycling, walking or telecommuting. To date, more than 4,000 employers have joined the programs. Employers with fewer than 250 employees are eligible.

### **Eliminated 690,000 one-way trips**

By taking 6,000 drive-alone commuters off the road, Rideshare Rewards and Club Metro have eliminated more than 690,000 one-way vehicle trips since 1998, says Transportation Planner Eric Carlson. That's a reduction of some 10 million miles and more than 86,000 pounds of vehicle emissions.

In turn, the MTA has paid out \$410,000 in incentives to members of the two programs. Rideshare Rewards participants have averaged nearly \$100 each in incentives, Carlson says.

Those enrolled in Rideshare Rewards can earn \$2 a day in gift certificates at Ralphs, Target or Unocal for each day they rideshare during their first three months of participation. Club Metro rewards commuters who have been ridesharing for six months or longer. They receive a nationally recognized discount coupon book with savings at local merchants and restaurants.

The new goal calls for eliminating 1.6 million additional one-way vehicle trips and 24 million vehicle miles, while preventing some 190,000 pounds of emissions.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## **Expanded Saturday-Style Service Planned for Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

(Jan. 4) Instead of the usual weekday service it has offered on Martin Luther King Jr. Day in past years, this Jan. 15 the MTA will operate an expanded Saturday-style Metro Bus and Metro Rail service.

On most official holidays that fall on a weekday, the MTA runs reduced service - either a Saturday- or Sunday-style schedule. On previous Martin Luther King Jr. Days, however, full weekday service has been in effect.

By operating an expanded holiday schedule this year, Transit Operations expects to better match the amount of service with actual ridership demand while saving some 6,000 service hours. The money saved can be used elsewhere in the system.

Before deciding to operate Saturday-style service on Jan. 15, the Scheduling Department assessed every line in the system. As a result, extra service will be offered on 45 lines and special schedules will be in effect on 13 lines. Twelve other lines that normally would not operate on a Saturday will be in regular weekday service for the holiday.

In the temporary schedule change letters issued to operators, Scheduling is asking operators to provide feedback on the numbers of patrons who board their buses during the holiday. The information will be used to measure the adequacy of the holiday schedules.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Richard Davis

## **Richard Davis Named Director of Budget**

(Jan. 4) Richard Davis, a financial analyst who's been involved in all aspects of MTA's budget development and analysis activities since joining MTA in 1984, has been named Director of Budget in the MTA's Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

In his new position, Davis will be responsible for the development of operating budgets and forecasts for the Enterprise, General and Internal Service Funds, performance reporting and variance analysis.

Davis joined the MTA as an Administrative Analyst in OMB in November 1984 and served as Budget Manager for four years before moving to Transit Operations in 1995.

After working as Chief Administrative Analyst in the Northern Region of MTA Transit Operations for one year, he helped established the Performance Analysis and Systems Support Unit in Transit Operations. This unit had responsibility for coordinating budget development and analysis, the production of operating performance reports and various ad hoc projects in support of bus and rail operations.

Prior to the MTA, Davis worked for the city's Community Development Department managing the allocation of funds to community based organization.

Davis earned a BA in Political Science from UCLA and a MPA from Cal State University, Long Beach. A native of Los Angeles, he makes his home in Encino with his wife, Ann, and son, Sam.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)





**DO THE MATH** - Fuel costs the MTA about 40 cents per mile for a CNG bus, compared with costs of about 41 cents per mile for a diesel bus. The average bus travels 42,500 miles a year. PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON

## **Spiraling Fuel Prices Could Impact MTA Operating Budget**

**By BILL HEARD, Editor**

(Jan. 5) The price of diesel fuel and natural gas - vital commodities for the MTA's 2,300-bus fleet - has skyrocketed the past 12 months as demand has outrun supply during an unusually cold winter. The cost increases are being watched closely for their impact on the agency's budget.

Diesel fuel, which was holding fairly steady at a two-year average price of 55 cents a gallon in mid-1999 more than doubled to \$1.13 per gallon in late December after it peaked at \$1.40 in November. The MTA expects to buy more than 13 million gallons of diesel fuel this year.

The two-year average price of natural gas in mid-1999 was 31 cents per "therm." Late last month, the cost had risen to about 75 cents per therm. This year, the MTA will purchase between 26 million and 28 million therms of natural gas.

Meanwhile, gasoline - which is used by the MTA's non-revenue fleet - is costing the MTA \$1.19 per gallon, down from a peak of \$1.72.

### **Still within budget**

The season's high prices have pushed MTA fuel costs beyond the expenditures planned for FY 2001, but they aren't budget busters.

"We feel we'll be able to manage these cost increases within the current authorized budget due to operating efficiencies we've realized throughout the year," said Carolyn Flowers, deputy executive officer, Finance. "We know they'll have an adverse impact and we'll be monitoring this component of the budget closely."

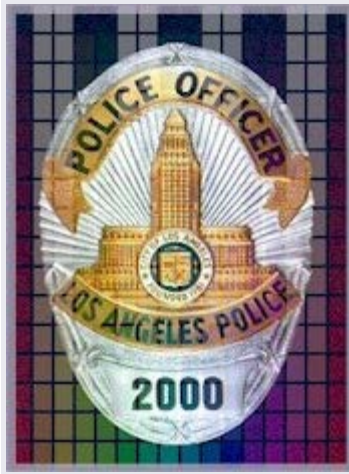


**The MTA operates 1,133 CNG buses and expects to have 1,570 on the road by the end of the summer.**

**In fuel costs alone, it costs the agency about 40 cents per mile to operate a CNG bus, compared with costs of about 41 cents per mile to run a diesel bus, according to Jim Pachan, equipment maintenance manager.**

**These costs don't take into account other operating, maintenance or capital costs. The average bus travels 42,500 miles a year.**

**[Back to MTA Report](#)**



## LAPD Transit Group Offers Explorer Post Training Academy to MTA Youth

By Gayle Anderson, Associate Editor

(Jan. 5) Does your son or daughter want to be a police officer when he or she grows up? Here's a fun and exciting way they can learn about law enforcement and acquire some of the skills that will serve them a lifetime.

The LAPD Transit Group Explorer Post will offer a 12-week academy training program in law enforcement and community policing to youths - both boys and girls - between the ages of 14 and 21. The academy begins on Feb. 3 and will meet at the Los Angeles Police Academy in Elysian Park on Saturdays from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Uniforms and material are supplied by the LAPD Transit Group; attendance is free to participants. To enroll or for more information, contact Officer Candice Hensley at (213) 922-3772.

"The program is particularly good for children or young relatives of MTA employees who display an interest in the field of law enforcement," said Officer Hensley. "Youths who already know something of the profession from their family experience will have an opportunity to broaden their understanding and firsthand knowledge of the challenges and job skills that make up their community's police service."

Graduates of the 12-week academy will be certified as Explorers and eligible to continue in the Explorer program.

Explorer is a co-educational, young-adult program developed and supervised by local community organizations. The LAPD Transit Group provides an effective law enforcement and police procedure program for young adults through six experience areas:

- **Career training** in the law enforcement area: patrol procedures; first aid, laws of arrest; leadership; field rides with patrol officers; annual Explorer academy and local, regional, and national competition.
- **Social activities:** out-of-state trips and attending sports events.
- **Community services:** direct off-street traffic parking, crowd control at parades, administrative duties at briefing stations, neighborhood clean up and crime fairs.
- **Leadership training:** gain a sense of pride in our community and country and teach individual responsibilities.
- **Personal fitness training:** weight lifting, academy obstacle course and running.
- **Outdoor activities:** backpacking, hiking adventures and camping.

The LAPD Transit Group Explorer Post provides an opportunity for youth to interact with the members of the Transit Police Group. The goal is to create a positive relationship between the Transit Police, the communities they serve and Explorer youths.

Members of the Explorer Post meet once a week and receive training in the various functions of law enforcement. The education an Explorer receives provides valuable insights into the daily operation of a law enforcement agency. Members also participate in state and national Explorer Scout competitions.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



## 2000 Was a 'Banner Year,' Says CEO Burke, Who Looks Ahead with Confidence at 2001



- [Search for a CEO](#)  
CEO Julian Burke has selected a recruiting firm and has the Board's approval to begin the search for a new CEO. [Click here.](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 8) "In 2000, I felt as though we - for the first time - turned the corner to looking forward rather than trying to cure the past," said CEO Julian Burke, in an interview with *MTA Report* during which he looked at the year past and the year ahead. "We really built up a head of steam as a result of the work we did the previous two years."

[GO TO](#)  
**Statement  
from  
Supervisor  
Yvonne  
Brathwaite  
Burke.**

Despite last fall's strike, a host of accomplishments that included the extension of subway service to North Hollywood made 2000 a "banner year" for the MTA, Burke believes. He also sees the agency moving confidently ahead on a number of important transportation projects in 2001.

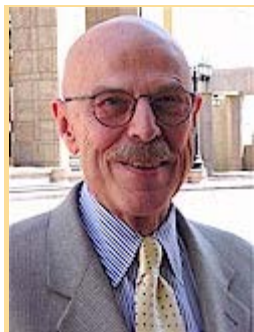
These and other topics he intends to address during an all-staff meeting, Jan. 30.

In a wide-ranging interview, Burke said rebuilding a stronger relationship with the MTA's unions and restoring growth in transit ridership are focal points for the year. And, he pointed to the Metro Rapid bus program and other service improvements, the agency's strengthened financial status, along with improved budget making and procurement processes as achievements in 2000.

MTA employees, the CEO said "should be proud of our accomplishments during the year 2000." He expects that employee confidence in the agency and pride in its progress will continue to grow throughout the year.

### Goals for 2001

Among his goals for 2001, the CEO included updating the Long-Range Transportation Plan, moving forward on plans for the three



**CEO Julian Burke**

transportation corridors, new "smart bus" and rail car purchases and improving relations with MTA unions.

The CEO wants to continue to improve the MTA's relationships with its customers, with state legislators, funding partners and with congressional leaders. "I believe we have a credibility base now from which to do that," he said.

Revising the Long-Range Transportation Plan is "very, very important," he said. "There's no doubt that with up to three and a half million people coming to Los Angeles County in the next 25 years we'll need to improve mobility – more transit service, better streets and highways."

The Plan will propose a range of options that include more HOV lanes, countywide traffic signal coordination, better management of truck traffic, more ridesharing, new busways, a countywide grid of Metro Rapid buses and extending the Metro Green Line to LAX.

The CEO expects to hand the draft Plan to the Board soon, so it can begin a 45-day public review period before it is considered for final adoption in the spring. The MTA must recommend projects to SCAG by April for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan and to be eligible for state and federal funding.

### **Labor Relations**

"Burke also plans to give labor relations a high priority this year. "One of our challenges for 2001 is to actively focus on improving our relationships with our unions and their leaders," he said. "After being involved in the recent labor negotiations, I've come to believe that this should be a very important focus for me now."

He welcomed the "statesmanlike remarks" by UTU General Chairman James Williams at the November Board meeting when the union chief stressed the importance of the MTA and UTU working together as a team.

### **Transportation Corridors**

In 2001, the MTA should expect to move ahead on projects in the three major transportation corridors. Projects on the Eastside, Mid-City and the San Fernando Valley will be going through preliminary engineering and environmental approval processes.

Noting that these are long-term projects that will come on-line in the next three to seven years, Burke said, "There's a lot of work to be done between now and then, but we're much more confident about our ability to manage the processes, including the construction that will be involved. I look forward to moving those projects along this year."

### **Transportation Zones**

The San Fernando Valley Transportation Zone is likely to make a go or no-go decision this year, Burke predicted, and the San Gabriel Valley may have a continuing interest in launching a zone, although it has taken no formal steps toward that end. The MTA's zone guidelines require that both the MTA and any new zone must come out ahead,

but he said a lot of work will be needed to achieve that result.

He noted that state legislation signed by Governor Davis last October – along with the MTA's own zone guidelines and the state's public utilities code - all provide protections for employees affected by implementation of a transit zone.

### **Consent Decree**

Although the MTA is awaiting a court ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals, Burke said the agency continues to be in substantial compliance with the Consent Decree.

The MTA has taken delivery of more than 1,100 new buses and 500 more will be delivered this year. In 2000, the MTA also delivered a record number of bus service hours.

"I'm pleased that we're seeing more growth in our bus system," Burke said. "It has grown significantly in the past year and we will continue to grow it."

### **'Smart Bus' Procurements**

During 2001, the MTA will continue to upgrade its bus fleet to include such "smart bus" options as automatic passenger counters, automatic systems to announce bus stops and universal fare equipment. Adding Global Positioning System equipment will track the location of buses and help ensure schedule compliance.

"We're doing everything we can to make our buses more reliable, more predictable, more comfortable, cleaner and safer," Burke said. "This will have an effect, not only on better service for our current riders, but also will attract additional riders out of their cars."

### **Call for Projects**

Over the next six years, the MTA expects to fund some \$850 million in transportation projects, primarily highway projects, through its 2001 Call for Projects, Burke said.

Funding marks in eight transportation categories will be presented to the Board this month. Applications are due from local agencies in February. The process should be completed in June or July.

### **Pasadena Blue Line**

Burke expects, at the present rate of progress, that the Pasadena Blue Line will be ready for operation by the MTA in the spring of 2003. Planning for that service includes purchasing new light-rail cars -including cars for the proposed rail line in East LA - ticket vending machines and other operating equipment. The "heavy work," he said, will come in late 2002 when Rail Operations begins testing the new system.

### **Search for a CEO**

During the interview with *MTA Report*, Burke revealed for the first time that he has selected a recruiting firm and has the Board's approval to begin the search for a new chief executive officer – a search that will be thorough and may require some time in order to ensure that the agency finds the right match for a CEO.

"I dearly love this job," said Burke, who has held the office since August, 1997, "but I really think we need someone – the right someone - to carry the MTA to new heights now."

The CEO anticipates that a number of experienced transportation executives - who "could have a long and substantial career here" -

will be interested in the job. A position he thinks will be much more attractive now that the MTA is on a more even keel.

### **Lead the MTA for years to come**

He said the new CEO should plan to lead the agency for many years to come and to guide the implementation of important transit corridor projects and the Long-Range Transportation Plan.

Burke noted that the Board and MTA management staff have a better working relationship now, a fact he believes provides a great measure of stability that will allow the new CEO to lead the agency with more confidence than earlier chief executives had.

He said the transition to the new CEO should come as "a normal course of our business" in which he would be available, for as long as needed, to serve as an advisor. In the period ahead, he'll continue his work to move the agency forward and ready it for his successor.

"I'm not going to be a lame duck," he emphasized. "I'm going to run this organization 'til the day I hand the keys to someone else. I have a lot of my self in it."

[Back to MTA Report](#)



**Statement by  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
on Announcement by  
CEO Julian Burke**



(Jan. 8) MTA Board Chair and Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke today expressed a mixture of gratitude and regret upon hearing that MTA CEO Julian Burke plans to leave the MTA later this year once a successor is in place.

"I don't think it's an understatement to say that Julian Burke transformed the MTA," Sup. Burke said. "This is a much more stable agency and one that has a much better customer focus than the MTA that existed before Julian became CEO 3 ½ years ago," Burke said.

Sup. Burke cited the chief executive's achievements in shoring up MTA finances, rebuilding its credibility with its funding partners in Sacramento and Washington, overhauling the Metro Bus system, and completing the last leg of the Metro Rail subway within budget and six months ahead of schedule among his many accomplishments at the MTA since he was hired as CEO in August 1997.

CEO Burke said he loves the job but feels the time is right to find a new CEO to lead the agency. However, Burke pledged to stay fully committed to MTA until a successor is chosen. An executive recruiting firm has been selected to conduct a search, a process that could take several months or longer. Once the MTA Board hires his successor, Burke said he would be pleased to serve as an advisor to the new CEO as long as it is felt he is needed.

Burke said working at the MTA has been the most enjoyable challenge of his long working career. Before joining the MTA, he was a successful corporate turnaround specialist with Victor Palmieri Associates for more than 20 years.

At MTA Burke helped steer the agency through a series of major milestones including efforts to shift more resources toward overhauling the Metro Bus system. More than 1,000 new buses already are in service with more than 1,000 more being ordered, and a record amount of Metro Bus service is on the road including the new Metro Rapid buses.

Burke also helped MTA complete the North Hollywood Metro Rail extension on budget and on time, negotiated new labor contracts and is revising the agency's 25-year Long Range Transportation Plan which will be considered for adoption by the MTA Board of Directors later this spring. In addition, he helped guide plans that call for new busways and light rail lines in the Eastside, Mid-City/Westside, and San Fernando Valley after he persuaded the MTA Board to suspend new subway construction in these corridors in January 1998.

[READ metro.net](#)  
article Jan. 8:  
**2000 Was a  
'Banner Year,'  
Says CEO  
Burke, Who  
Looks Ahead  
with Confidence  
at 2001**

[Back to Viewpoint Articles](#)



Metro Bus sports bike rack, and, below, bike rack at the Marine Avenue station on the Metro Green Line. Bike locker can be seen in the background.



## MTA Adding Bike Racks, Lockers for Two-Wheeling Commuters

(Jan. 9) Bicycle commuters are being increasingly welcomed on the Metro system, thanks to the growing number of bike racks installed on Metro Buses and increased bike parking at rail stations.

Today, some 1,400 buses – two-thirds of the fleet – sport racks above their front bumpers that are capable of carrying two bicycles. The MTA expects to receive 438 new coaches, all factory-equipped with bike racks, in the first half of 2001.

The number of bike racks and lockers also will be increased at many of the 50 Metro Rail stations this year. Thirty-four stations currently have parking for a total of 653 bicycles. Sixteen others, which now lack space for bikes, will be re-evaluated to determine whether bicycle parking can be added.

One immediate need for bike parking was at the Metro Red Line's North Hollywood station. At the Board's direction, 20 new racks were placed at the station in December and eight new lockers will be installed this month, bringing the number of bike parking spaces to 44.

Bike parking also will be increased at six other subway stations in Segments 2 and 3. Sixteen racks will be added at the Universal City station and 29 lockers are being installed at other stations.

Bikeway parking is part of the planning for all new transit projects, including the East-West Transit Corridor in the San Fernando Valley, the Mid-City/Westside corridor and the Eastside corridor. Plans also are to seek funding for bike racks at Metro Rapid bus stations.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



## Division 10's Pete Garcia Saves Woman from Drowning

(Jan. 9) When he took a Red Cross CPR class several years ago, it never occurred to Division 10 Storekeeper Pete Garcia that he'd actually have to use the skill. But, today, a Hacienda Heights woman owes her life to his quick response.

Last Friday, as he was on his way to the Post Office, Garcia, 62, was flagged down by a frantic woman.

She told him someone was drowning in a backyard swimming pool.

When he reached the pool's edge, Garcia saw a woman's body at the bottom of the 10-foot-deep pool. Throwing aside his wallet and cell phone, he jumped fully clothed into the water.

Diving to the bottom, Garcia grabbed the woman's arm and struggled to the surface. He pulled himself over the edge and dragged her onto the deck.

### 'I thought she was dead'

"When I got her up and saw how purple she was, I thought she was dead," Garcia recalls. Without hesitation, however, he cleared the woman's mouth and began CPR just as he had learned it in class. "But, I felt no result. No pulse. No reaction."

Within minutes Sheriff's deputies arrived and took over from Garcia. The LA County Fire Dept. also responded. Garcia, now "in sort of a state of shock," went home and told his wife what had happened.

Firefighter Joe Ingram told the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* that the woman was in full arrest when Garcia pulled her from the pool. Paramedics cleared her lungs of water, medicated her and she began to breathe.

"If the gentleman wasn't there to pull her out," Ingram told the paper, "she definitely wouldn't have survived."

Garcia later returned to the house and learned from Sheriff's deputies that the woman, apparently a babysitter who may have been cleaning the pool when she fell in, had survived. "They said to me, 'So, you're the guardian angel.'"

Reflecting on the event, Garcia, a 15-year MTA veteran, is grateful he attended the CPR class. "I think everyone should be able to perform CPR. It could save a life."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



After making the rounds in the audience, Terry McCann's Olympic Gold Medal returns to its champion, left, and MTA Toastmasters Chapter president Frank Clarke.

## Toastmaster General's Word is 'Good as Gold'

BY GAYLE ANDERSON

Associate Editor

(Jan 10) Olympic Gold Medallist Terry McCann's encounter with a whale three years ago off the California coast taught the accomplished athlete, daily surfer and business executive a profound lesson in life.

McCann, now executive director of Toastmasters International, Inc., visited MTA Tuesday as guest speaker for an expanded Toastmasters meeting hosted by the MTA chapter.

"Suddenly, a California gray whale rose up from the sea like Moby Dick, his blowhole erupting furiously. Bobbing helplessly in my kayak, I was

level with his huge, unwavering eye and felt the spray from the giant blowhole erupting above. As he finished his dive, his tail slammed my kayak and sent me up in the air about 8 feet. I was never so excited in my life," said McCann.

The moral of the story? Put anticipation to good use. "Be ready for the whales that will rise up and send you flying," he said.

McCann's "whales" include winning the gold medal in wrestling, bantamweight division, in the 1960 Rome Olympics. "I really wanted to be a basketball player," said the diminutive McCann, "but there's not much call for 5'6" guards."

McCann's 40-minute speech harpooned his audience with tales of goals, motivation and achievement and ended with a rapid fire Q&A:

The meaning of life: fulfillment.

The key to self-confidence: practice hard, 50 percent more than everyone else.

McCann's formula for success of an endeavor or organization:  
1) meet the need 2) have a good time 3) replenish, replenish, replenish.

Retirement goal: Surf longer.



McCann brought along a friend of more than 50 years – his wife, Lucille. Now 67, he met his wife, Lucille, when they were both 15 and in high school. They have seven children and 18 grandchildren.



Terry and Lucille McCann

Asked to reveal their secret to a successful marriage, they gave different responses. Said Lucille, "It's a 90-10 give-and-take proposition." Said McCann, "I bought her a brand new red convertible." [Back to Bulletin Board](#)

[MORE](#)  
on  
McCann





Angels Walk founder Deana Molloy, at podium, leads dedication ceremony with, from left, LA Times columnist Patt Morrison, MTA Countywide Planning chief Jim de la Loza, former SCRTD Board Chairman Nick Patsaouras and actor and transit advocate George Takei.

## MTA Celebrates LA's History, Helps Dedicate Second Phase of Angels Walk



By ED SCANNELL

(Jan. 11) The rich history of Los Angeles took center stage today with the dedication of the second phase of Angels Walk, the self-guided walking tour of downtown LA historic sites.

Representatives from the MTA joined elected officials and community leaders at the Japanese American National Museum in a ceremony to commemorate this colorful link to the city's past and future.



Angels Walk was launched in 1997 with the support of the MTA to encourage pedestrian exploration of the Bunker Hill/Historic Core District of downtown Los Angeles.

The new phase takes the explorer further back in Los Angeles history to the early Native American village, Yang-na, home of the Tongva Indians, which became the settlement El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles. The name of the burgeoning settlement eventually was





YOU ARE HERE -- George Takei and Jim de la Loza; LA Times columnist Patt Morrison, followed by Nick Patsaouras at the podium, and with Takei.  
PHOTOS BY JOSÉ UBALDO

shortened to Los Angeles.

### **Journey through early days**

"Angels Walk takes the pedestrian on a journey through the early days of Los Angeles up to the present day," said Deanna Molloy, founder and executive director of Angels Walk LA. "It tells the story of the places, events and people whose ambitions, hopes and dreams shaped the City of Angels."

The second phase of Angels Walk includes 15 walk sites which span the city's history with an eye to the future.

The sites include the Patsaouras Transit Plaza/MTA Building, Union Station, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, Gateway to Chinatown, Los Angeles Mall/Fletcher Bowron Square, Roybal Federal Building, Little Tokyo (three sites, including the Japanese American National Museum), the Los Angeles Times, City Hall, Court of Flags/Civic Mall/Criminal Courts Building, Music Center and Disney Concert Hall.

Angels Walk serves as an extension of the public transit system in downtown Los Angeles and includes convenient connections to the Metro Red Line, the Metro Blue Line, the Metro Bus system, DASH buses and Amtrak.

"The MTA recognizes the need to promote programs such as Angels Walk that integrate the pedestrian element into the transportation system," said Jim de la Loza, executive officer, Countywide Planning. "Angels Walk weaves a historical thread through downtown Los Angeles that both educates and fascinates."

### **'Classroom without walls'**

In December, 1999, the MTA took part in the dedication of the first of 30 millennium markers to be installed along Angels Walk. The 12-foot tall cylindrical markers serve collectively as a "classroom without walls," highlighting the history and significance of their locations through the use of photographs and text written by Los Angeles Times columnists Patt Morrison and Cecilia Rasmussen.

The markers are located in the areas around the public transit system and

each features an area map that shows the proximity of Angels Walk to the Metro Red Line. Fabrication of the markers was funded by the MTA, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation.

The first phase of Angels Walk includes the following sites: the Ronald Reagan Building, Spring Street Streetscape, Biddy Mason Park, the Bradbury Building, Million Dollar Theater Building, Grand Central Market, Angels Flight( Railway, The Omni Los Angeles Hotel, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Watercourt at California Plaza, Wells Fargo Center, Wells Fargo History Museum, ARCO Center and the Calder Sculpture.

Also, the Plaza Orchard, Hope Street Overpass, Bunker Hill Steps, The Los Angeles Public Library, Maguire Gardens, Merchants' Row/Seventh Street, Macy's Plaza, Fine Arts Building, Figueroa Tower, 7th Street/Metro Center and Ernst & Young Plaza. \_

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Angels Walk founder Deana Molloy, at podium, leads dedication ceremony with, from left, LA Times columnist Patt Morrison, MTA Countywide Planning chief Jim de la Loza, former SCRTD Board Chairman Nick Patsaouras and actor and transit advocate George Takei.

## MTA Celebrates LA's History, Helps Dedicate Second Phase of Angels Walk

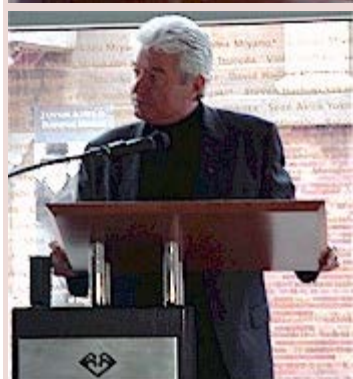


By ED SCANNELL

(Jan. 11) The rich history of Los Angeles took center stage today with the dedication of the second phase of Angels Walk, the self-guided walking tour of downtown LA historic sites.



Representatives from the MTA joined elected officials and community leaders at the Japanese American National Museum in a ceremony to commemorate this colorful link to the city's past and future.



Angels Walk was launched in 1997 with the support of the MTA to encourage pedestrian exploration of the Bunker Hill/Historic Core District of downtown Los Angeles.

The new phase takes the explorer further back in Los Angeles history to the early Native American village, Yang-na, home of the Tongva Indians, which became the settlement El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles. The name of the burgeoning settlement eventually was shortened to Los Angeles.

### Journey through early days

"Angels Walk takes the pedestrian on a journey through the early days of Los Angeles up to the present day," said Deanna Molloy, founder and executive director of Angels Walk LA. "It tells the story of the places, events and people whose ambitions, hopes and dreams shaped the City of Angels."



**YOU ARE HERE --** George Takei and Jim de la Loza; LA Times columnist Patt Morrison, followed by Nick Patsaouras at the podium, and with Takei.  
PHOTOS BY JOSÉ UBALDO

The second phase of Angels Walk includes 15 walk sites which span the city's history with an eye to the future.

The sites include the Patsaouras Transit Plaza/MTA Building, Union Station, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, Gateway to Chinatown, Los Angeles Mall/Fletcher Bowron Square, Roybal Federal Building, Little Tokyo (three sites, including the Japanese American National Museum), the Los Angeles Times, City Hall, Court of Flags/Civic Mall/Criminal Courts Building, Music Center and Disney Concert Hall.

Angels Walk serves as an extension of the public transit system in downtown Los Angeles and includes convenient connections to the Metro Red Line, the Metro Blue Line, the Metro Bus system, DASH buses and Amtrak.

"The MTA recognizes the need to promote programs such as Angels Walk that integrate the pedestrian element into the transportation system," said Jim de la Loza, executive officer, Countywide Planning. "Angels Walk weaves a historical thread through downtown Los Angeles that both educates and fascinates."

#### **'Classroom without walls'**

In December, 1999, the MTA took part in the dedication of the first of 30 millennium markers to be installed along Angels Walk. The 12-foot tall cylindrical markers serve collectively as a "classroom without walls," highlighting the history and significance of their locations through the use of photographs and text written by Los Angeles Times columnists Patt Morrison and Cecilia Rasmussen.

The markers are located in the areas around the public transit system and each features an area map that shows the proximity of Angels Walk to the Metro Red Line. Fabrication of the markers was funded by the MTA, the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation.

The first phase of Angels Walk includes the following sites: the Ronald Reagan Building, Spring Street Streetscape, Biddy Mason Park, the Bradbury Building, Million Dollar Theater Building, Grand Central Market, Angels Flight(Railway, The Omni Los Angeles Hotel, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Watercourt at California Plaza, Wells Fargo Center, Wells Fargo History Museum, ARCO Center and the Calder Sculpture.

Also, the Plaza Orchard, Hope Street Overpass, Bunker Hill Steps, The Los Angeles Public Library, Maguire Gardens, Merchants' Row/Seventh Street, Macy's Plaza, Fine Arts Building, Figueroa Tower, 7th Street/Metro Center and Ernst & Young Plaza.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## **Division 1's Martinez in Stable Condition After Being Hit by Car**



Alex Martinez

(Jan. 11) One of the MTA's most senior bus operators, Alex Martinez, is hospitalized today after being struck by a pickup truck as he crossed a street near Division 1 during Wednesday night's rain storm.

Martinez, 61, who joined the MTA in July, 1970, is being treated for bruises and other injuries at County USC Hospital, but may be moved to another hospital today. According to Division 1 Manager Jesse Castorena, who visited him today, Martinez is in stable condition and is in good spirits.

Martinez had completed his runs Wednesday and was crossing Central Avenue on the way to his car at about 5:25 p.m. when he was struck. Witnesses said the truck that hit the operator had been westbound on 6th Street and was turning left onto Central.

The accident site is less than 100 feet from the division gates. Police have not charged the pickup truck driver.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## **Rain Storm Caused Only Minor Service Delays**

(Jan. 11) The storm that swept through Los Angeles overnight caused only minor delays in Metro Rail service and some juggling of equipment. Flooding early today in the Sepulveda Basin forced street closures and Metro Bus detours in Sherman Oaks.

Flooding near the I-5 freeway affected some Metro Bus service and downed trees caused temporary street closings in Tarzana between Burbank and Victory boulevards.

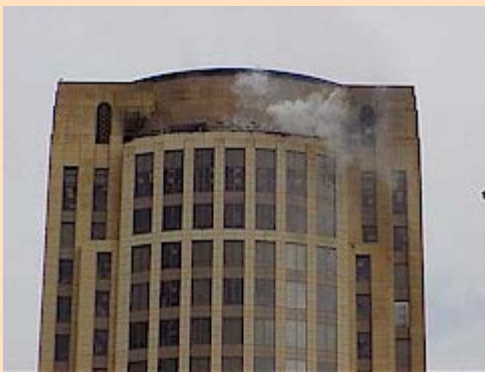
On the Metro Green Line, signal and switching problems required rail officials to set up a bus bridge for a short time between the Douglas and Marine station.

Both the Metro Blue Line and Metro Red Line experienced minor electrical problems with rail cars, but neither line missed a rollout or a passenger trip.

"We did well through a lot of peoples' efforts," said Rail Superintendent Jess Diaz. "Computerized equipment can be very sensitive."

[Back to MTA Report](#)





The fire that erupted outside the 26th floor of MTA Headquarters on Friday at 10:22 a.m. may have started with an electrical short on the parapet, left, leaving seared remnants of fiberglass insulation, at right, but no damage to equipment inside.

PHOTOS: ABOVE, BY LISA FLETCHER; AT RIGHT, BY GAYLE ANDERSON.



**GALLERY**  
CLICK ON IMAGE  
TO VIEW



Firefighters make way to roof area as employees evacuate in stairwell.



Fire trucks line Cesar Chavez Avenue.



The view from Regional Rebuild Center.



Smoke curls from the high-rise rooftop.



Fire hose is lifeline at Gateway Plaza base camp.

Media

# FIRE!

## HQ Roof in Flames as Employees Evacuate; Five Minor Injuries, Some Offices Water Damaged







By BILL HEARD, Editor  
(Jan. 12) A fire that apparently started in lighting equipment and rapidly spread to insulation on a parapet above the 25th floor of the Headquarters building, Friday morning, forced employees to evacuate the high-rise and sent firefighters scrambling to reach the source of the flames.

No one was seriously injured, although four employees - one of them pregnant - and a city firefighter were transported to a nearby hospital. More than 100 firefighters from 25 companies and five ambulances, along with a phalanx of local media responded to the scene.

Although it was a scary situation and there was some initial confusion, MTA Security officials said the building was evacuated in an orderly manner. During an impromptu news conference, City Fire Chief Bill Bamattre complimented the MTA's "excellent evacuation plan."

At a meeting of the Emergency Operations Committee after the event, Chief Operating Officer Alan Lipsky praised employees' quick reaction. "Overall, I think we did a terrific job



|   |  |
|---|--|
|     | surrounds<br>City Fire<br>Chief Bill<br>Bamattre.  |
|    | Office of<br>CEO Julian<br>Burke<br>sustained<br>water<br>damage   |
| PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD  |  |
|    | Security<br>Investigator<br>Roy<br>Romero<br>inspects<br>fire rubble<br>piled<br>beneath<br>structural<br>equipment. |
|    | Security<br>Director<br>Dan<br>Cowden<br>checks<br>damages<br>to wiring.   |
|  | Seared<br>remnants<br>of<br>fiberglass<br>insulation.<br><br>PHOTOS BY<br>GAYLE<br>ANDERSON                          |
|  | View of<br>parapet<br>from 27th<br>floor.<br>PHOTO BY<br>EDSCANNELL  |

in what was a frightening situation."

**Alarm signaled evacuation**

The fire was first noticed at about 10:22 a.m. An alarm was sounded to signal evacuation of the building. Employees who gathered on the bus plaza could see smoke billowing from the top of the building and flames licking over the edge of the roof above the MTA executive offices.

The floors above the executive offices contain heating and ventilation equipment, microwave communications equipment and the elevator hoisting machines. A helicopter pad is located on the roof.

When he spotted the smoke, MTA Security Director Dan Cowden and Security Investigator Roy Romero rushed to the 26th floor where they discovered a microwave room filled with smoke. Told that someone was on the roof, they climbed several more flights of stairs and found Building Technician Frank Porto.

The three men unreeled a fire hose installed on the roof, then went down a ladder to reach a vantage point above the fire. From there, they attempted to spray the flames until thick, black smoke frustrated their efforts. LA City firefighters arrived a few minutes later.

"We made some progress," says Cowden, "but, once the firefighters got there, they had the fire knocked down in a matter of minutes." By 11 a.m., the fire had been extinguished.

**Treated for smoke inhalation**

Romero later was treated for smoke inhalation. Porto injured himself in a fall and was treated. TOS Dietra Thompson, who complained of abdominal pain, and Secretary Arlette Nunley, who suffered knee and respiratory pains, also were treated, along

with a 37-year-old firefighter who suffered heat exhaustion and elevated blood pressure.

Employees from the Metropolitan Water District headquarters, adjacent to Union Station, responded to the situation by escorting some MTA employees to their building, where they were treated to a free lunch.

Firefighters efforts to douse the blaze caused minor water and smoke damage to the offices of CEO Julian Burke, Lipsky and Chief of Staff Maria Guerra. County Counsel offices on the 24th floor and some cubicles on 23 also were affected.

A post-event assessment by General Services and others found that the fire caused little beyond superficial damage. Arrangements were being made to hire a contractor to make necessary repairs as quickly as possible.

Loss of power to the microwave equipment affected communications with Metro Rail lines, but didn't disrupt service. Some Bus Operations Center personnel moved for a short while to a mobile operations center, but were able to maintain communications with the buses.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## **Metro Rail Prepared to Keep Service Moving During Power Shortages**

(Jan 12) Emergency infusions of electrical power from the Northwest and Canada narrowly averted "rolling blackouts" in the Los Angeles area, Thursday evening, but those areas served by Southern California Edison remained under a Stage Two power alert Friday.

Edison provides most of the electricity for the Metro Blue Line and Metro Green Line and, with the possibility of continued power problems, the MTA is closely watching the situation.

Metro Rail officials, however, were breathing much easier about the Metro Red Line. The subway draws its electricity from DWP, which generates its own power, and would not be affected by a power shortage.

### **Prepared for blackouts**

Following Edison's Thursday evening announcement, Héctor Guerrero, facilities manager, Rail Operations Control, said, "The MTA is prepared for the blackouts and we intend to keep the same level of service to our riders so they can get home on time."

Had some electrical substations on the Metro Blue or Metro Green lines been affected by rolling blackouts, ROC supervisors would have directed energy from other substations to keep rail service moving.

Edison has told the MTA it will give the agency a 10-minute courtesy notification of any power disruptions that would affect MTA facilities. That would give Metro Rail a window to take the steps necessary to provide continuous service.

In the unlikely event of a complete shutdown of electrical power on the Metro Blue or Metro Green lines, the MTA will provide emergency bus service along the rail corridors.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



PHOTO by JIM AVILA, Red Line Maintenance Specialist, Division 20.

## Forensics Firm Assessing Headquarters Fire Damage; No Estimate Yet on Repair Costs



(Jan. 16) A forensic investigation firm retained by the MTA began an analysis, today, of the smoky blaze that destroyed lighting equipment atop Headquarters last Friday, caused minor water damage to floors beneath and prompted an evacuation of the building.

[Six Stayed Behind](#) See Bulletin Board

"The firm has extensive experience in electrical fires," said Frank Cardenas, executive officer, Administration. "We want to determine whether the fire was an isolated incident and to make sure it won't occur again."

A Los Angeles Fire Department arson investigator also is conducting a routine examination of the fire scene, according to General Services Director Brian Soto. No estimate of repair costs has been made, but Soto considers the \$30,000 cited in local news stories to be very conservative.

Over the weekend, a General Services team and an outside contractor cleaned the insides of windows, dried carpets and dehumidified walls where water from the fire fighting seeped into offices on the 25th, 24th, and 23rd floors. Window washers are at work today on the building's exterior.

### Preliminary damage survey

A preliminary survey of damage from the fire indicates that electrical wiring and lighting equipment will have to be replaced. The caulking between the limestone blocks fronting the parapet where the fire started and even some of the blocks, themselves, may have to be repaired or replaced.

Determining what has to be repaired, how repairs are made, who should make them and how much the repairs should cost will be the task of

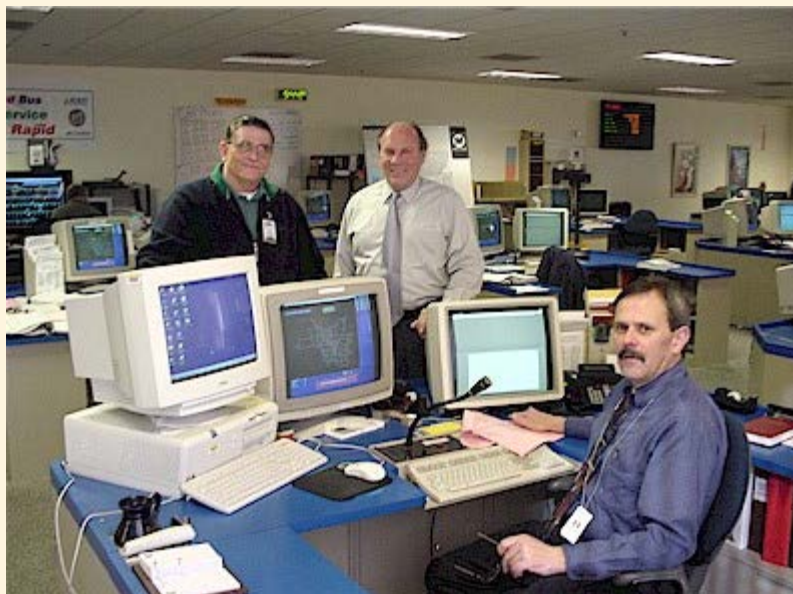
Warren Fu, director, Facilities Engineering.

"This job will be unusual because of the architectural design of the building and because it is so high above ground," Fu said.

Cardenas commended the Security, General Services and Facilities Maintenance departments for their emergency response during and after the fire. And he praised the firefighters' work. "The support we got from the Fire Department was terrific."

"From all accounts, the evacuation was quite orderly," he added. "It just goes to show that our fire drills are a good practice."

[Back to MTA Report](#)



From left: Robert Nedelcoff, George Trudeau and Mike Turk at BOCC station.

**TRANSITION TEAM**—As an estimated 1,400 employees began an evacuation in the Headquarters stairwells last Friday, six remained behind in BOCC to transfer communications to an emergency mobile unit stationed at RRC. "It's a 30-minute procedure," said George Trudeau, assistant vehicle operations manager, "and someone has got to keep communications open until the mobile unit is manned and located to a safe reception area."

With the aroma of smoke wafting through the ventilation system, an emergency transition crew composed of DEO Richard Hunt, Operations Control Supt. Tom Jasmin, George Trudeau and Transit Operations supervisors Mike Turk, Peter Mellon, and Robert Nedelcoff remained in the sixth-floor operations center to direct the transfer of communications to the mobile unit. The team also had to field all incoming calls that were being rerouted from the switchboard. "We could smell the smoke but we didn't think we were in danger," said Turk.

As "information central," the team was relaying communications from the Fire Department, the media, the general public and anyone concerned about the fire. "If we needed to evacuate, we'd be the first to know," said Trudeau. -- GAYLE ANDERSON

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)





YOU CAN GET THERE FROM HERE -- Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations, at left, speaks at opening festivities for new pedestrian crossing in Compton. The crossing provides pedestrians more direct and safer access to hotel and other destinations on the east side of the station.

## **MTA, Crystal Park Casino Open Metro Blue Line Crossing in Compton**

By ED SCANNELL

(Jan. 17) The MTA and the Crystal Park Casino Hotel held festivities at the nearby Metro Blue Line Artesia station today to mark the opening of a pedestrian crossing. The crossing will greatly improve access to one of the City of Compton's largest private employers.

Prior to construction of the new gated crossing, Metro Blue Line passengers and bus passengers arriving at a park and ride lot on the west side of the tracks were forced to make a circuitous walk to the hotel via the Artesia Boulevard overpass. The new crossing provides pedestrians more direct and safer access to the hotel and other destinations on the east side of the station.

Design and construction of the crossing was financed through a \$100,000 grant awarded by the MTA to the City of Compton in the 1997 Call for Projects and a local match of \$25,000 provided by the hotel.

"Accessibility is key to increasing the use of public transit," said Ralph de la Cruz, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. "The new pedestrian crossing is an excellent example of how a public/private partnership can benefit transit users and better serve employment centers, places of recreation and many other destinations."

### **Hotel employs 479**

Crystal Park Casino Hotel employs 479 people. In addition to its 237 rooms, the hotel features live entertainment and includes one of the largest banquet facilities in the City of Compton.

For several years, many area residents, Metro Blue Line passengers, patrons of the hotel and other nearby destinations climbed over a steep embankment in an effort to shorten their walk to the east side of the Metro Blue Line tracks. The new pedestrian crossing makes this long and difficult walk unnecessary.

In addition to the accessibility it provides, the crossing was constructed with safety in mind. It includes a flashing signal to warn pedestrians of an approaching train, safety barrier pedestrian gates and a sloping ramp to the parking lot of the hotel.



"The new crossing provides a safe and short walk to and from the station for local residents and patrons of our hotel," said Leo Chu, owner of Crystal Park Casino Hotel. "We are pleased to have worked with the MTA on a project that will benefit both our property and many of the people who use the Artesia station every day."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## MTA 'Backfeeding' Power to Metro Blue Line as Shortages Continue



PHOTO BY JOSÉ UBALDO

**UPDATE:** (Jan. 18) A power shortage Thursday morning again required the MTA to reduce electrical usage along the Metro Blue Line between the Willow and Slauson stations. Rail Superintendent Jess Diaz said the brownout had no effect on train service as the Rail Operations Center backfed power into the area.

(Jan. 17) The MTA's Rail Operations Center "backfed" electrical power into an eight-mile stretch of the Metro Blue Line, today, to keep service operating normally as power shortages continued to plague the region.

Southern California Edison, declaring a Stage 3 alert, asked the MTA to reduce power along the 22-mile rail line at 5:17 a.m. By mid-morning, the reduction - which affected the Metro Blue Line yard and five of the eight stations between Willow and Firestone - was still in effect, according to Rail Superintendent Jess Diaz.

Edison made two such power reduction requests on Tuesday, an unusual occurrence. The first came at 6 a.m. and affected the stretch of rail between Willow and Slauson stations - an area that has continually been hit by rolling brownouts in recent weeks. The second request covered a period from about 5 p.m. until 10 p.m.

When power reduction - "load-shedding" -- is requested, Metro Rail supervisors take certain electrical substations off-line and backfeed power into those areas from adjacent substations. There are 14 substations along the Metro Blue Line. The MTA took seven off-line in response to today's alert.

"The system was designed to do this," Diaz said Wednesday morning. "We're not putting anyone in jeopardy and, at this time, it's not affecting the operation of the trains."

None of Edison's power reduction requests affected the Metro Green Line, Diaz said. The Metro Red Line draws its power from the City of Los Angeles DWP, which has not been subject to power reductions.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



## **New Billboards Promote Metro Rail Ridership**

(Jan. 17) A series of billboards began to appear in select areas of the county over the past weekend as part of a new advertising campaign to encourage Metro Rail ridership.

The billboards show a bleak, gridlocked freeway and offer weary commuters a few simple words of advice: "Had Enough? Try Metro Rail."

"With most people back from holiday vacations, schools returning to full swing and gas prices remaining high, driving is likely to be very frustrating right now," said Warren Morse, deputy executive officer, Marketing and Customer Relations. "That's what makes this is an ideal time to remind potential riders of the benefits of using Metro Rail."

A total of 49 billboards have been posted; 33 are concentrated in the San Fernando Valley, while the remainder are located in the Hollywood area.

### **Billboards are customized**

The billboards are customized geographically. Each notes how quickly Metro Rail riders can reach downtown LA from that location. The billboards will remain posted through the end of March.

Radio spots will support the billboard campaign with a similar message about Metro Rail's advantages. The spots began airing this week on three stations: KFWB-AM, KRTH-FM and KCBS-FM. They will continue for four weeks through February 9.

Meanwhile, the MTA is continuing to promote improvements to its bus service through the "It's Getting Better on the Bus" campaign.

Messages promoting the fact that MTA has the "Nation's Largest Clean Air Fleet," "More Service Than Ever Before," and is getting "500 New Buses This Year Alone" are now posted on 98 billboards throughout the county.

They join similar messages appearing in local newspaper ads and on the sides of 600 Metro Buses. The billboards, bus posters and newspaper ads all continue through the end of March.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Items to Watch

### **Committee actions updated, Thursday, Jan. 18**

- **Board Workshop on Long-Range Transportation Plan, Committee Meetings Scheduled in January**

(Jan. 16) The MTA Board has scheduled a workshop at 11 a.m., Wednesday, Jan. 17, to discuss the county's 25-year Long-Range Transportation Plan and to consider authorizing release of the Plan for a 45-day public comment period.

Revising the Long-Range Transportation Plan is "very, very important," says CEO Julian Burke. "With up to three and a half million people coming to Los Angeles County in the next 25 years we'll need to improve mobility."

The Plan will propose a range of options that include more HOV lanes, countywide traffic signal coordination, better management of truck traffic, more ridesharing, new busways, a countywide grid of Metro Rapid buses and extending the Metro Green Line to LAX.

Here is a description of some other items of interest before the Board this month and the times and dates of committee meetings.

- **Operations Committee**  
**1 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 17**

**Alternative Fuel Path for Transit Buses, Item 12 Approved. Sent forward to full Board.** Last February, the California Air Resources Board adopted a rule aimed at reducing air pollution from transit buses and encouraging the use of alternative fuels.

The rule requires that transit agencies select either an "alternative fuels path" or a "diesel fuel path" for compliance with the pollution reduction rules. The alternative fuels path requires new buses to run on alternative fuels and mandates the purchase of zero-emissions buses by 2010.

Because the MTA for some time now has had a policy of purchasing only alternative fuels buses, the clean-air rule is expected to have only minimal financial impact on the agency.

- **Executive Management Committee**  
**11 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 18**

**High-Capacity Bus Procurement Process, Item 28 Staff will rework the Board report, including new information from bus manufacturers and present the item at the Jan. 25 Board meeting.** In November, 2000, the Board asked the staff to provide a plan for buying and deploying articulated buses or 45-foot coaches as a means of increasing passenger load capacity. The Board stipulated that the buses should have alternate-fuel engines and be constructed of light-weight, composite materials. Currently, no manufacture builds an approved high-capacity bus that uses alternative fuels such as CNG.

The staff is seeking Board approval for a two-phase process in which the MTA would first seek information about bus manufacturers' plans for building high-capacity, alternative-fuel coaches during the next 36 months. In the second phase, the MTA would issue a procurement request with recommendations for specific types of vehicles and the

quantities the MTA would purchase.

**Light-Rail Car Procurement, Item 32** **Approved by committee. Sent forward to Board's consent calendar.** The motion, which requires a two-thirds vote of the Board, would authorize the CEO to solicit proposals for the purchase of 61 light-rail cars needed over the next nine years for service on the Pasadena Blue Line, the Metro Blue Line and the Metro Green Line.

**Cellular Phone Service in Subway Tunnels, Item 33** **Approved by committee. Staff to report back in February.** The motion by Board Chair Yvonne Burke would direct the MTA to solicit proposals to install cell phone signal reception equipment in the Metro Red Line tunnels. A report is due in March.

"While our passengers enjoy the Red Line for its speed and convenience," Burke's motion says, "they cannot utilize their cell phones due to the lack of reception of radio signals in the tunnels." Other transit properties, she said, have permitted signal reception equipment to be installed in their subway tunnels.

- **Planning and Programming Committee**  
**1 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 18**

**Proposal for Schools at Two Subway Stations, Item 41**  
**Committee recommended approval, but amended the motion to include a 90-day "sunset" clause after which the MTA could negotiate with other parties for use of the North Hollywood station property.** The Los Angeles Unified School District has expressed interest in building public high schools on MTA-owned land at the Metro Red Line's Wilshire/Vermont and North Hollywood stations.

The committee is expected to discuss an LAUSD request for a 90-day negotiating period with the agency. The talks would be expected to clarify how much of the sites would be needed for the schools, how subway portals, bus layover zones and park 'n ride lots would be placed, construction schedules and compensation for use of the MTA property.

The MTA had planned to encourage commercial development of the property around the stations as a stimulus to local communities and as a convenience to subway riders.

**Approve 2001 Call for Projects Funding Marks, Item 45**  
**Forwarded to full Board without recommendation.** Over the next six years, the MTA expects to fund some \$850 million in transportation projects, primarily highway projects, through its 2001 Call for Projects.

The committee will consider approving funding marks in eight transportation categories for presentation to the Board this month. Applications for project funding are due from local agencies in February. The process should be completed in June or July.

- **Construction Committee, 3 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 17**
- **January Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 25**

[Back to MTA Report](#)





## **Commuters to See New Buses on Lines Operated by First Transit, Coach USA**

(Jan. 18) Commuters on Metro Bus lines operated by First Transit and Coach USA this week saw the first of 120 brand new coaches the two companies are purchasing for revenue service.

Six new low-floor Orion coaches joined the First Transit fleet. Sixty-one more of the 40-passenger buses will be rolled out over the next two months. In addition, the company will buy 28 new 30-passenger El Dorado coaches.

Coach USA received five new 18-passenger El Dorado coaches for service on Line 214, servicing stops between the Artesia Transit Center and downtown LA. The company also is purchasing 20 new 40-passenger Thomas coaches.

The companies are under contract to the MTA for five years, with three one-year options. At the end of the contracts, the MTA will buy the buses for \$1 each.

First Transit operates 10 bus lines in the South Bay, Harbor area, South Central LA and the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys. Coach USA operates Line 214 and two others serving the San Fernando Valley.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

#### UPDATE: W-2 Forms Mailed

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The MTA Payroll Department reports that employee W-2 forms were mailed Tuesday, Jan. 23.



### Electronic System May Ease Tax-Time Headaches This Year

(Jan. 19) MTA employees who plan to complete their federal and state income taxes electronically, this year, may find the process a little easier, thanks to the Payroll Department.

Employees who use TurboTax 2000 will be able to directly download their W-2 information into the tax preparation program via Internet. The Automated Tax Return service uses a military-grade encryption system that ensures the highest level of security for a taxpayer's financial data.

The new service is provided by ProBusiness, the contractor retained by the MTA to print MTA paychecks and W-2 forms, according to Payroll Manager Dave Wakeling. He said W-2 forms will be mailed in time to meet the Jan. 31 federal deadline.

Employees who don't currently have TurboTax 2000 can purchase the software at a five percent discount. Information about the software will be included on the W-2 form. For more information, employees also can visit the ProBusiness web site at [www.probusinesstaxes.com](http://www.probusinesstaxes.com).

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



## **Plastic Sheeting Replaces Stone Parapet Atop MTA Building**

(Jan. 22) Pedestrians crossing the Transit Plaza today could see an odd sight at the top of MTA Headquarters: billowing plastic sheeting where there once was a stone parapet.

The front of the building was cordoned off last Friday, when it appeared some pieces of the 25 or so panels of stone facing were in danger of coming loose from their fastenings and falling onto the plaza.

Over the past weekend, a contractor removed the top course of stone facing from the parapet, wrapped the area in plastic for weather protection and cleaned up debris - mostly burnt insulation and wiring - from the Jan. 12 fire.

"The stone was damaged when the fire heated it and then the cold water hit it," said Dan Colonello, General Services supervisor. "Some of the pieces were cracked almost like a jigsaw puzzle."

Colonello said much of what burned was the stucco and insulation of a wall directly behind the stone parapet.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



55th District Assembly-  
woman Jenny Oropeza

## **Oropeza to Chair Assembly Committee Responsible for MTA Oversight**

(Jan. 23) Assemblywoman Jenny Oropeza, until recently a member of the MTA's Board of Directors, will chair a committee that will oversee the agency's activities.

Assembly Speaker Bob Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys) named Oropeza (D-Long Beach) to lead the panel. The select committee was formed to ensure that the MTA meets the county's transit needs and to strengthen the MTA's role in the state and county economy, according to City News Service.

"In order to improve mass transit services in the county, I believe an examination process that includes all stakeholders will be most helpful," said Oropeza, who was a member of the MTA Board for four years. "Our number-one goal is to keep people and goods moving in the county."

She said her committee will study every aspect of the MTA, "from the scope of responsibility to the governance structure."

"Given the labor strike of last summer and the challenges that face the agency," Oropeza told the Los Angeles Times, "it's very important we ensure it is the most efficient and effective agency for bringing transportation to the county."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Metro Bus Passenger Complaints Continue 28-Month Decline

By ED SCANNELL

A downward trend in customer complaints by Metro Bus passengers has now been sustained for 28 months, according to figures in a just-released MTA report. The decline began in August, 1998.

The 12-month moving average for December, 2000, showed 1,268 complaints versus an average of 1,419 in December, 1999. Total passenger boardings for the Metro Bus System in December, 2000, reached 30.4 million.

Customer Relations recorded notable improvements in several reporting categories of passenger complaints, particularly in the areas of Schedule Adherence and Unsafe Operation.

The decline in complaints by Metro Bus passengers can be attributed, in part, to the large infusion of new buses into the active fleet, which results in improved fleet reliability.

Typically, fewer customer complaints are received during the month of December than in any other month. Nevertheless, complaints received in December, 2000, represent a 9.1 percent decrease from December, 1999, and were the lowest December totals since 1994.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON



A Metro Blue Line train approaches the Vernon Avenue crossing as pedestrians wait to cross safely. New sign at upper right indicates a second train is approaching the intersection.

## MTA's Prototype 'Second Train Coming' Sign Warns Pedestrians of Danger at Rail Crossings

By ED SCANNELL

(Jan. 23) The MTA is evaluating the effectiveness of a fibre optic sign designed to warn pedestrians at Metro Blue Line grade crossings that more than one train is approaching. It is the first warning sign of its kind in the United States.

Installed last June at the Vernon Avenue crossing, the "second train coming" warning sign is intended to serve as an additional deterrent to illegal crossings that sometimes result in serious injury or death.

The "second train coming" sign is activated only when two or more trains are approaching the crossing, either two Metro Blue Line trains, a Metro Blue Line train and a freight train, or, on some occasions, two Metro Blue Line trains and a freight train.

At the current volume of rail traffic on the alignment, two or more trains approach the Vernon Avenue crossing 20 to 25 times a day. A video camera has been installed to record the number of pedestrians who enter the crossing illegally when the sign is activated.

### Images of pedestrian, train

The sign, which measures three feet by four feet, includes images of a train, a pedestrian, a grade crossing and an arrow placed in the line of sight between the pedestrian and the train. The train and the arrow symbols alternate from left-to-right, warning the pedestrian to be aware of the imminent danger of a second train approaching from either direction.

Before installing the sign, the MTA surveyed community members to determine whether a sign with graphics or text would be more effective. After reviewing four potential options, most showed a preference for the design currently in use.



Mouse over image to alternate sign. On actual sign, neon yellow figures flash from black background.



A second survey will determine the public's awareness of the sign and whether pedestrians understand the sign's message. The MTA anticipates completing the evaluation and filing a report with the Federal Transit Administration this spring.

If the "second train coming" sign is found to be an effective deterrent, the MTA will seek approval from the California Public Utilities Commission to retrofit additional crossings. The Metro Blue Line includes 101 crossings along its 22-mile alignment.

The design, construction, installation, testing and evaluation of the sign was made possible by a \$200,000 grant from the FTA.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



**TOP SHOP:** Division 3 Storekeeper Larry Magee, left, and stock clerks John Autry, Ervin Leib, and, above, Dante Ronquillo. Not pictured: Armando Gonzales. PHOTOS BY JIM MONTOYA

### **Division 3 Storeroom Named Procurements Top Shop**

The storeroom at Division 3 in Cypress Park was named Storeroom of the Quarter for the last quarter of 2000. The staff consists of Larry Magee, storekeeper, and stock clerks Armando Gonzales, Dante Ronquillo, Ervin Leib and John Autry.

An awards presentation was held Jan. 19 at Division 3 to honor the storeroom personnel.

A commemorative plaque listing each person's name and the award date was presented to the staff. Each member of the storeroom received a jacket with the individual's name embroidered on it.

"Division 3 is a good example of a group of individuals each doing their part to make the whole team better," said Jim Montoya, Materiel Manager. "Everyone strives to do their best and it shows in their collective effort. They are an example of what a group can achieve by working together."

Milo Victoria, Division 3 Maintenance Manager, has been impressed with storekeeper Larry Magee's ability to maintain neatness and cleanliness. Victoria spoke highly of Magee's storeroom organization and his willingness to do whatever it takes to get the parts he needs.

"The staff at Division 3 has always been high performers for our department, they have now achieved the level of excellence and customer service we strive for at all our locations, " said Ted Montoya, Deputy Executive Office, Procurement.

Division 3 supports a fleet of 217 coaches of various coach types.

**--Submitted by Jim Montoya**

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



By Gayle Anderson, Associate Editor

It seems that the rest of world needs their clocks cleaned.

A report in the Sunday edition of the Westside Weekly section of the Los Angeles Times cited *another* transit system from a certain beach community for running buses two minutes fast. But unlike that flyaway service, the report noted, MTA's bus operations system is connected to the nation's official time.

But it doesn't come easy.

We're not talking time bomb here, but when the operating divisions clock in with Bus Operations Control Center every day to synchronize their watches, wall clocks and on-board time devices, they're getting what amounts to an atomic reaction from the Transit Operations Supervisor on duty.

No, the TOS isn't ticked off, he's merely giving the divisions the time of day from an atomic clock quietly counting atoms like sheep in Fort Collins, Colo.

"The time from the atomic clock is transmitted to an antenna at BOCC by radio signals," said Brent Howe, a senior programmer analyst in Information Systems. The radio signals are broadcast from radio station WWVB of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST).

The time that runs the trains on time arrives at the Rail Operations Control by satellite rather than radio signals, said Kelvin Zan, a SCADA Systems and Control Engineer at ROC.

Somewhere in space, a satellite is beaming down data from an atomically correct synchronized clock to an antenna installed at ROC, which, in turn, sets the standard for the yard clock, servers, networks, watches and anything else with a nano-second hand and a face.



This cylinder houses one of the most accurate clocks in the world. NIST-7, the seventh generation atomic clock at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, will gain or lose about one second in six million years. Essentially, an electronic clock selects atoms in one hyperfine state and exposes them to radiation which causes them to switch to the other state. The frequency of the radiation causing the transition becomes the regular beat that the clock counts to register time. Courtesy of NIST

So there, Big Blue Bus. MTA may not get there early, but at least we get there on time.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



## **'Pay-for-Performance' Proposal Approved; Board Chair Burke Calls for Input from Employees**

(Jan. 25) The MTA Board approved a motion, Thursday, authorizing implementation of a Performance-Based Compensation Program for non-represented employees. Implementation of the "pay-for-performance" program is expected to begin in July, 2001.

The purpose of the program "is to recognize and reward performance that meets or exceeds performance objectives," says a Board report authored by Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources, and HR Manager Amy Vander Breggen.

### **Checks and balances**

Board Chair Yvonne Burke has called for "checks and balances" to avoid favoritism in employee performance evaluations. She also has asked for a report within a year on the implementation of the program and, at the Board meeting, asked for a report after two years with input from employees about the program.

"I want to be careful about this," CEO Julian Burke told the Board. "I think it is a very wise thing if you can manage it properly and train for it properly. I think it would be a very good thing for this organization." He added that across-the-board raises don't tend to "encourage people to want to do their best."

In the interim, HR will develop a training program for supervisors and managers, information sessions for employees and a new performance appraisal form for use during the June-July employee evaluation period.



Sheriff's Capt. Marc Klugman, who led the Transit Services Bureau for eight years receives a certificate of appreciation from Board Chair Yvonne Burke. Klugman now is responsible for medical services at the county's detention facilities. He was succeeded at the MTA by Capt. Sylvia Fort.  
PHOTO BY JOSÉ UBALDO

### **Alternative Fuel Path for Transit Buses, Item 12**

**Approved on consent.** Last February, the California Air Resources Board adopted a rule aimed at reducing air pollution from transit buses and encouraging the use of alternative fuels.

The rule requires that transit agencies select either an "alternative fuels path" or a "diesel fuel path" for compliance with the pollution reduction rules. The alternative fuels path requires new buses to run on alternative fuels and mandates the purchase of zero-emissions buses by 2010.

Because the MTA for some time now has had a policy of purchasing only alternative fuels buses, the clean-air rule is expected to have only minimal financial impact on the agency.

### **High-Capacity Bus Procurement Process, Item 28**

**Approved as amended.** In November, 2000, the Board asked the staff to provide a plan for buying and deploying articulated buses or 45-foot coaches as a means of increasing passenger load capacity. The Board stipulated that the buses should have alternate-fuel engines and be constructed of light-weight, composite materials. Currently, no manufacture builds an approved high-capacity bus that uses alternative fuels such as

CNG.

The staff is seeking Board approval for a two-phase process in which the MTA would first seek information about bus manufacturers' plans for building high-capacity, alternative-fuel coaches during the next 36 months. In the second phase, the MTA would issue a procurement request with recommendations for specific types of vehicles and the quantities the MTA would purchase.

**Light-Rail Car Procurement, Item 32** **Approved.** The motion, which requires a two-thirds vote of the Board, would authorize the CEO to solicit proposals for the purchase of 61 light-rail cars needed over the next nine years for service on the Pasadena Blue Line, the Metro Blue Line and the Metro Green Line.

**Cellular Phone Service in Subway Tunnels, Item 33** **Approved on consent.** The motion by Board Chair Yvonne Burke would direct the MTA to solicit proposals to install cell phone signal reception equipment in the Metro Red Line tunnels. A report is due in March.

"While our passengers enjoy the Red Line for its speed and convenience," Burke's motion says, "they cannot utilize their cell phones due to the lack of reception of radio signals in the tunnels." Other transit properties, she said, have permitted signal reception equipment to be installed in their subway tunnels.

**Proposal for Schools at Two Subway Stations, Item 41** **Continued to March.** The Los Angeles Unified School District has expressed interest in building public high schools on MTA-owned land at the Metro Red Line's Wilshire/Vermont and North Hollywood stations.

The committee is expected to discuss an LAUSD request for a 90-day negotiating period with the agency. The talks would be expected to clarify how much of the sites would be needed for the schools, how subway portals, bus layover zones and park 'n ride lots would be placed, construction schedules and compensation for use of the MTA property.

The MTA had planned to encourage commercial development of the property around the stations as a stimulus to local communities and as a convenience to subway riders.

**Approve 2001 Call for Projects Funding Marks, Item 45** **Approved.** Over the next six years, the MTA expects to fund some \$850 million in transportation projects, primarily highway projects, through its 2001 Call for Projects.

The committee will consider approving funding marks in eight transportation categories for presentation to the Board this month. Applications for project funding are due from local agencies in February. The process should be completed in June or July.

**Long-Range Transportation Plan, Item 46** **Receive and file. "Reader-friendly" draft to be released in two weeks. 45-day comment period will follow upon release of the new draft.**

[Back to MTA Report](#)





A Metro Rapid Bus pulls into the newly constructed Sepulveda station on the Ventura Boulevard line. Variable message sign announces the arrival time of the next bus. PHOTOS BY MICHAEL RICHMAI



## **Metro Rapid Bus Program Meeting Goals: Ridership, Customer Satisfaction are Up**

(Jan. 25) The Metro Rapid Bus demonstration program has met its initial goals, the program's manager told the Board, Thursday, reducing travel times by 25 percent and boosting ridership by 26 percent.

In fact, reported Transportation Planning Manager Rex Gephart, Metro Rapid Bus service in the Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard corridors is faster than similar bus service in Curitiba, Brazil, the model for the MTA's program.

The Wilshire/Whittier service, with 90,000 daily boardings, is now the MTA's most heavily traveled bus line. The Ventura line averages 14,000 daily boardings.

"Nearly half of this increase is new ridership," Gephart said. "These are people who have never tried public transit in their lives."

A before-and-after survey conducted by the MTA indicates customer satisfaction on the Metro Rapid Bus lines is up significantly, he added.

### **Station construction program**

The MTA expects within the next several weeks to complete installation of Metro Rapid Bus stations along the 16-mile Ventura line. Stations then will be constructed on the 26-mile Wilshire/Whittier line, a project expected to take several months.

The stations have canopies for weather protection and feature variable message signs that announce when the next bus is due at the station. Because the stations are brightly lit, passengers have said they are some of the safest they've used, Gephart reported.

**Visit**  
[Metro Rapid](#)  
**on the Intranet**

Following an evaluation of the program later this year, he expects to propose an expansion of the Metro Rapid Bus program that could include exclusive lanes on major thoroughfares, high-capacity buses and a feeder network.

Gephart noted that the MTA and the LADOT cooperated in the development of the Metro Rapid Bus program. LADOT has installed electronic equipment at intersections to give the buses traffic signal preference. The agency also provides access to its ATSAC traffic surveillance network, which helps the MTA monitor bus movements.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



**A.J. Taylor**

EDITOR'S NOTE: A retirement party for A. J. Taylor is scheduled, April 21, at Little J's Restaurant, 1119 So. Olive St., Los Angeles. For information, contact Charlene Carr at 922-6218. PHOTO BY MIKE LENSCH

## **A.J. Taylor to Retire in April**

### **MTA's Most Senior Division Manager**

(Jan. 26) A.J. Taylor, the MTA's most senior operating division manager, will retire in April – 30 years to the day after he joined the SCRTD as a bus operator.

Over the years, Taylor, 53, also has worked as a division dispatcher and as an assistant division manager. He has managed divisions 8, 3, 1, 7 and the Arthur Winston Division – twice. He currently is manager at Division 18 for the second time.

"A.J. manages one of the largest and most challenging divisions in the bus system," said Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner. "As our most senior manager, he has served as a

mentor to many here at the MTA."

### **Many positive contributions**

Conner praised Taylor's dedicated service and his "many positive contributions to the MTA," noting that he most recently led the development of a program for accident review procedures and the Bus Transfer Manager program.

A native of San Antonio, Texas, Taylor joined the SCRTD on April 17, 1970, after a four-year enlistment in the Navy during Vietnam.

Taylor's primary motivation is making the Metro Bus system work for the public. "From Day One of my career, I was trained that serving the public is the most important part of our job. We need to offer people an alternate mode of transportation."

He also enjoys daily contact with his fellow division employees.

"Interacting with the bus operators and mechanics is the best part of my job. I can be down when I come to work, but as soon as I start talking to them, I pump up."

So, what comes after retirement for the 53-year-old Taylor?

First, he's going back home to San Antonio to visit his mother, Catherine, who hasn't been in good health lately. Then, he plans to go back to school to study foreign languages. His goal: to become an interpreter in Spanish and, perhaps later, in French and Japanese.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## **MTA Goes to Head of Line for Bus Rapid Transit Funding**

(Jan. 29) The MTA just got a boost from the Federal Transit Administration that now ranks the agency at the head of the line for funding of Bus Rapid Transit projects.

As a "first tier member" of the FTA's Bus Rapid Transit Consortium, the MTA is numbered among only 11 local agencies nationwide whose projects will be the first to receive federal funding for travel, research and project development.

[Read about Bus Rapid Transit programs on the FTA web site.](#)

The success of the Metro Rapid Bus demonstration impressed the FTA and was the primary factor in winning a place on the consortium for the MTA, says Rex Gephart, project manager. As a result, the agency will receive an initial grant of \$50,000, with more expected in the near future.

"The FTA sees very positive results from what we're doing," he says. "In fact, they're taking our results to the federal budget committees to suggest that bus rapid transit programs are actually working."

### **Metro Rapid Bus won admiration**

The MTA was excluded from the consortium at first, Gephart says, because the FTA considered dedicated rights-of-way to be a key factor in any bus rapid transit plan. But, the 25 percent reduction in travel times and the 26 percent increase in ridership achieved by the Metro Rapid Bus demonstration won the FTA's admiration.

"The initiation of rapid bus service on Wilshire and Ventura Boulevards is already generating positive results," wrote Nuria Fernandez, acting FTA administrator. "Bus riders are experiencing higher levels and more reliable service. These improvements are already generating tangible mobility benefits."

In the months ahead, Gephart expects more interest in bus rapid transit projects and an increase in the MTA's interaction with the FTA and other "first tier" agencies as funding becomes available for research.

In fact, he's already been named to a technical advisory committee for a transit vehicle design competition.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

(Jan. 29) Big blue cranes and yellow front-end loaders can be viewed

## Pasadena Blue Line Making Progress on Aerial Guideway to Chinatown

Click here to visit the  
[Pasadena Blue Line](#)  
web site.



from the north windows of MTA Headquarters busily constructing an elevated guideway that in 2003 will be the first leg in a 13.7-mile light-rail line to Pasadena.

Concrete pillars are being erected alongside the tracks leading north from Union Station. Piles of lumber, giant re-bar cylinders and stacks of 80-foot rail sections placed at construction sites just downhill from Chinatown are waiting to be assembled into a railroad bed.

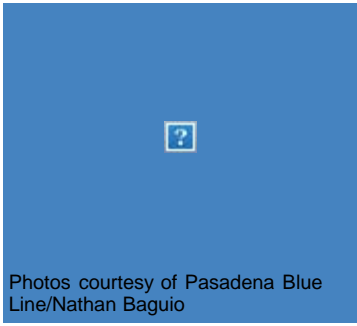
The 2,766-foot aerial guideway will begin at the Union Station train platform, run along Vignes to Main Street, then curve north at Alameda and cross Bruno and College. It will end just north of the future site of the Chinatown Station. The guideway will carry both north and southbound tracks and will rise some 24 feet above street level.

In Old Pasadena, meanwhile, contractors are building the "Colorado Box," a complex cut-and-cover project that will take the railroad beneath historic buildings from Delmar Avenue north to Walnut Street and the Memorial Park station in Pasadena. The foundations of a dozen buildings must be strengthened to stabilize them during construction.

Once completed, the MTA will operate the Pasadena Blue Line, which in its first phase, will serve the communities of Los Angeles, Chinatown, Lincoln Heights, Highland Park, South Pasadena and Pasadena.

Phase II of the project will extend 24 miles east from Pasadena to Claremont through the eight communities along the rail right-of-way.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Photos courtesy of Pasadena Blue Line/Nathan Baguio



**Burke Declares in  
Staff Meeting:**

**MTA in  
'Better Position  
Today'  
for Transition to  
New CEO**



By BILL HEARD, Editor

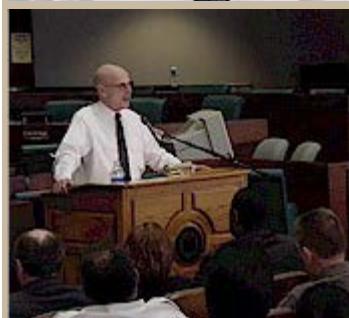
(Jan. 30) The MTA "is in a much better position today to have a change in its CEO than it has ever been," Julian Burke declared, Tuesday, in his first all-staff meeting of the year.

Burke announced earlier this month that he plans to leave what he described during the meeting as "this wonderful job" sometime in 2001. He said, however, that the idea of retirement for someone who has been totally absorbed in his work throughout a long life is difficult to contemplate.



The CEO told a packed Board room, and others listening in from offices and conference rooms, that the Board of Directors had given him responsibility for finding his replacement.

"I think that's good. I think I can bring something to the process," he said. "We ought to be able to get through it in a meaningful way and find someone who is a seasoned manager."



Burke said the Executive Leadership Team – whose members are the chief operating officer, chief financial officer, county counsel and the heads of Transit Operations, Construction and Countywide Planning – will help facilitate the transition to a new CEO.

This group of senior executives considers most of the issues that cut across departmental boundaries and develops recommendations for the CEO. Burke expects the ELT to play a "very meaningful" role during the transition to a new chief executive officer.



CEO Julian Burke fields questions at all-staff meeting. Bottom photo, CEO calls

**Focus in 2001**

Among the issues the CEO expects to focus on in 2001 are labor relations and proposed transit zones in the San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys.

Burke said he hopes to "improve our

upon Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky, at right.

PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

conversations" with the MTA's unions and he mentioned a recent lunch with UTU Chief James Williams, during which the two exchanged ideas.

On the transit zone issue, he said the Board wants to understand why the MTA's operating costs are higher than those of other regional transit agencies. He said a comparison of MTA operating costs with other agencies of its size found that MTA costs "were at the high end.

Burke indicated that much more thought needs to be put into formation of transit zones and that employees "don't need to be fretful about it until we understand it better." He was reluctant to put a time frame on creation of the zones, adding, "if it happens at all, it won't be soon...and if it happens at all, it will be right."

### **Pay-for-performance**

Turning to the current proposal for a non-contract Performance-Based Compensation system, Burke called himself "a reluctant dragon" who was concerned about whether such a system was appropriate for a public agency and whether it could be implemented by managers without favoritism.

"It will take some training of our managers. It will take a lot of change in the documentation that we've historically used to measure performance," he said. "I have come to the conclusion that it certainly should be possible to have such a program if it is carefully done."

Noting that the original proposal was put forward by the Morale Task Force, the CEO also called on a group of employees who had circulated a petition to send a delegation to meet with him and Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky to discuss the pay-for-performance plan.

"We're trying to do a program that works and that you have confidence in," he said. "Why would we want to have any kind of compensation program that was not substantially acceptable and desirable and thought of with confidence by employees?"

### **Looking back at 2000**

Looking back at the year 2000, Burke picked out the opening of the North Hollywood segment of the Metro Red Line as a notable achievement, along with the start of Metro Rapid Bus service. The MTA also began a project – expected to be completed this summer – to extend the Metro Blue Line platforms to accommodate a third rail car.

He cited improvements in the quality of bus service and "increases in bus service for the first time in six years." He noted that 350 new buses were added to the fleet in 2000 and that some 500 more are expected in 2001.

"We continue to be in substantial compliance with the Consent Decree," Burke said. He was optimistic that the MTA would gain relief from the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in its quest to better define the intent of the Consent Decree.

The CEO outlined a "huge procurement" that will bring "smart bus" features to the Metro Bus fleet. These include a GPS satellite system

that will monitor bus movements, a passenger counting system, an automatic voice system to announce bus stops and a fare collection system that will be compatible with those of municipal operators.

"This will bring us closer, I believe, to the point where we will have a seamless fare collection system on all the transit systems in the county," Burke said.

He noted that both the light-rail line proposed for the Eastside and the busway proposed for the Burbank-Chandler right of way in the Valley are in the preliminary engineering phase. And he said the MTA's corridor studies have gained support at the county, state and federal levels.

[Back to MTA Report](#)