

Metro Report Archives

March 2001 Articles

MTA Releases Draft Long-Range [Transportation Plan](#) for Public Review (March 1) The MTA has released for public comment its draft Long-Range Transportation Plan, a 25-year blueprint for transportation planning in Los Angeles County through the Year 2025.

U.S. Transportation [Secretary Mineta](#) Pays a Call on MTA (March 2) Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta visited MTA Headquarters, Friday, to talk with CEO Julian Burke, Board Chair Yvonne Burke and Mayor Richard Riordan.

MTA Releases Draft [Environmental Report](#) for Eastside Light-Rail Project (March 6) The MTA has released the draft environmental study of a six-mile light-rail extension that would serve one of the most densely populated and heavily transit dependent areas in Los Angeles County.

LA's Successful [Metro Rapid Program](#) Sparks Nationwide Interest (March 6) The success of Los Angeles' Metro Rapid bus demonstration program has sparked new interest in Bus Rapid Transit projects by the federal government, cities, transit organizations and bus manufacturers across the nation.

[Eight Bus Operators](#) First to be Honored in Accessible Service Program (March 7) Eight Metro Bus operators who have demonstrated a commitment to safety, courtesy and outstanding service to physically impaired passengers were honored, Wednesday, during a ceremony at Division 3.

GHOST Officers Arrest Vandal in [Graffiti Spree](#) that Scarred Metro Buses, Little Tokyo (March 7) Three days after Christmas, a 16-year-old boy stepped onto a bus in East Los Angeles, whipped out a razor blade and started to scratch his moniker on a window.

[Pilot Project](#) Will Estimate Cost of Graffiti Zero Tolerance Program (March 7) How much would it cost in actual dollars and staff time to keep the entire Metro Bus fleet completely free of graffiti?

Bus Operator Charged in Alleged [Worker's Comp Fraud](#) (March 9) A Metro Bus operator was arraigned, Friday, on eight felony charges for allegedly defrauding the MTA on a stress-related worker's compensation claim. She also was charged with a misdemeanor for allegedly filing a false police report.

[MTA Asks Congress](#) for \$75 Million for FY 2002; CEO Burke Meets with Leaders (March 8) The MTA is asking Congress for \$75 million in FY 2002 to help meet Los Angeles County's goals of reducing traffic congestion, operating efficient transit services and improving air quality.

MTA Working to Open [Transportation Museum](#) on Olvera Street (March 13) The MTA is one of the prime movers behind an effort to open a \$1.5 million transportation museum that would become a focal point of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument and a major link in a chain of downtown museums.

Canadian Couple Finds Metro System is an E-Ticket to

Southland Adventure (March 13) This story, about one Canadian couple's vacation adventures using Los Angeles' Metro system, originally appeared in the Vancouver Sun.

Man Killed on Metro Rail Line is First Since Mid-2000 (March 14) A 41-year-old man was struck and killed, Tuesday, while walking on the Metro Blue Line tracks south of the Compton station. It was the first fatality on the rail line since June 26, 2000.

Metro Green Line Sound Barrier Completed, but City Wants it Extended (March 14) Metro Construction recently completed construction of a 2,200-foot long sound barrier along the Metro Green Line elevated tracks in Hawthorne. Now, the wall will be extended another 112 feet at the city's request.

HAZMAT: MTA Team Focuses on Cleanup, Disposal, Environmental Compliance (March 15) Mid-morning, June 2, 1999. A Metro Blue Line train eastbound on Washington Boulevard rams an 18-wheeler attempting an illegal turn onto Hill Street.

Employment, Records, Security Will Move into New Plaza-Level Offices (March 19) The newly erected walls are painted, carpet is laid and lights are installed. Cubicles, shelves and counters are in place. In fact, the new offices on the Plaza level lack only furniture and a Certificate of Occupancy to be ready for employees to move in.

Stage 3 Power Emergency Affects Metro Blue Line Service (March 20) Rolling blackouts hit communities throughout California for a second day, Tuesday, as the state remained in a Stage 3 Power Emergency. The outages affected electrical equipment ranging from latte machines and elevators, to traffic lights and light-rail service.

Ribbon-Cutting Opens High-Tech Metro Rapid Bus Station (March 20) With the *snip-snip* of a giant pair of scissors, MTA and Los Angeles officials cut a ribbon, Tuesday, to mark the opening of 27 new Metro Rapid bus stations on Ventura Boulevard.

Motorist Finds Jeep No Good on Metro Blue Line Tracks (March 22) The driver of a Jeep who must have thought he was operating a Metro Blue Line train drove onto the tracks just after midnight, Thursday, and attempted to enter the tunnel at 12th and Flower.

MTA Schedules Public Workshops on Long-Range Transportation Plan (March 22) The MTA will conduct a public workshop in South Central LA at 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 4, on the plaza level of First AME Church, 2270 S. Harvard Blvd. See story for other scheduled workshops.

Metro Clean Gang Awareness Seminars Stress Goals, Education to Youthful Offenders (March 27) When Frank Ojeda tells a young man that he might be dead tomorrow he speaks from experience. Ojeda is a community specialist in the East LA Community Gang Reduction Project and has seen more than his share of gang violence.

MTA Engineering Designs Nation's First 'Slow-Fill' CNG Pumping Station for RRC (March 28) Mechanics at the Regional Rebuild Center no longer will have to tow CNG buses back and forth to Division 10 for fueling, thanks to an innovative, cost-efficient "slow-fill" gas pump designed by the

MTA's Engineering Department.

MTA's [State of the Bus](#) Report Shows Dramatic Improvements to Bus Service over Last 5 Years (March 30) Metro Bus service now ranks as one of the best among its peers with the dramatic turnaround over the last five years being accomplished by improved management and operations, coupled with the arrival of new clean-burning, state-of-the-art CNG buses.

MTA Internet Web Site Launches New 'Pressroom' Feature (March 30) MTA Media Relations has added an important news-oriented feature to the agency's Internet web site at www.mta.net.

- **Supervision [Certificate Program](#) Scheduled for Frontline Supervisors** (March 12) Supervisors who want training in the fundamentals of managing employees now can enroll in the MTA's new Frontline Supervision Certificate Program.
- **Employees Make a [Career Check](#) in HRD&T Pilot Program** (March 12) A group of 30 MTA employees will be taking a close look at their careers over the next three months, thanks to a pilot program begun, Thursday, by Human Resources Development and Training unit.
- **MTA Introduces new '[Employee of the Quarter](#)' Recognition Program** (March 9) Giving recognition where recognition is due – whether to an individual or to a team of employees. That's the goal of the MTA's new "Employee of the Quarter" program.
- **Four [Board Committees](#) to Meet in March** (March 9) Only four of the Board's five committees are scheduled to meet this month. The Finance Committee meeting has been cancelled for the second month in a row.
- MTA Employees [Go for the Gold](#) in LA Marathon
- Teamwork makes [September 2000 Refund Project](#) 'a piece of cake' for Fare Media Operations.
- **[MTA Security Team](#) Joins Forces for Appreciation Program** For the first time in the history of MTA Security, all hands were on deck in the MTA Board Room Thursday evening for an appreciation and awards program hosted by the MTA Office of Systems Safety & Security to honor an outstanding security team.
- **MORE PHOTOS! [GALLERY](#) Black History Month Celebration Draws 200 to Division 1.**
- **["How you doin'?"](#) is more than just a casual greeting in Transit Operations these days.** It's the department's newest performance awareness and incentive awards program.
- **Coming to Your Home Computer [March 23](#): Intranet Access!!** (March 16) If you have the Internet at home, the MTA has news – something news every day – for you! Beginning Friday, March 23, employees and retirees will be able to access metro.net, the MTA Intranet.
- **[1,200 Employees](#) Must File Outside Income and Gift**

Disclosure Forms by April 2 (March 16) Some 1,200 MTA employees this year will be required to file one or more forms disclosing outside income, investments and gifts received from contractors. The "Statement of Economic Interests" – Form 700 – is due April 2.

- **Welcome to metro.net!**
- **They're Doin' Great! Division 9 Sweeps "How You Doin'?" Awards; Green Line Continues 'Top Rail Line' Winning Streak...**
- **Faith and Begorrah: There Once Was a...Saint Patrick's Day Limerick Contest** (March 19) With shamrocks, leprechauns and the Ould Sod in mind, Metro Café marked Saint Patrick's Day – Saturday, March 17 – with a limerick contest.
- **Strategy #13: A User-Friendly Procurement Process** (March 15) The Procurement Department has taken the first steps towards a procurement process that is easier, faster and more user-friendly for the many departments it serves throughout the MTA.
- **Career Day:** The 'Future' of the MTA is Coming April 5
- **Best of the Best** Fifty-three Transit Operations employees will be honored as the MTA's "Best of the Best," Saturday, at a banquet co-sponsored by Transit Operations, Risk Management and System Safety and Security.
- **Learning to Give the Breath of Life** Everyone should know CPR, and the Office of System Safety and Security – working with the American Red Cross – is making an effort to teach the skill to as many employees as possible.
- **Support Services Group Plans 20% Improvement; Process Starts with 'Base Line' Survey** (March 26) Six departments that comprise the MTA's Support Services Group plan to achieve a 20 percent improvement in FY 2002 in their service to internal customers. But first, they need to know how they're doing now.
- **Historical Assn. to Mark Last Day of Pacific Electric Cars** (4/6/01) Forty years ago Monday, the last of the Pacific Electric Red Cars made their final run in Los Angeles. On Sunday, April 8, the Electric Railway Historical Association will commemorate that event on the Metro Blue Line.

MAKING THE SCENE AT DIVISION 1
African American Employee Association
and Division 1 produce memorable
Black History Month Celebration.



Guest Speakers U.S. Congresswoman Maxine Waters and Pastor Mark Whitlock of First AME Church raised the roof more than once.



AAEA's Nery Watson, Division 1 event coordinator Emily Beckett and AAEA's Stacey Watson present award to Rep. Waters.



Division 1 Bus Operator Sandra McGhee gave it up in song. AAEA's Mary Lee-Dysart joined guest Shirlee Cavallaro in rousing rendition of "Walk in Faith."



Rep. Waters enjoyed photo opportunity with Division 1 Maintenance Service Attendant Anna Bates, left, and Division 1 Transit Operations Supervisor Fred Fluker.



Honoree Dana Coffey, Arthur Winston Division Transportation Manager, with Arthur Winston, Rep. Waters, and County Counsel George Parks. Division Manager Coffey, who joined the MTA in 1976 as a bus operator, personified the theme of this year's event: *African American women stepping out of time and into time.*



From left, AAEA member Mary Lee-Dysart, Human Resources Director Naomi Nightingale, and Executive Officer Ray Inge congratulate Pastor Whitlock.



The Greater Compton Soulette Drill Team chill out after floor-stomping, roof-raising, crowd-pleasing routine.



More than 200 attended. At left, Transit Chief Tom Conner, Rep. Waters, CEO Julian Burke and Pastor Whitlock enjoy the program.



Line for the barbecue buffet wound through the train room.



Barbecue king "Cowboy," aka Mike Burke, kept five industrial- size grills going with the help of cousin Johnny Burns, background.

PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

They're Doin' Great!

Division 9 Sweeps "How You Doin'?" awards for February; Green Line continues 'Top Rail Line' winning streak.

- "How You Doin'?" is Transit Operations' newest performance awareness and incentive awards program



Division 9 Maintenance: from left, 1st row: John McBryan, Julio Velasquez, Ricardo Hernandez; 2nd row: Harvey Robles, Tam Quach, Raul Eguia, Edward Rivera, Rubin Ramirez, Ted Garcia; 3rd row: Ricard Famighetti, Javier Castro, Adolfo Soto, Rudy Gutierrez, Raymond Tat, Jaime Lazano, Barry Richter; 4th row: Ernie De La Rosa, Rudy Silva, Sonny Dang, Carmen Boctor, George Arredondo, Tom Conner; 5th row: Ryan Granados, Dave Bricker, John Roberts, Gerry Clark, Antonio Sanchez, Mace Bethel, Dennis Mullen, and Larry Cosner.



Division 9 Transportation: from left, back row, Ebelio

Montoya, Louie Madrigal, Reginald Pearson, Betty Hubler, Cathy Hardway, Naginder Sidhu, Robert Holley, Vincent Rhodes, Raymond Guinn, acting DEO John Roberts, Shawn Secrest, Transit Chief Thomas Conner, Division 9 Transportation Manager Maceo Bethel, Varun Talwar, and Devinder Singh. Front row, from left, UTU Local Chairman Roberts Douglas, Manuel Valencia, Division 9 Assistant Transportation Manager Laurence Cosner, and Raymond Guinn.



Metro Green Line crew nabs "Top Rail Line" trophy for second consecutive month. Pictured are, from left, Ralph De la Cruz, Jesse Ruiz, Bryan Goms, Kevin Doan, Joe Daniels (behind Doan), Bill Haines, Eugene Adams (holding trophy), Ed Smith, Phil Meyers, Trimisha Wilson (holding trophy), Tanzeem Rizvi, Tom Conner, Rick Flores (hidden behind Tom Conner), Tony Capasso, Joe Knapik, Jack Eich, and Khiem Pham.

PHOTOS BY CHRISTIAN VALTIERRA

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

State of the Bus System Report

MTA's Report Shows Dramatic Improvements to Bus Service over Last 5 Years



Included in this review:

- [Report Highlights](#)
- [MTA Faces Challenges](#)
- [Report Conclusions](#)

By RICK JAGER

(March 30) Metro Bus service now ranks as one of the best among its peers with the dramatic turnaround over the last five years being accomplished by improved management and operations, coupled with the arrival of new clean-burning, state-of-the-art CNG buses.

According to the MTA's just-released "State of the Bus Report," a record amount of bus service is now scheduled, including the popular Metro Rapid Buses. More than 1,100 new CNG buses are now on the road – representing half of MTA's fleet, with hundreds more on the way.

As a direct result of putting newer buses on the road and expanding service, the MTA has seen customer complaints drop 27 percent since 1998. Customer complaints were at a six-year low last December.

The State of the Bus Report, which tracks both improvements and ongoing challenges in the Metro Bus system, notes that this year the MTA is spending \$945 million on its bus operations and bus capital programs. In addition, another \$215 million is being distributed to 16 municipal bus operators in Los Angeles County.

45% of budget slated for buses

Altogether, the MTA this year will spend 45.5 percent of its entire budget on buses, up more than \$213.5 million compared to 1997.

The report shows that in 2000-2001, the MTA and its contracted services



Click here to read
[State of the Bus System Report](#)

set a new record for the most bus service operated by THE MTA or its predecessor transit agencies. The MTA today schedules 2,012 peak hour buses for a total of 7,271,125 annual bus revenue service hours—up nearly 1 million hours compared to 1996.

The State of the Bus Report tracks improvements in the Metro Bus system since October 1996. That year, the MTA began implementation of a federal court Consent Decree designed to improve Metro Bus service.

The MTA is completely revamping its bus fleet by replacing older diesel buses with new CNG coaches, but it also has increased the number of buses in service by 377 in the last four years. Annual ridership has increased by 47 million boardings.

State of the Bus Report Highlights

Other highlights contained in the State of the Bus Report include:

- Improvements in on-street management and supervision along with newer buses has enabled the MTA to place 99.5 percent of scheduled buses into service each day.
- Implementation of a Bus Cleanliness Inspection Program has resulted in cleaner buses.
- The MTA's operating costs continue to drop, down to \$98.66 per revenue service hours from a high of more than \$110 in 1996.
- The MTA has improved mobility for elderly and disabled patrons with the purchase of easy-access low-floor clean fuel buses.
- The MTA operates the largest clean fuel bus fleet in the nation. One CNG bus equals the reduction of emissions of 7.2 automobiles.

MTA Faces Challenges

While gains have been made during the past five years, the report notes that the MTA still faces many challenges in continuing to improve transit service:

- Improve bus in-service on-time performance.
- Eliminate graffiti on the transit system and increase the number of miles the MTA operates buses between road calls and breakdowns.
- Control operating costs and increase operating revenues so that the MTA can further expand service.
- Further reduce the bus accident rate.
- Continue to comply with the federal consent decree
- Monitor MTA-contracted bus service providers to ensure that the level of service quality lives up to the terms of the agreements.
- Expand the bus operator-training program with a focus on customer service and safety.

As the MTA considers proposals for additional or expanded zone services in the San Gabriel Valley and the San Fernando Valley, careful consideration of how zones might be developed, funded and operated needs to be addressed for the benefit of MTA customers, while providing adequate protection for the wages and benefits of MTA employees.

State of the Bus Report Conclusions

The report concludes that service reliability continues to improve and

notes that the MTA this year alone will take delivery of 500 new CNG buses.

The report also notes that the future for further bus improvements looks bright. The MTA, as part of its 25-year Long-Range Transportation Plan, is looking to expand the Metro Rapid Bus system to include 22 additional lines throughout the region.

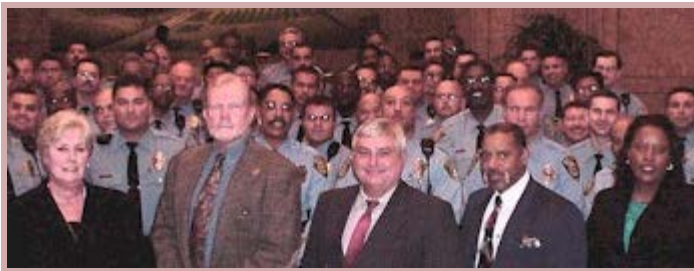
Currently, the MTA operates two Metro Rapid Bus lines serving the Wilshire/Whittier corridor from Santa Monica to Montebello and along Ventura Boulevard in the San Fernando Valley.

Metro Rapid Bus is designed to provide faster service by using signal transponders on board buses to extend green traffic lights. Since it debuted last June, travel time has been reduced by 25 percent with ridership on the Wilshire/Whittier line up 26 percent and patronage on the Ventura line up 25 percent.

To further improve bus service, the MTA is now acquiring high capacity buses as part of the agency's bus procurement plan, and is looking at 45-foot buses and articulated buses. Exclusive busways also are planned in various corridors.

The MTA is developing a universal fare system that will provide a seamless way for people to connect from one bus system to the other as well as to the Metro Rail system.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



ALL HANDS--Security Chief Paul Lennon, center, hosts appreciation and awards program for security team. PHOTOS BY SR. SECURITY OFFICER ART GRANT

Security Team Joins Forces for Appreciation Program



DECORATED Above, from left, MTA security officers Mario Carrillo, Richard Nelson, Luis Medrano and Loretta Ferem. Below, officers Marv Jenkins, Manuel Quezada, Shantelle Brown, Belford Gaines, and Rodolfo Ragudo.



By GAYLE ANDERSON

For the first time in the history of MTA Security, all hands were on deck in the MTA Board Room Thursday evening for an appreciation and awards program hosted by the MTA Office of Systems Safety & Security to honor an outstanding security team.

Security Chief Paul Lennon congratulated the men and women of the force, which consists of 94 uniformed officers and a support staff of three, for excellence under pressure during four major deployments in the year 2000.

"Security went through the Y2K, the opening of the Red Line to North Hollywood, the Democratic National Convention and the work stoppage and met each challenge individually and collectively with distinction," said Lennon. Noting how the deployments required 'round-the-clock shifts and

seven-day work schedules, he said, "They consistently exceeded my expectations."

The first-ever "All Hands Meeting" was a deployment in itself, said Pam Murano, security manager of in-house systems. "Security duties had to be covered so that officers could leave their posts to attend the meeting. Others who were off-duty were happy to come into work and bring their families for the special occasion," she said.

During the two-hour program, the familiar faces of security officers manning the desks of the Gateway Building were briefly replaced by Lou Hubaud, Vijay Khawani and Robert Torres. General Services supervisor Phyllis Meng handled the dispatch center and Rick Hittinger and Rita Malone arranged for the gate watch.

Special recognition awards were handed out to officers who worked the Democratic National Convention. All officers who had worked on the team for at least one year were decorated with a distinctive Transit Service Award.

While service continues to be mainstay in priorities, the department's goals for 2001 include a reinvigorated training program of increased capacity and a full staff, said Director Dan Cowden. "It's a small group and they've all done a great job."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



ABOVE AND BEYOND DAC volunteers, above, together for a meeting at Headquarters, recently made a presentation, at the Braddock Drive Elementary School in Culver City. Below, giving the presentation were Linda Wilkison of Division 6 (center, standing), Paul Magallanes of Division 7 and Dyana Elloriaga of Division 1 (seated, center). Not shown is volunteer Sam Saucedo of the RRC.



DAC Volunteers Take MTA's Safety, Vandalism Messages to Area School

(March 1) In the past two months, MTA Division Advisory Committee volunteers have taken the agency's bus and rail safety and anti-vandalism messages to more than 7,000 elementary pupils throughout Los Angeles.

A remarkable record for the 146 Transportation and Maintenance employees who spend many hours of their own time preparing for or making presentations in area schools, says Helen Ortiz, Transit Operations communications officer and DAC coordinator.

Armed with flip charts and some of the tools used to remove graffiti, the DAC members dramatize the harmful effect of graffiti and how it can destroy buses and the children's neighborhoods. They also teach the children how to ride buses and trains safely.

"The volunteers have a tremendous amount of pride in what they're doing," says Ortiz. "As role models, they plant a seed of respect with the children."

25 schools by year's end

One recent week, DAC volunteers gave presentations at assemblies in five different schools. They plan to reach 25 more schools before the end of the school year.

DAC volunteers also are involved in education efforts, community clean-ups and parent education seminars. Working in partnership with schools, community groups and businesses, the volunteers help remove graffiti from targeted neighborhoods.

At the parent education seminars, DAC members help parents identify anti-social signs in their children's behavior and appearance. They stress the importance of personal responsibility and communication between parent and child.

"We've had excellent cooperation from division managers who have released our DAC members for meetings and the school presentations," says Ortiz.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

MTA Releases Draft Long-Range Transportation Plan for Public Review

By MARC LITTMAN

(March 1) The MTA has released for public comment its draft Long-Range Transportation Plan, a 25-year blueprint for transportation planning in Los Angeles County through the Year 2025.

Since last spring, the MTA staff has held community outreach and focus group meetings with transit users, academics, environmentalists, community groups, business and labor leaders and others to develop the draft transportation plan.

Now that the draft plan has been released, MTA will conduct a series of public workshops at which the staff will discuss the plan and seek comment from the general public. Members of the public also can request copies of the plan from the MTA or [click here](#) to read it on the agency's Internet web site at www.mta.net.

Workshops have been scheduled at the Boyle Heights Senior Center, 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 20; at the Northeast Valley Senior Center in Pacoima, 7 p.m., Thursday, March 15; at the North Hollywood Recreation Center, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, March 29; at MTA Headquarters, 6 p.m., Thursday, March 22; and in the Inglewood/LAX area, Saturday, March 24, at a time and place to be announced.

The Board will consider adoption of the plan at its April 26 meeting. Following Board adoption, the plan will be included in SCAG's Southern California regional transportation plan so that Los Angeles County transportation improvements can be eligible for state and federal funding.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta, center, visited MTA Headquarters, Friday, to talk with CEO Julian Burke, Board Chair Yvonne Burke and Mayor Richard Riordan. Former Mayor Ed Randell of Philadelphia, left, a guest of Riordan's, joined the group. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

U.S. Transportation Secretary Mineta Pays a Call on MTA

(March 2) Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta visited MTA Headquarters, Friday, to talk with CEO Julian Burke, Board Chair Yvonne Burke and Mayor Richard Riordan. Former Mayor Ed Randell of Philadelphia, a guest of Riordan's, joined the group.

Mineta's visit gave MTA officials an opportunity to brief the secretary on the agency's progress in modernizing the Metro Bus fleet and improving passenger service. The discussion also included an update on the Eastside rail project, the Metro Rapid bus demonstration program and other transit projects.



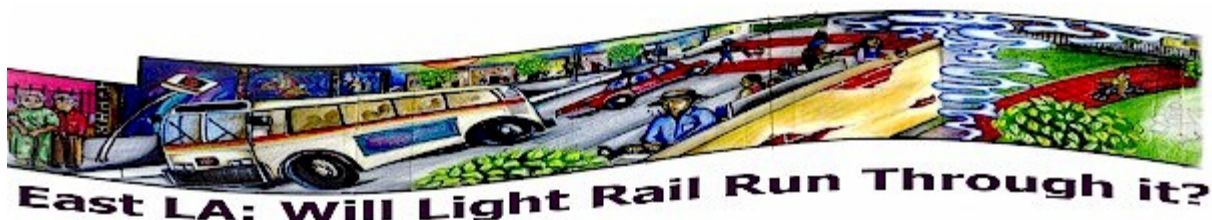
**U.S. Secretary of
Transportation
Norman Mineta**

Mineta, a Democrat, served as Secretary of Commerce in the Clinton administration and was appointed Secretary of Transportation by President Bush.

A native of San Jose, he served as mayor of the city – the first Asian-American mayor of a major U.S. city. He was elected to Congress in 1975 and served for more than 20 years on the House Transportation Committee.

While on that committee, he helped write the Americans with Disabilities Act. He also was instrumental in passage of ISTEA, a 1991 bill that allowed federal highway money to be used for public transit projects.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



MTA Releases Draft Environmental Report for Eastside Light-Rail Project

- [Features that make the Eastside an excellent candidate for a light-rail line.](#)
- [Background on earlier work to build the Eastside line.](#)
- [Determining residents' concerns and educating the community.](#)
- [Next steps in the process.](#)

By ED SCANNELL

(March 6) The MTA has released the draft environmental study of a six-mile light-rail extension that would serve one of the most densely populated and heavily transit dependent areas in Los Angeles County.

Release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Eastside Light-Rail Transit Project will be followed by a 45-day comment period. The MTA will hold three public hearings to receive community input on the study.

The light-rail project would serve as an extension of the Pasadena Blue Line. It would operate from Union Station to Atlantic Boulevard along 1st Street, then transition to 3rd Street via Indiana Street and proceed east along 3rd Street/Beverly Boulevard to Atlantic Boulevard.

The extension would include nine stations and operate at street level, with the exception of a 1.7-mile tunnel segment through Boyle Heights, which was necessitated by the narrowness of streets along this portion of the alignment.

Several features make the Eastside an excellent candidate.

The 40-square-mile Eastside is a densely populated area with a current population of 403,000. That figure is expected to grow 25 percent by the year 2020 and, during the same period, the number of jobs is expected to climb by 30 percent.

In addition, many Eastside residents are transit dependent. More than 19 percent of workers use the bus system to get to work as compared to 6.8 percent for Los Angeles County as a whole. In some Eastside neighborhoods, as many as 50 percent of commuter trips occur on public transit.

If the light rail extension receives final environmental approval later this year, construction could begin in mid-2003. The extension could begin operations in mid-2007.

In addition to Union Station, stations would be located at 1st St./Alameda St. (Little Tokyo), 1st St./Utah St., 1st St./Boyle St., 1st St./Soto St., 1st St./Lorena St., 3rd St./Rowan Ave., 3rd St./Mednick Ave., and Beverly Blvd./Atlantic Blvd.

The extension would be linked with the 13.7-mile Pasadena Blue Line at Union Station. The Pasadena Blue Line is expected to begin operations in mid-2003.

The initial work on the Eastside line was suspended.

In January 1998, the MTA suspended work on the Eastside extension of the Metro Red Line subway prior to groundbreaking. The suspended project would have consisted of

four stations east of Union Station.

Following a study of potential transit alternatives for the corridor, the MTA Board in June, 2000, selected the Light-Rail Transit alternative as the preferred mode of choice for the Eastside community.

The Federal Government had committed to fund \$495 million, or approximately 50 percent, of the cost of the subway extension. The MTA studied the light rail alternative with the intent of improving transit mobility while retaining federal funding eligibility.

Following the recommendation of Gov. Gray Davis, the state legislature earmarked state surplus funds to fully fund the Eastside alternative. The projected cost of the Eastside Light-Rail Transit Project is approximately \$760 million.

Determining residents' concerns and educating the community.

The MTA has been meeting with residents and other community stakeholders since June, 1999, to solicit input on the Eastside project. Three public hearings will be held during the 45-day comment period, which began, Friday, March 2, to receive input on the draft EIS/EIR.

To ensure a thorough understanding of the draft EIS/EIR, the MTA will distribute 10,000 executive summaries of the report along the project alignment. Some 61,000 households will be notified by letter about where they can read one of the 1,500 copies of the draft EIS/EIR to be distributed.

Copies of the report will be distributed to various governmental agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Postal Service branches, the Sierra Club, the Boys and Girls Club, libraries, public service agencies and service organizations along the alignment.

Next steps in the process.

At the conclusion of the Draft Environmental Phase, the MTA board of Directors will consider adopting a "Locally Preferred Alternative" (LPA), the federal government's term for the transit improvement preferred over other available alternatives.

The MTA is nearing the start of preliminary engineering on the project, which will incorporate mitigation measures, design features and safety features identified during the environmental phase and received during the comment period.

Following Board certification and approval by the Federal Transit Administration, the project would be ready for final design and construction.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Metro Rapid

LA's Successful Program Sparks Nationwide Interest

(March 6) The success of Los Angeles' Metro Rapid bus demonstration program has sparked new interest in Bus Rapid Transit projects by the federal government, cities, transit organizations and bus manufacturers across the nation.

This week, representatives from the MTA are participating in a two-day Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) workshop in Pasadena. The workshop is one of the steps in an international design and planning competition sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration and transit agencies in Massachusetts and Oregon.

More than 35 design and planning teams are expected to present their concepts for high-tech transit vehicles and BRT systems during the workshop at the Arts Center College of Design in Pasadena.

The competition calls for vehicles designed with low floors and multiple doorways, possibly on both sides of the bus. They should be light-weight vehicles with large windows, good interior lighting, intelligent control systems and low-noise, clean-air propulsion systems.

The proposed transit systems in which the vehicles would operate might include charging stations for electric vehicles, automated parking lots, instant car or bicycle rentals for passengers and communication services.

"Los Angeles is prominent in the Bus Rapid Transit program because our city is the first to have a system that is making a dramatic improvement in passenger travel times," says Rex Gephart, Metro Rapid project coordinator and a member of the BRT competition's technical advisory committee.

"Most other concepts are still in the design stage," he says. "But, in LA, we're looking at the possibility of exclusive lanes on arterial streets and dedicated bus lanes on former rail rights-of-way. We also have asked for manufacturers' proposals for large-capacity buses for use in expanding the Metro Rapid program."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Pilot Project Will Estimate Cost of Graffiti Zero Tolerance Program

(March 7) How much would it cost in actual dollars and staff time to keep the entire Metro Bus fleet completely free of graffiti?

That's what a team of employees who recently graduated from the MTA's Transportation Leadership Academy will try to determine over the next three months.

The seven-member team, sponsored by Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner, will monitor a Zero Tolerance experiment on a single inner-city bus line. The project will begin Sunday, March 4, and continue through June 3.

On a daily basis, the team will collect data on the expense and staff time involved with keeping the bus line's 47 coaches clean and graffiti-free. From the data collected, the team hopes to estimate the cost of a Zero Tolerance program systemwide.

Team members are Luis Alcantar, Mary Grace-Hall, Gary Jolly, Mike Kennedy, Lorraine Melendez, Pete Serdienis and Behzad Yassan.

The operating division supporting the bus line will ensure that all buses leave the division graffiti-free each morning. Court-referred community service workers stationed at layover zones will clean the buses and remove any graffiti picked up during their runs.

Bus operators on the test line will be asked to note and report graffiti problems and to provide a description of the taggers and the locations where they board the bus.

"We're interested in getting the word out on the street that, with the assistance of our LAPD and Sheriff's Department units, we're going to be attacking vandalism with vigor," said team member Serdienis. The team will draft a report on the project this summer.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

[MORE on Graffiti:](#)

'GHOST Officers Arrest Vandal in Graffiti Spree that Scarred Metro Buses, Little Tokyo'



(March 7) Eight Metro Bus operators who have demonstrated a commitment to safety, courtesy and outstanding service to physically impaired passengers were honored, Wednesday, during a ceremony at Division 3.

Each of the eight operators received a special pin indicating that they had successfully boarded 50 or more physically impaired passengers between July and December 2000. They were the first operators to be recognized in the MTA's new Accessible Service Milestone Awards Program.

Michael Priesont of Division 18 was honored for boarding 69 physically impaired passengers; Darrell Stephens, Division 18, boarded 67 passengers. Robert Jenkins, Division 7, boarded 55; David Farrington, Division 18, and Larry Thompson, Division 10, each boarded 54.

Ignatius Arellano, Division 18, boarded 53. William Herscovitch, Division 15, and Antonio Sanchez, Division 15, each boarded 51.

Recognition pins also will be awarded to operators who board 75, 100, 150, 200 and 250 physically impaired passengers. The MTA first began providing accessible bus service in 1980.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Division 15 Operator Antonio Sanchez details program for reporter. PHOTOS BY JOSÉ UBALDO.



Evidence found in vandal's home included acid, spray paint and photos.



Little Tokyo store window, above, furniture and bus window, below, served as canvas for vandal.



GHOST Officers Arrest Vandal in Graffiti Spree that Scarred Metro Buses, Little Tokyo

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 7) Three days after Christmas, a 16-year-old boy stepped onto a bus in East Los Angeles, whipped out a razor blade and started to scratch his moniker on a window.

He had hardly begun when LAPD undercover officers, who had been watching the boy's movements for several days, arrested him. Suspect in tow, Officer Todd Waymire and Officer Kevin Huff – armed with a search warrant – went to the boy's home in East Los Angeles.

There, in a house whose rooms and furniture were shockingly defaced with graffiti, they found 92 pieces of evidence: spray paint cans, a bottle of acid powerful enough to scar glass, two liquid shoe polish applicator bottles filled with an acid mixture and photos of the boy in the act of writing graffiti.

It wasn't merely by chance that the officers, members of the LAPD's GHOST anti-graffiti team, arrested the youth. They had spent 20 days talking with witnesses, researching graffiti monikers, and assembling other evidence of a string of vandalism crimes.

\$12,500 in graffiti damage

In the boy's wake were at least six Metro Buses – almost certainly many more – whose windows he allegedly had destroyed with etch bath acid. In Little Tokyo, officers found the boy's moniker permanently etched on 11 store windows: \$12,500 damage from one four-hour nighttime vandalism spree.

"One window, alone, was \$2,500 in replacement value," says Waymire, noting that etch bath is

the vandals' latest weapon of choice. "The kid also tagged a bus going there, the bus stop, the bus he took home and that bus stop."

[MORE on Graffiti:](#)
'Pilot Project Will Estimate Cost of Graffiti Zero Tolerance Program'

After pleading guilty to one felony vandalism and one misdemeanor charge in juvenile court, the boy was sentenced to three years and four months in the California Youth Authority facility and given five years' probation. He and his parents also are responsible for monetary restitution for the damage.

What does Officer Waymire hope will result from this case?

"I'm hoping bus operators will fill out a crime report when their buses are tagged and that division managers will immediately report these incidents to the police," he said. "It wasn't until Dieter Hemsing at Division 1 reported that six buses in his yard had etch bath damage, that we became aware of it."

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Fare Media Operations Team leaders, from left, Vanessa Smith, Gail M. Harvey and Liz Armijo-Holbrook follow certificate presentation with icing on the cake. Below, accounting team members, clockwise from left, Velda Medlock, Carmelita Malonzo, Luz Garcia, Cathy Taylor, Nancy Untalan and Linda Looper show off their certificates.



Fare Media Operations Celebrate Teamwork in Completion of September 2000 Refund Project

(March 8, 2001) It was cake and certificates of appreciation all around for some 56 MTA staffers who combined organizational and accounting skills to issue a whopping 4,800 refund checks to transit patrons. Patrons received refunds for fare passes purchased when the buses and rail operations closed up shop during last year's work stoppage.

"The fact that we worked together to complete the tasks of organizing, inputting, processing, issuing and reconciling the issuance of over 4,800 checks was a great accomplishment," said Gail Harvey, Project Team Leader and Manager, Fare Media Operations.

The Fare Media Operations Team staged the event, held Feb. 27, to recognize and celebrate the completion of the project, which required significant teamwork from several different departments and spanned four months.

The roster of awards read like the NBA playoffs: Liz Armijo-Holbrook's Revenue Team, Agapito Diaz' Management Support Team, Gretchen Maxwell-Perry's Accounts Payable team, Patricia Lane-Goodson's Procurement Team, Mary Morgan's Treasury Team and Tom Horne's Customer Relations Team.

And just in case the image of the September 2000 Pass begins to fade in the memories of those who toiled in its long shadow, both the cake and the certificates bore the image of the pass that time forgot.--TEXT AND PHOTOS

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| | BY GAYLE ANDERSON |
|--|-------------------|

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

MTA Employees Go for the Gold in LA Marathon



MTA MARATHONERS: Above, back row, from left, **Robert Barron**, Division 2, 7 hrs., 33 min.; **George Parks**, County Counsel, 8 hrs., 50 min.; **John Tena**, Division 2, 4 hrs., 19 min. (Front row, from left) **Christian Valtierra**, Operations Support, 4 hrs., 58 min.; Bike Tour rider **Marie Pratt**, Arthur Winston Division, 1 hr., 25 min.; **Mario Razo**, Division 2, 5 hrs., 14 min. Below, back row, from left, **Roland Guzman**, Division 20, 4 hrs., 30 min.; **Simon Guzman**, Division 20, 3 hrs., 50 min.; **Al Martinez**, Countywide Planning, 5 hrs., 8 min.; **Gary Chan**, Countywide Planning, 5 hrs., 11 min.; and **Everett Wilson**, Revenue, 4 hrs., 17 min. Middle row, from left: **Bernie Guzman**, Division 20, 5 hrs., 52 min.; **Art Aguilar**, Division 2, 7 hrs., 55 min.; Bike Tour rider **Deven Lewis**, ITS, 1 hr., 20 min.; **Vazgen Vartanian**, ISD, 3 hrs., 28 min.; and **Charles Hernandez**, RRC, 6 hrs., 26 min. Front row, from left: **Paul Kim**, Division 20, 5 hrs., 50 min.; Bike Tour rider **Kathryn Jackson**, ISD, 1 hr., 40 min.; **Luis Inzunza**, Media Relations, 4 hrs., 35 min.; and Bike Tour rider **Mattie Jones**, ITS, 1 hr., 30 min. PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON



By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 8) John Tena, a Division 2 mechanic, has run the LA Marathon 11 times. Marie Pratt, a dispatcher at the Arthur Winston Division, has cycled in seven. Everett Wilson, an auditor, has run in all 16 events.

We're not talking amateurs here. Well, actually, we are. But, with that many races under their belts, the pain, strain and pleasure of crossing the finish line after 26 grueling miles is familiar to this bunch of MTA employees.

Tena finished the race in 4 hours, 19 minutes. "Not quite my best, but not too bad," he says.



Division 8 Transportation Manager **Grant Myers**, above left, and Transit Operations Supervisor **Ralph Gray** did the Bike Tour. It was the sixth time for Myers and the seventh for Gray. Below, new medal makes 15 marathons for Sr. Security Officer **Luis Medrano**.



The hardest part was getting ready. "Committing every other day to go out and run is harder than the marathon, I think," says Tena. Now, he's thinking of entering either the San Diego or San Francisco marathon.

Pratt, the cyclist, completed the course in 1 hour, 25 minutes, "but that was slow," she says, regretting that she hadn't really trained for the race.

"The hardest part was climbing the hill on Vine Street," she remembers. "I really felt it. Then, again, coming toward the end on Union Street. I was glad to be home, but it was fun!"

Wilson was a late arrival

Everett Wilson, with 15 previous LA Marathons under his belt, made a mistake this time. He arrived only a half hour before the starting gun and found himself lost in a sea of marathoners.

"For a veteran runner, I should have known to get there early so I could get up front," he says, regretfully. "There were just too many people in front of me."

Wilson had to struggle for the first two miles to work his way through a pack of walkers and slower runners. His slow early pace left him with excess energy. "From mile 23 to the end, I was sprinting. I had a lot left," he said.

Wilson's time of 4 hours, 17 minutes reflected his slow start. In an earlier race he ran the 26 miles in 3 hours, 15 minutes. His next event? The Palos Verdes marathon in May.

First-timers made it OK

Al Martinez, a first-time marathoner, was hoping to complete the courts in less than five hours and he was happy with a time of 5 hours,

8 minutes.

The hill on Highland Avenue leading to Mann's Chinese Theater "was tough," but his technique of running for eight minutes, then walking for two, pulled him through.

For Mattie Jones, riding in the LA Marathon was a life-time goal. "I've mentally trained for years, so I only needed two days of actual training." She finished in 1 hour, 30 minutes.

Her friend, Kathryn Jackson, also was on her first marathon. The huge crowds lining the marathon route made her "a little nervous, but it was OK."

Earlier in the week, she did a 10-mile training run and took a spill. But, under the pressure of the actual event, she finished in 1 hour, 40 minutes. Now, Jackson is training for the 62.3-mile Avon Breast Cancer 3-day walk in October.

Although metro.net invited all LA Marathon participants to have their photo taken, it's not certain all runners, bikers or wheelchair competitors got the word. The photos with this article picture those we were able to round up.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

MTA Asks Congress for \$75 Million for FY 2002

- CEO Julian Burke was in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, to meet with leaders of the LA County congressional delegation and with members and staff of House and Senate appropriations subcommittees.



CEO Julian Burke

(March 8)The MTA is asking Congress for \$75 million in FY 2002 to help meet Los Angeles County's goals of reducing traffic congestion, operating efficient transit services and improving air quality.

CEO Julian Burke was in Washington, D.C., Wednesday, to meet with leaders of the LA County congressional delegation and with members and staff of House and Senate appropriations subcommittees.

Mayor Richard Riordan, in the capital on city business, joined Burke for part of the day.

The biggest chunk of the MTA's funding request is \$50.1 million to complete the federal funding commitment for the Metro Rail North Hollywood extension. The agency also is seeking \$11.9 million for final design of fixed guideways for the Eastside and Mid-City transit corridors.

The MTA is asking for \$10 million to support and expand the Metro Rapid bus program in the San Fernando Valley, Mid-City area and the South Bay. Of that, \$6.5 million would be use to purchase new coaches and for the bus signal priority system. The remaining \$3.5 million would be for construction of bus stations.

The funding request includes \$2 million for additional transit services in areas with high numbers of workers who need transportation throughout the day. The MTA also is seeking \$1 million for development of the Regional Universal Fare System database.

In a fact sheet prepared for members of Congress, the MTA notes that it continues to expand and improve its Metro Bus and Metro Rail service. Metro Rapid buses now transport more than 100,000 passengers each day, the fact sheet said.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



"We must promote a supportive team environment in which each employee strives to do the best job possible...."

MTA Introduces new 'Employee of the Quarter' Recognition Program

(March 9) Giving recognition where recognition is due – whether to an individual or to a team of employees. That's the goal of the MTA's new "Employee of the Quarter" program.

The program began this month as posters, brochures and nomination forms were placed at operating divisions and in kitchens on each floor of MTA Headquarters. The new program replaces the Employee of the Month program, started in 1996.

"The program recognizes individuals and teams who have shown they are capable of a high-quality work product," says Ray Inge, executive officer, Human Resources. "It rewards those who work well with others in achieving goals, who are dependable, who show initiative and who are highly motivated."

The criteria for team awards also include significant improvement in team performance, improvement in the team's goal, leadership by team members and completion of a team's objectives. Each member will receive all the honors accorded the team.

Better employee recognition

"With these criteria and by improving the quality of the awards, we should be able to provide better recognition to those selected as Employee of the Quarter," says Employee Activities Manager Diane Delaney-Talton.

Employees below the director level who have been with the MTA at least six months may be nominated. Any employee may nominate another full-time, regular employee, team or group of employees, or themselves, for a quarterly award.

Nominations must be approved by the department head, who then must forward it to the executive officer. The Employee of the Quarter selection committee will review all nominations and select an employee or a team from each unit to be honored for the quarter.

Employee of the Quarter selectees will receive personalized awards from their executive officers. They will be invited to lunch with the CEO and their photos will be mounted in the cafeteria lobby and will appear on the Intranet. Each single honoree or team member also will receive a gift basket with logo shirt, coffee mug and pin.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Four Board Committees to Meet in March

(March 9) Only four of the Board's five committees are scheduled to meet this month. The Finance Committee meeting has been cancelled for the second month in a row.

The Board's monthly meeting is scheduled at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 22. Committee meetings scheduled this month are:

- **Operations:** 1 p.m., Wednesday, March 14
- **Construction:** 3 p.m., Wednesday, March 14
- **Executive Management:** 11 a.m., Thursday, March 15
- **Planning and Programming:** 1 p.m., Thursday, March 15

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Bus Operator Charged in Alleged Worker's Comp Fraud

(March 9) A Metro Bus operator was arraigned, Friday, on eight felony charges for allegedly defrauding the MTA on a stress-related worker's compensation claim. She also was charged with a misdemeanor for allegedly filing a false police report.

Rochelle Givens, 26, of Long Beach, was arrested and booked, March 7, by LAPD Transit Group detectives. She is charged with one felony count of grand theft and seven felony counts related to preparing and filing false insurance claims.

According to police reports, Givens claimed she had been robbed of her transfer tickets at gunpoint during a bus run on November 17, 2000. Police said a check of the bus videotape for that time period, however, showed no robbery had occurred.

Following the reported incident, Givens allegedly complained of stress. She filed a worker's compensation claim and was drawing benefits. Givens has just over two years' service with the MTA.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Employees Make a Career Check in HRD&T Pilot Program

(March 12) A group of 30 MTA employees will be taking a close look at their careers over the next three months, thanks to a pilot program begun, Thursday, by Human Resources Development and Training unit.

Called "Talent Alliance," the program will offer pilot group members an opportunity to complete a skills profile. It also will provide career development and counseling. All elements of the program will be available via the Internet through the employees' desk computers or in the HRD&T Learning Center.



TALENT ALLIANCE Marion Colston-Fayyaz, HRD&T manager, welcomes the 30 employees chosen to participate in the Talent Alliance program. The group will receive career counseling during the three-month pilot program.

"The program is good for someone who may have been hired for a specific job, but now years later, needs to reassess what it really takes to do that job," says Marion Colston-Fayyaz, HRD&T manager.

"If you're interested in a new career, the program will enable you to do some research, tell you whether your current job compliments your new career goals and will help you assess what you need to do to start that new career," she adds.

Morale Task Force had input

HRD&T developed the Talent Alliance program after the Morale Task Force indicated that the MTA needed to improve employee career development.

The Talent Alliance web site provides "career workshops" whose key features include career surveys and courses, on-line research, instruction in career coaching, advice on how to balance work and personal life. It also helps an employee identify professional development and job opportunities.

HRD&T, worked with the MTA's Training Council and Diversity Task Force, to identify a cross-section of employees to participate in the pilot program. Each will be expected to work on the Talent Alliance web site at least twice a week for an hour or more each time.

If the pilot program is successful and funding is approved in the FY 2002 budget, HRD&T plans to conduct one additional pilot program for Bus Operations Control Center dispatchers.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Supervision Certificate Program Scheduled for Frontline Supervisors

(March 12) Supervisors who want training in the fundamentals of managing employees now can enroll in the MTA's new Frontline Supervision Certificate Program.

The program, which begins March 28, is designed for both new and experienced supervisors who have had little or no formal training. A UCLA Extension instructor will teach the course.

The course will focus on the challenges and role of frontline supervisors, work-related issues and practical solutions for everyday supervisory problems.

Application forms, which are available from the Human Resources Development and Training unit, must be submitted by March 16. Applications may be submitted to Michelle Berry at mail stop 99-14-5, submitted via e-mail or faxed to 922-5259.

For more information, contact HRD&T's Julie Fowler at 922-7119 or Michelle Berry at 922-7113.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Canadian Couple Finds Metro System is an E-Ticket to Southland Adventure

By JOHN COX

In Los Angeles, the city where the automobile is king, we chose to get around by public transit.

This is not something recommended by most guidebooks. Even some locals thought we were daring. But my wife, Joan, and I had successfully used public transportation in places like London, Hong Kong and Copenhagen, so why not Los Angeles?

Our first experience with the LA transit system was several years ago when we had an afternoon to kill at Los Angeles International Airport. We took the bus to nearby Venice Beach and had a great time.

Encouraged by this experience, we thought we'd explore a little farther on a recent more extended trip. Our base was an apartment in Redondo Beach (or Redundant Beach as we nick-named it after seeing the unbroken miles of sandy shoreline).

We got there easily by bus from LAX. Frequent shuttle buses connect the airport terminal with a nearby transit center. The free shuttles also go to a Metro Green Line rail station where it is possible to catch a train to downtown and northern or eastern points.

Our first excursion was to the Getty Center in Brentwood. This turned out to be a perfect day trip. Actually, it may be best to go there by transit since parking is scarce at the museum and must be reserved days in advance.

Next, we traveled to the city center where we visited the Grand Central Market, rode the Angels Flight Railway, and took the Metro Blue Rail line and bus to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Another successful and enjoyable trip.

Now we were ready to venture farther afield — to Long Beach (Aquarium and the Queen Mary) and south along the coast through Huntington Beach, Balboa, Newport Beach and Laguna Beach. If we hadn't lingered over coffee and lunch, we could have gone all the way to San Clemente and back.

Our last day trip was to the wonderful Huntington Museum in Pasadena. And with only one transfer in downtown Los Angeles.

Admittedly, our goal was not to see all of the sights in the Los Angeles area. We were there from rainy Vancouver for a mid-winter sun break. But, when we tired of walking or biking along the miles of level coastal bike paths, or when the weather turned wet or too hot, it was fun to go sight-seeing.

As with using public transit anywhere, it is essential to plan ahead. Fortunately, that was easy. We pre-planned most of our trips on the Internet before we left home. The Los Angeles Metro Transit system has an excellent website — www.mta.net — where you enter your starting point, your destination, and when you want to leave or arrive.

It tells you what bus to take, when and where to catch it, where to transfer and get off, and even where to walk to get to your exact destination address. The same information is available by telephone (1-800-COMMUTE).

Timetables for specific routes also can be picked up at transit and tourist information offices and on the bus. And, generally, drivers are extremely friendly and helpful as are



Traveling light, Joan Cox of West Vancouver, B.C., hops aboard a local bus heading for the Los Angeles International Airport. Author John Cox's e-mail address is jcox@planeteer.com

other passengers who are quick to tell you where to get off (in the nicest way).

Seeing LA by public transit worked well for us but it probably wouldn't suit others, such as families with children bent on seeing Universal Studios, Disneyland and Knotts Berry Farm.

As in other cities, it requires time, patience and a sense of adventure. What is not needed is a lot of money. Seniors like us can travel all the way from Hollywood to San Clemente — half way to San Diego — for less than two dollars return!

Of course, when we returned home, we used Translink to get from the airport to West Vancouver (a trip now made faster and easier by the new Airport Station connection).

EDITOR'S NOTE: This story, about one Canadian couple's vacation adventures using Los Angeles' Metro system, originally appeared in the Vancouver Sun.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Historic Los Angeles Railway Company power substation is future site of transportation museum.

MTA Working to Open Transportation Museum on Olvera Street

(March 13) The MTA is one of the prime movers behind an effort to open a \$1.5 million transportation museum that would become a focal point of El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historical Monument and a major link in a chain of downtown museums.

The 11,325-square foot interactive museum will be located in Olvera Street's historic Los Angeles Railway Company power substation across Alameda Street from Union Station. Olvera Street is currently undergoing a \$22 million renovation.

The museum, directed mainly at children, will chronicle LA's transportation history with historic artifacts, transportation-related videos and educational displays on the Red and Yellow trolley cars that once networked the region. About two-thirds of the 2 million annual visitors to Olvera Street are children on school field trips.

The transportation museum will be an important stop on Angels Walk, the pedestrian path connecting downtown tourist venues. It will join the Children's Museum, the Japanese-American National Museum, the Geffen Contemporary Museum of Art, and others.

Robin Blair, MTA transportation planning manager and a member of the museum coordinating committee, expects the museum building renovation to take about a year. Within two years, static and dynamic displays should be installed and ready for visitors.

Caltrans recently announced funding of a \$1.257 million grant for the museum. The funds are expected to be available in July and will be matched with a City of Los Angeles grant to reach the \$1.5 million needed to renovate the substation and prepare it for museum use.

Former MTA Board member Nick Patsaouras, who has been a strong supporter of the museum project for a decade, is leading an effort to obtain additional funding for development of the educational and historic displays.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Man Killed on Metro Rail Line is First Since Mid-2000

(March 14) A 41-year-old man was struck and killed, Tuesday, while walking on the Metro Blue Line tracks south of the Compton station. It was the first fatality on the rail line since June 26, 2000.

Witnesses said the man, identified as Daniel Villegas Munoz, was walking in a fenced area of the tracks when he was hit by a northbound train. The Sheriff's Department is investigating the accident.

Metro Rail operations said some 100 passengers were on the train, but there were no other injuries. Operations set up a bus bridge between the Artesia and Rosa Parks stations.

The only fatality involving the Metro Blue Line in 2000 was a man who apparently committed suicide by walking in front of a train at 10th and Long Beach Boulevard. Tuesday's fatality is the 55th since service began on the rail line in July 1990.

In recent years, the MTA has become a national leader in efforts to improve rail safety. It has installed quad gates at some crossings, placed left-turn signals at intersections and installed cameras that take photos of cars that cross the tracks illegally.

The most recent innovation is a "second train warning" sign that began operation in February at the Vernon Avenue crossing. The fibre optic sign warns pedestrians that more than one train is approaching a rail crossing.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Metro Green Line Sound Barrier Completed ...but City Wants it Extended

(March 14) Metro Construction recently completed construction of a 2,200-foot long sound barrier along the Metro Green Line elevated tracks in Hawthorne. Now, the wall will be extended another 112 feet at the city's request.

"The city was concerned that noise from the trains would bounce off existing structures and disturb neighbors on the south end of the barrier," said Al Nijland, the MTA's project engineer. "We got approval to extend the barrier if it would cost no more than \$50,000." The cost of the extension is estimated at \$49,000.

The total cost of the original project, which was completed on time and on budget, was \$945,232. Nijland expects the sound barrier extension will be completed later this month, depending upon arrival of acoustical panels from the east coast manufacturer.

The six-foot-tall barrier extends down both sides of the elevated rail structure from the south end of the Douglas/Rosecrans station to about 600 feet south of the intersection of Rosecrans Avenue and Aviation Boulevard.

Before beginning construction, the MTA conducted extensive noise studies that indicated passing trains produced between 55 and 72 decibels, depending upon time of day. The barrier is expected to cut noise by at least 10 decibels in the adjacent Holly Glen neighborhood.

The MTA also attempted such noise abatement measures as grinding train wheels to reduce friction against the tracks and running trains at slower speeds. When those efforts were not as successful as hoped, the agency decided to construct a sound wall.

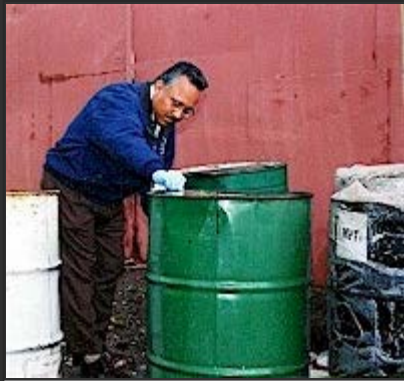
Construction workers erected some 275 steel columns at 16-foot intervals along the outside edge of the aerial structure. Then, the 16-foot-long, two-foot-wide panels were slipped into place between the

columns, three high to make a six-foot wall. The panels are made of fiberglass sandwiched between sheet metal.

Metro Builders of Laguna Niguel is the prime contractor on the project. The MTA's Tom Lee is resident engineer.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

HAZMAT



David Daniels investigates abandoned waste on a MTA rail right-of-way.



Marion Ray, left, checks hazardous waste drums at RRC.



Moni Rubisa supervises cleaning of steam rack oil and water separator.

MTA Team Focuses on Cleanup, Disposal, Environmental Compliance

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 15) Mid-morning, June 2, 1999. A Metro Blue Line train eastbound on Washington Boulevard rams an 18-wheeler attempting an illegal turn onto Hill Street.

Diesel fuel pours from the truck's ruptured tank. Leaking into a nearby storm drain, it runs into Ballona Creek. The spill must be stopped before it reaches the ocean.

Within the hour following the accident, MTA Environmental Compliance officers Jim Jimenez, Marion Ray and David Daniels are on-scene directing the cleanup. Also responding are city Public Works Department and county HAZMAT officials and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The MTA team oversees a contractor whose workers clean and flush the storm drain. A 5,000-gallon tanker truck vacuums up the waste water. Workers also set up absorbent booms in Ballona Creek to catch any fuel that might escape the vacuum truck.

No contaminants reach the ocean.

Trained and equipped for the job

Not an ordinary day for the members of the Quality Assurance Department's Environmental Compliance Section, but one they were trained and equipped to handle, says section head Jim Jimenez.

"It's mayhem, sometimes," says Jimenez, noting that members of the team are on 24-hour call, "but we try to respond as fast as we can to contain a release."

The five-member Environmental Compliance Section spends 85 to 90 percent of its time doing preventive work. Team member Gerry Alvarez inspects all 20 MTA operating facilities each month. He, along with Victor Laury and Moni Rubisa, advises managers on waste disposal and keeps them abreast of constantly changing environmental regulations.

The team ensures that the MTA recycles or properly disposes of almost 2 million gallons of waste oil, fluids and chemicals it generates annually. They maintain a 60- to 70-day schedule for hazardous waste removal.

Tons of waste materials, recycling

The team oversees the disposal each year of some 70 tons of spent oil filters, hundreds of worn out tires, thousands of burned-out fluorescent light tubes and high-intensity discharge lamps. They also arrange for collection of hazardous waste that frequently is illegally dumped on MTA property.

Recycling is a major effort. Waste oil is burned as bunker fuel by ocean-going ships. Some used oil,



Victor Laury checks the sensor on an underground storage tank at Division 5.



Division 2 mechanics clean up diesel fuel spill.

blended with waste paint and chemicals ends up as tar paper, street tar or asphalt. Fluorescent tubes are broken into their components of mercury, glass and tin. Metal from used oil and transmission filters is turned into construction rebar.

The MTA spends some \$900,000 annually to contract with companies for waste cleanup and removal. By maintaining and properly documenting its environmental compliance programs, the agency receives \$25,000 each year from the state.

"The MTA is doing its environmental share in recycling and waste management," says Mike Stange, superintendent in charge of the Quality Assurance Department. "And, we're doing a very good job of it."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Strategy #13: A User-Friendly Procurement Process



By DAVE HERSHENSON

(March 15) The Procurement Department has taken the first steps towards a procurement process that is easier, faster and more user-friendly for the many departments it serves throughout the MTA.

The department is participating in the Strategy #13 Team – an MTA initiative to streamline the procurement process as part of the Business Process Improvement Project.

Other departments include Finance, Administration, Management Audit Services, Risk Management, Human Resources and Operations.

The Strategy #13 Team has developed plans that identify and map core processes for several departments with a target of improving turn-around time by 20 percent with no additional costs or performance decline.

Selecting the essentials

The first phase of the project evaluated the number of steps and time involved in each step of the procurement process to determine which were essential, which were deemed necessary but could be modified, and which processes were unnecessary.

The team's goal was to eliminate unnecessary activities, modify some procedures, and streamline the essential activities in the procurement process.

The Strategy #13 team has adopted four business process improvement strategies:

- Strategy 1 is to identify, document and benchmark the major processes.
- Strategy 2 establishes sub-teams to work with other staff to eliminate non-essential steps in the procurement process.
- Strategy 3 will make organizational changes to implement the new streamlined procedures.
- Strategy 4 will provide training to support the new streamlined processes.

Several senior level MTA executives on the Strategy #13 team include Deputy Executive Officer Ted Montoya and Director of Contract Administration Rudy LeFlore.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

CALIFORNIA 2000/2001 FORM 700
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMM.

STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS
A Public Document

Date Received
City and State

Please type or print in ink

NAME (LAST) (FIRST) (MIDDLE) DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER

- **1,200 Employees Must File Outside Income and Gift Disclosure Forms by April 2**

(March 16) Some 1,200 MTA employees this year will be required to file one or more forms disclosing outside income, investments and gifts received from contractors. The "Statement of Economic Interests" – Form 700 – is due April 2.

Employees required to complete Form 700 include MTA executives, contract administrators, buyers and real estate officers. Planning managers, analysts and engineers, employee relations and government relations officers and many others also are included.

"The decision about who must file was made by Human Resources, Ethics and the County Counsel's office," explains Bill Lowe, senior ethics officer. "It was based on a review of MTA job descriptions to determine which might influence a financial decision or evaluate contracts or procurements."

Even if an individual employee within a job classification isn't actually involved in such decisions, he or she still must complete the annual disclosure forms if they are in a job description with such authority, Lowe said. The reporting period is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2000.

Most only complete cover sheet

Although the Statement of Economic Interests includes a cover sheet and as many as seven disclosure schedules, about 60 percent of employees required to file will need to complete only the cover sheet. Most of the other 40 percent will be required to file only one or two forms. Lowe estimates it might take first-time filers with something to declare less than an hour to complete the required forms.

The [Ethics & Lobby Registration](#) home page on the Intranet has a link to "Forms" that includes the Form 700 cover sheet, disclosure schedules and instructions. The cover sheet and schedules can be completed on-line, then printed out for filing with the Ethics office.

The types of items to be disclosed are real estate holdings in LA County, investments and partnerships in businesses. Employees must list personal loans, all gifts of \$50 or more, services and travel provided by contractors, as well as speech honoraria, food, beverages and social events involving contractors.

Filers also must disclose all sources of outside income, including a spouse's income, income from day trading in stocks, and gifts of plaques and trophies valued at more than \$250. Other disclosure categories are listed on the schedules.

For assistance, Form 700 filers may contact senior ethics officers Charisse Anderson at 922-2983 or Bill Lowe at 922-2981.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

INTRANET ACCESS

Coming to Your Home Computer March 23

(March 16) If you have the Internet at home, the MTA has news – something news every day – for you! Beginning Friday, March 23, employees and retirees will be able to access metro.net, the MTA Intranet.

Offering remote access is expected to benefit bus operators, mechanics, service attendants and other operating division employees, as well as Customer Information agents and many other employees who can't log on to the Intranet at their worksites.

"Now, from their homes or any remote location, employees and retirees will be able to read the latest MTA news or use our departmental web pages," said Webmaster Joe Simpson. "It opens up the Intranet to perhaps 6,500 employees and untold numbers of retirees."

"This is something we've been looking forward to since we launched the Intranet in May 1999," said Bill Heard, Intranet editor. "We hope our new readers will log on every day."

News 'quicklinks' available

Almost all features offered on the employee Intranet will be available to home users, including such news "quicklinks" as MTA Report, Bulletin Board and CEO HotLine. Facts at a Glance, News Releases and Classified Ads also can be accessed. The site includes an archives of previous news stories.

Home or remote users will be able to access Human Resources, Employee and Labor Relations, Equipment Engineering, the MTA Library, the Regional Rebuild Center, Countywide Planning – 15 departmental web pages in all.

Features that will not be available for remote access are the agency telephone directory, the Financial Information System (FIS) or Forms On-Line.

Heard and Simpson credited Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett and the Information Technology Services team for developing the systems needed for remote access. The Information Systems Department and Human Resources provided key assistance in ensuring access for employees and retirees.

Remote access will be easy

Go to: www.mta.net

- [Employee Access](#)
Your link to the metro.net is located in the lower right corner of the home page.
- **MTA Intranet User Login**
Click on the [Employee Access](#) link to get to the Intranet login page.
- Enter your badge number and hire date.

How to enter badge numbers:

- Enter your five-digit badge number. Three-digit badge numbers must be preceded by zeros as in this example: **00123**. Four-digit badge numbers must be entered as in this example: **01234**.

How to enter hire dates:

- Hire dates for January through September are entered as in this example for April 6, 1992: **40692**. Hire dates for October, November and December use a six-digit format as in this example for Nov. 2, 1984: **110284**.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

**A bonnie wee lassie named Sharon
Who hailed from the green land o' Erin
Announced, "It's a cinch
That I'll not get a pinch
On Saint Pat's. For the green, I'll be wearin'.**



Cecelia Railey, management analyst
City of Los Angeles Personnel Dept.

Faith and Begorrah

There once was a...Saint Patrick's Day Limerick Contest

(March 19) With shamrocks, leprechauns and the Ould Sod in mind, Metro Café marked Saint Patrick's Day – Saturday, March 17 – with a limerick contest. The winner was to be announced on Monday.

Cecelia Railey, who frequently rides the Metro Red Line to eat at the MTA and whose limerick appears above, submitted one of eight poems for the contest.

The contest winner will be chosen by cafeteria manager Bruce Ueno and Lauren Tripp, Sodexo district manager, and an MTA representative. The winner will get a week of free lunches valued at \$6 each.

Here's another limerick to wrap your tongue around:

**A passenger called around seven,
And asked for directions to heaven.
"Take the Bus 203
To the Observatory –
It leaves Sunset at five past eleven."**



Frank Sahlem
Customer Information

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Ribbon-Cutting Opens High-Tech Metro Rapid Bus Station

On hand for the media event in Sherman Oaks were Mayor Richard Riordan, MTA Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky, Countywide Planning Chief Jim de la Loza, Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner, LADOT General Manager Frances T. Banerjee and Doug Suisman of Suisman Urban Design.

PHOTO BY JOSÉ UBALDO

(March 20) With the *snip-snip* of a giant pair of scissors, MTA and Los Angeles officials cut a ribbon, Tuesday, to mark the opening of 27 new Metro Rapid bus stations on Ventura Boulevard.

Nine of the stations on Line 750, like the one at the corner of Ventura and Sepulveda in Sherman Oaks, include a canopy for weather protection and a variable message sign. The other 18 stations have two marker poles and the Metro Rapid “tear drop” sign.

With the variable message sign, passengers won’t have to guess when the next bus is coming. The sign will give them the exact arrival time. It’s the first use of such a real-time feature by any bus operation in the Los Angeles area.

The unique color and signage of the station match those of the Metro Rapid buses. Suisman Urban Design developed the design and color scheme especially for the MTA.

Similar stations will be built over the next several months on Line 720, serving Wilshire/Whittier. Metro Rapid stations are located about a mile apart. _

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Stage 3 Power Emergency Affects Metro Blue Line Service

(March 20) Rolling blackouts hit communities throughout California for a second day, Tuesday, as the state remained in a Stage 3 Power Emergency. The outages affected electrical equipment ranging from latte machines and elevators, to traffic lights and light-rail service.

The electrical "load shedding" began in the Los Angeles area at 9:30 a.m. Some 20,000 Southern California Edison customers lost power initially, but that number was expected to grow to 60,000 by 10 a.m.

Alerted at 9 a.m. that Edison needed to begin electrical "load shedding," Metro Rail Operations shut down alternate power substations in an eight-mile stretch of the Metro Blue Line between Slauson and Willow stations. The shutdown was still in affect as of 11:30 a.m.

Trains continued in normal operation, however, as other power substations took up the slack. There are 14 substations along the 22-mile Metro Blue Line. The Metro Red Line, which takes power from the city's DWP, was not affected by the blackouts.

On Monday, Edison asked the MTA to take power substations off-line as a precautionary measure. Train operation wasn't affected, but later in the day due to a blackout in Long Beach that took traffic lights out of service, trains encountered five-minute delays. Ticket vending machines on platforms at four stations also were out of service.

Bus Operations, meanwhile, reported only minor problems caused by out-of-service traffic lights that slowed bus service. John Roberts, deputy executive officer, Bus Operations, said all operating divisions have emergency generators that can provide basic electrical service in the event of a blackout.

Edison said the Monday's blackouts touched 430,984 customers in 140 cities. More than 1.2 million customers were affected throughout California.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Logging on from home?

[CLICK HERE](#)

(March 22) If you're just now joining us: Welcome to metro.net! Since we kicked off the employee Intranet in May 1999, only those employees who had MTA computers – and not all of those – could access metro.net.

Now, any employee with access to the World Wide Web from home or any remote location can use metro.net any time. But why, after a long day at work, would you want to?

**[more on
home
access](#)**

Metro.net opens the door on a wide range of information ranging from the latest MTA news to job opportunities to operating division activities...and more.

It's interactive. Want to place a classified ad? Ask a CEO HotLine question? Provide feedback to the RRC? Fill out a job application? You can do all that...and more.

Information that's important to your ability to do your job. Information that could help advance your career. Information about activities you may want to participate in. You'll find all that on metro.net...and more.

So, welcome to metro.net. We hope you'll log on as often as possible, because on metro.net, you'll find something news...every day.

[Would you like to comment on this story? Click here.](#)

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Above, Track Inspector Douglas Jaeger lines up tow truck, below, that hauled jeep away.
PHOTOS BY PHIL MEYERS.



Motorist Finds Jeep No Good on Metro Blue Line Tracks

(March 22) The driver of a Jeep who must have thought he was operating a Metro Blue Line train drove onto the tracks just after midnight, Thursday, and attempted to enter the tunnel at 12th and Flower.

The driver left his crippled vehicle some 200 feet down the incline, ran farther toward the 7th and Metro station and exited through an escape hatch, according to Leroy Bonifay, the senior rail equipment supervisor in charge of clearing the scene.

There were no injuries and only minor damage to the tracks. Metro Rail line was out of service at that hour. The incident is under investigation by the LAPD.

A Rail Operations salvage crew managed to clear the tracks before morning rail service began. Track, Traction Power and Signal personnel worked together for about three hours to haul away the Jeep and replace some 50 steel clips that hold the tracks in place.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Update: MTA Schedules Public Workshops on Long-Range Transportation Plan

Editor's Note: The MTA will conduct a public workshop in South Central LA at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 4, on the plaza level of First AME Church, 2270 S. Harvard Blvd.

(March 22) The MTA will hold public workshops in Long Beach, April 3, and in Pomona, April 9, to discuss its draft Long-Range Transportation Plan, a 25-year blueprint for transportation planning in Los Angeles County through the year 2025.

Anyone concerned about worsening traffic as the population of Los Angeles County grows is encouraged to attend. Those unable to attend the workshops, but who wish to comment on the draft plan, can send an e-mail to mtaplan@mta.net or write to MTA Countywide Planning & Development.

The Long Beach meeting will start at 6 p.m., April 3, in the Water Treatment Plant auditorium, 2950 Redondo Ave. The Pomona meeting will begin at 6 p.m. in the Pomona City Council Chambers, 505 S. Garey Ave.

Comments must be postmarked by Wednesday, April 11, 2001, to be considered by the MTA Board before adoption of the plan, probably in late April.

Following Board adoption, the Long-Range Transportation Plan will be forwarded to the Southern California Association of Governments for inclusion in its Southern California regional transportation plan in order that Los Angeles County transportation improvements can be eligible for state and federal funding.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Learning to Give the Breath of Life

Students practice CPR techniques using practice manikins provided by the American Red Cross.

Everyone should know CPR, and the Office of System Safety and Security – working with the American Red Cross – is making an effort to teach the skill to as many employees as possible.

Eighty-four employees from Metro Bus and Metro Rail operations, Facilities Maintenance, Transit Security, Procurement and Safety participated, March 23, in a CPR “marathon” at the Regional Rebuild Center.

Cary Stevens of the RRC management team mobilized RRC departments and provided the training accommodations.

Pictured above are mechanics Tom Ferrero, Ken Lam, Tom Sintoplertchaiyaki, and Mike Bennett.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Support Services Group Plans 20% Improvement

Process Starts with 'Base Line' Survey

(March 26) Six departments that comprise the MTA's Support Services Group plan to achieve a 20 percent improvement in FY 2002 in their service to internal customers. But first, they need to know how they're doing now.

The departments – Administration, Finance, Human Resources, Management Audit, Procurement and Risk Management – are asking employees to complete a “base line” survey they can use to benchmark improvements. The Executive Leadership Team is encouraging 100 percent participation in the survey.

In the survey, Human Resources asks about customer satisfaction with processing, training and development, events and recreation activities, among many other services it provides.

Finance is curious about customer perception of paycheck processing; Risk Management asks about claims processing; Procurement wants customer ratings on contract processing and change orders; Administration asks about mail services and the Help Desk; while Management Audit asks about...well, audits.

Internal customers are asked to rate 74 different departmental services in terms of responsiveness, efficiency and reliability. Each is to be judged on a five-point scale that ranges from Unsatisfactory to Excellent. The survey also has a space for comments.

The scheduled return date for the surveys is April 11, but with mail delays must be received no later than April 16. Responses are anonymous and will be evaluated by an outside firm, the Pine Company of Culver City. A second survey will determine what progress the Support Services Group has made toward its 20 percent improvement goal.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Community activist Frank Ojeda addresses seminar



Juvenile crew removes trash from hillside lot.



A day's work stacks up significantly.
PHOTOS BY GLENN SANDERS

Metro Clean Gang Awareness Seminars Stress Goals, Education to Youthful Offenders

By GLENN W. SANDERS

(March 27) When Frank Ojeda tells a young man that he might be dead tomorrow he speaks from experience. Ojeda is a community specialist in the East LA Community Gang Reduction Project and has seen more than his share of gang violence.

"Even if you aren't in a gang, we aren't promised tomorrow," Ojeda warns the youngsters.

Ojeda has been promoting his message in gang awareness seminars with MTA Metro Clean every month for over a year. Metro Clean is the MTA's community service program. Both adults and juveniles pay their debt to society by cleaning buses, bus stops and inactive rail rights-of-way throughout the county.

The gang awareness seminars are targeted at juvenile offenders, many convicted of vandalism or fare evasion. More than 120 juveniles have participated in the seminars since their inception.

Ojeda provides a gritty description of gang life and discusses the motivations for joining a gang. He reminds the young men and women in his seminar audiences that as soon as they join a gang they have thousands of enemies.

'They shoot at your house'

"Once you're in (a gang) everyone's in: your mom, dad, sister, brother," he warns. "They don't care because they shoot at the whole house."

How does a young person stay out of a gang? Ojeda says it starts with having goals and role models.

"Life will mold your role for you if you don't have goals," Ojeda says. "You won't like what you end up with." He also reminds each youth to value their lives and finish school.

The partnership between Metro Clean and the Community Gang Reduction Project was originally conceived with the goal of reducing recidivism. By reducing the number of repeat offenders it is hoped that graffiti and fare evasion will be reduced.

Raymond Baldonado, a Metro Clean supervisor closes the seminar by stressing the importance of what Ojeda has taught the youngsters.

"Our hope is that we can reach at least one of you," he says. "These are not just words – this is real life experience."

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Oscar Benavente, Systems Shop leadman, demonstrates the fueling of a CNG bus. Note large tanks and pump control system in the background. In a real fueling operation, the mechanic would wear a face shield. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD



Before CNG buses are repaired at the RRC, they must be defueled. CNG extracted from a bus is fed back into the Gas Company system. The MTA receives a credit against the cost of fuel.

MTA Engineering Designs Nation's First 'Slow-Fill' CNG Pumping Station for RRC

By STEFANIE SPIKELL
(March 28) Mechanics at the Regional Rebuild Center no longer will have to tow CNG buses back and forth to Division 10 for fueling, thanks to an innovative, cost-efficient "slow-fill" gas pump designed by the MTA's Engineering Department.

The first such compressed natural gas station of its type in the United States, the slow-fill equipment allows RRC employees to pump only as much CNG as a newly repaired bus needs to be driven back to its home division. Ordinary CNG pumping stations fill tanks very rapidly and do not make allowance for small amounts of gas to be pumped into bus tanks.

"This achievement is remarkable in the industry and is a tremendous cost-saving measure for the

agency," says Percy de Zoysa, Engineering project leader for the assignment. The project, originally estimated at \$673,000, and was completed on time and on budget at \$530,000.

"We're anxious to begin using the equipment," says Mike Singer, the equipment maintenance manager currently responsible for RRC operations. "This is really going to help our productivity."

Before mechanics can begin using the equipment, they must be trained in its safe and proper use, Singer said. That training is expected to begin within a week or 10 days. The contractor, A.E. Schmidt Environmental of Van Nuys, will provide the training.

Above and beyond

"Every member of the team went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that this important and innovative project was successful," says de Zoysa. In particular, he credited Facilities Maintenance Supervisor Tai Lim of the RRC, who was "committed to always having a crew available to us whenever needed. He never missed a beat."

"Other bus facilities will be looking to us for guidance as they implement this idea for their bus repair centers," said Joel Sandberg, deputy executive officer, Engineering. "We're exceptionally pleased to have been the first agency to install this type of station."

"It is projects like this that are the mainstay of our Capital Improvement Plan and they give us great satisfaction," he added. "Our goal in Engineering is to achieve on-time, on-budget projects that truly serve our 'clients' and this is an excellent example."

The team also included Rudy Rey, Electrical Designer; Ben Mendoza, Contract Administrator; Michael Cummings, Configuration Management; Tom Lee, Resident Engineer.

The new slow-fill pumping system includes a 180 SCFM compressor with a 75-horsepower

motor, a single tower manual operated gas drier with a gas flow rate of 180 SCFM, two pressure vessels, each 68.3 cubic feet with design pressure of 4800 psig, de-fueling and refueling nozzles.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

**MTA
Career Day
2001**

BE PREPARED...The 'Future' is Com

(March 29) The future of the MTA may come walking in the door on Thursday, April 5. That's when 175 students from five area high schools will arrive to participate in the MTA's seventh annual Career Day.

Professionals from many occupations within the MTA have volunteered to host the youngsters during a day of job shadowing and career counseling. Students will be assigned to volunteers who work at Headquarters, at the RRC and at the bus and rail operating divisions.

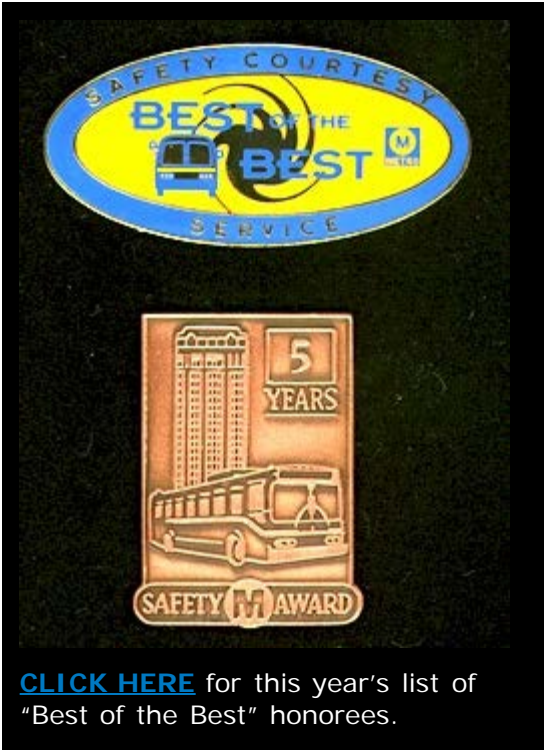
"Our goal is to attract young people to careers at the MTA," says Holly Balderas of Human Resources Development, who along with Benita Horn, coordinates the program. "This program allows the students to observe and participate in the real world of work."

The students are enrolled in the Transportation Careers Academy Program (TCAP) at North Hollywood High, Franklin High, Wilson High, Locke High and at John Glenn High in the Norwalk/La Mirada School District.

The day's program will begin at 9 a.m. with a welcome in the Board room for the students and their MTA volunteers. Following lunch, the program ends at 1:30 p.m.

Career Day is a key component of the overall instructional program within TCAP, according to Balderas. Among the transportation occupations the students will experience are urban planning and architectural design, engineering, government relations, human resources, public affairs and a range of technical applications.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



[CLICK HERE](#) for this year's list of "Best of the Best" honorees.

53 to be Honored as
'Best of the Best'

7 to Receive
'Extra Mile' Awards

(March 30) Fifty-three Transit Operations employees will be honored as the MTA's "Best of the Best," Saturday, at a banquet co-sponsored by Transit Operations, Risk Management and System Safety and Security.


Forty-three Metro Bus operators were named to this year's honors list. Twenty-two of those operators earned the "Best of the Best" distinction for the second year. And for the first time, five Metro Rail operators and five mechanics were

chosen for the award.

Seven employees will receive "Extra Mile" awards for their acts of courage, selflessness or extraordinary service. They are Evelyn Davis, Edgardo Dimson, Eddie Gomez, Rosa Graciano, Jose Hill-Soto, Ralph Lee and Marco Sanchez.

To qualify as "Best of the Best," operators must have recorded no customer complaints, no lost-time injuries, no traffic accidents and no long-term leaves for the past five years. Mechanic selectees must have had perfect attendance, no lost-time injuries and no disciplinary actions for the past five years.

Each honoree will receive a commemorative plaque and pin and a bomber jacket with "Best of the Best" logo. Operators who earned their second honor will receive a gold Seiko railroad-approved watch engraved with the program logo.

|  | | |
|---|-----------------|---|
| Mechanics | | Train operators |
| Enrique Tovar Ike Allison To Chau Francisco Guzman Ted Loyo | | Ronald Armijo William Jarvis Lewis Hawkins Robert Rodriguez Frederick Bagwell |
| Bus operators | | |
| Gabriel Benitez | Reginald Harris | Encarnacion Cabrera |

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Robert Spears | Pete Avila | Sergio Chavez |
| Joe Barbosa | Rodolfo Cortez | Richard Munoz |
| Gregory Brown | Steven Kushner | Daniel Saldana |
| Luis Caceres | Albert Gallardo | Barron Simon |
| Leopoldo Cuevas | Raymond Guinn | Mario Cancio |
| Rick Brown | Bobby Johnson | Carlos Iglesias |
| Cecil Escalante | Ignacio Landa | Latonia Martinez |
| Cheryl Faheem-Horne, | Richard Lopez | Robert Richards |
| Delfino Rodriguez | George Novelo | Frank Aguilar |
| Margaret Sifuentes | Pedro Perez | Gene Freeman |
| Robert Wageman | David Singer | Teresa Gray |
| Edmundo Poblano | Mario Villegas | Francisco Sanabria |
| Yuko Sao | Earl Weingartner | Khanh Trinh |
| Johnny Hardwick | | |

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

State of the Bus System Report

MTA's Report Shows Dramatic Improvements to Bus Service over Last 5 Years



Included in this review:

- [Report Highlights](#)
- [MTA Faces Challenges](#)
- [Report Conclusions](#)

By RICK JAGER

(March 30) Metro Bus service now ranks as one of the best among its peers with the dramatic turnaround over the last five years being accomplished by improved management and operations, coupled with the arrival of new clean-burning, state-of-the-art CNG buses.

According to the MTA's just-released "State of the Bus Report," a record amount of bus service is now scheduled, including the popular Metro Rapid Buses. More than 1,100 new CNG buses are now on the road – representing half of MTA's fleet, with hundreds more on the way.

As a direct result of putting newer buses on the road and expanding service, the MTA has seen customer complaints drop 27 percent since 1998. Customer complaints were at a six-year low last December.

The State of the Bus Report, which tracks both improvements and ongoing challenges in the Metro Bus system, notes that this year the MTA is spending \$945 million on its bus operations and bus capital programs. In addition, another \$215 million is being distributed to 16 municipal bus operators in Los Angeles County.

45% of budget slated for buses

Altogether, the MTA this year will spend 45.5 percent of its entire budget on buses, up more than \$213.5 million compared to 1997.

The report shows that in 2000-2001, the MTA and its contracted services



Click here to read
[State of the Bus System Report](#)

set a new record for the most bus service operated by THE MTA or its predecessor transit agencies. The MTA today schedules 2,012 peak hour buses for a total of 7,271,125 annual bus revenue service hours—up nearly 1 million hours compared to 1996.

The State of the Bus Report tracks improvements in the Metro Bus system since October 1996. That year, the MTA began implementation of a federal court Consent Decree designed to improve Metro Bus service.

The MTA is completely revamping its bus fleet by replacing older diesel buses with new CNG coaches, but it also has increased the number of buses in service by 377 in the last four years. Annual ridership has increased by 47 million boardings.

State of the Bus Report Highlights

Other highlights contained in the State of the Bus Report include:

- Improvements in on-street management and supervision along with newer buses has enabled the MTA to place 99.5 percent of scheduled buses into service each day.
- Implementation of a Bus Cleanliness Inspection Program has resulted in cleaner buses.
- The MTA's operating costs continue to drop, down to \$98.66 per revenue service hours from a high of more than \$110 in 1996.
- The MTA has improved mobility for elderly and disabled patrons with the purchase of easy-access low-floor clean fuel buses.
- The MTA operates the largest clean fuel bus fleet in the nation. One CNG bus equals the reduction of emissions of 7.2 automobiles.

MTA Faces Challenges

While gains have been made during the past five years, the report notes that the MTA still faces many challenges in continuing to improve transit service:

- Improve bus in-service on-time performance.
- Eliminate graffiti on the transit system and increase the number of miles the MTA operates buses between road calls and breakdowns.
- Control operating costs and increase operating revenues so that the MTA can further expand service.
- Further reduce the bus accident rate.
- Continue to comply with the federal consent decree
- Monitor MTA-contracted bus service providers to ensure that the level of service quality lives up to the terms of the agreements.
- Expand the bus operator-training program with a focus on customer service and safety.

As the MTA considers proposals for additional or expanded zone services in the San Gabriel Valley and the San Fernando Valley, careful consideration of how zones might be developed, funded and operated needs to be addressed for the benefit of MTA customers, while providing adequate protection for the wages and benefits of MTA employees.

State of the Bus Report Conclusions

The report concludes that service reliability continues to improve and

notes that the MTA this year alone will take delivery of 500 new CNG buses.

The report also notes that the future for further bus improvements looks bright. The MTA, as part of its 25-year Long-Range Transportation Plan, is looking to expand the Metro Rapid Bus system to include 22 additional lines throughout the region.

Currently, the MTA operates two Metro Rapid Bus lines serving the Wilshire/Whittier corridor from Santa Monica to Montebello and along Ventura Boulevard in the San Fernando Valley.

Metro Rapid Bus is designed to provide faster service by using signal transponders on board buses to extend green traffic lights. Since it debuted last June, travel time has been reduced by 25 percent with ridership on the Wilshire/Whittier line up 26 percent and patronage on the Ventura line up 25 percent.

To further improve bus service, the MTA is now acquiring high capacity buses as part of the agency's bus procurement plan, and is looking at 45-foot buses and articulated buses. Exclusive busways also are planned in various corridors.

The MTA is developing a universal fare system that will provide a seamless way for people to connect from one bus system to the other as well as to the Metro Rail system.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

MTA Internet Web Site Launches New 'Pressroom' Feature

(March 30) MTA Media Relations has added an important news-oriented feature to the agency's Internet web site at www.mta.net.

The new web pages, titled Pressroom, are especially designed for use by reporters, editors, news planners and broadcast news producers.

Any Internet user also may access the pages to read MTA news releases and other up-to-date information. A link to the new feature is located on the left-hand navigation bar of the MTA Internet home page.

The new web pages will make it easier for news outlets to track the transportation services and programs provided by the MTA in Los Angeles. They also will give the media prompt access to the latest MTA news, according to Rick Jager and Jose Ubaldo, the senior communications officers who developed the Pressroom pages.

Internet Webmaster Joe Simpson of MTA Marketing designed the graphics and links for the new web pages.

Beyond the mainstream media

"The MTA has to go beyond the mainstream media headlines to tell its story," said MTA Public Relations Director Marc Littman. "The Internet gives us immediate access to hundreds of media outlets around the world and also lets us communicate directly to our customers and the general public here in Los Angeles County."

Pressroom resources will include English and Spanish versions of documents, a Viewpoints section, an archive of previous news releases and MTA Facts at a Glance. It will feature information about the Metro Rapid bus program, bus and rail ridership figures and Metro Rail system maps.

Readers will find the MTA's Long-Range Transportation Plan, the new MTA State of the Bus Report and links to other major transit providers in Los Angeles County.

Pressroom also will feature a Photo Gallery that highlights some of the programs and services offered by the MTA.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

**Pressroom
Chiefs:**
Media
Relations'
José Ubaldo,
webmaster
Joe Simpson
and Media
Relations'
Rick Jager.
Click here
to visit
[PRESSROOM](#)
on the
World Wide
Web at
[mta.net](http://www.mta.net).



March 31, 2001



Prize cake in the shape of a Metro Bus, made for the occasion by the wife of Division 15 mechanic Cliff Thorne, was the official door prize. [Click here to see who took the cake](#) (home).



Match the Quote: "MTA has one of the best safety records in the nation." Was it guest speaker **a)** Transit Chief Tom Conner, **b)** MTA Board Chair Yvonne Burke or **c)** Chief Operating Officer Allan Lipsky? See answer below.



BEST OF THE BEST

County Supervisor and MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke congratulates honorees at the start of the gala evening. Performance awards were presented to 60 Transit Operations employees March 31 at a banquet co-hosted by Transit Operations, Rick Management and System Safety and Security. **Mechanics:** Enrique Tovar, Ike Allison, To Chau, Francisco Guzman, Ted Loyo. **Train operators:** Ronald Armijo, William Jarvis, Lewis Hawkins, Robert Rodriguez and Frederick Bagwell. **Bus operators:** Gabriel Benitez, Robert Spears, Joe Barbosa, Gregory Brown, Luis Caceres, Leopoldo Cuevas, Rick Brown, Cecil Escalante, Cheryl Faheem-Horne, Delfino Rodriguez, Margaret Sifuentes, Robert Wageman, Edmundo Poblano, Yuko Sao, Johnny Hardwick, Reginald Harris, Pete Avila and Rodolfo Cortez, Steven Kushner, Albert Gallardo, Raymond Guinn, Bobby Johnson, Ignacio Landa, Richard Lopez, George Novelo, Pedro Perez, David Singer, Mario Villegas, Earl Weingartner, Encarnacion Cabrera, Sergio Chavez, Richard Munoz, Daniel Saldana, Barron Simon, Mario Cancio, Carlos Iglesias, Latonia Martinez, Robert Richards, Frank Aguilar, Gene Freeman, Teresa Gray, Francisco Sanabria, and Khanh Trinh. **"Extra Mile" awards:** Evelyn Davis, Edgardo Dimson, Eddie Gomez, Rosa Graciano, Jose Hill-Soto, Ralph Lee and Marco Sanchez.



And the winner was, you didn't guess it, Mary Ann Hunt, ably assisted in the winner's circle by husband Richard Hunt, DEO, Operations.

Answer to **Match the Quote:** It was **b.** MTA Board Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke.

PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

- See [previous story](#) on 'Best of the Best' awards program.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)