

'Party of the Century' Marks Division 6 100th Anniversary



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(Aug. 28, 2001) Everyone who attended the Division 6 100th Anniversary celebration in Venice last Saturday, had so much fun they want to be at the 200th Anniversary party in – 2101!!

Joe Medrano, the Venice division’s mechanic leader, issued an invitation to that far-off event during remarks at the birthday ceremony.

Medrano, who retires Aug. 31 with 23 years’ service, joined the division’s senior bus operator, Melvin Braxton, a 34 year veteran, at the podium. The men – both of whom have spent their entire careers at Division 6 – were honored as the division’s most senior employees.

In his remarks, CEO Julian Burke singled out former Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner and his wife, Carol, for applause. He also welcomed incoming deputy CEO John Catoe – now of Santa Monica Transit – saying, “He knows transportation in this county. He will be a key person in Roger Snoble’s administration.”

Board Member Pam O’Conner had an armful of congratulatory proclamations and resolutions from the MTA Board, the California Assembly, the LA County Board of Supervisors and the LA City Council.

Safe and efficient transportation

The resolution passed by the Board, “recognizes and congratulates Division 6 and the Venice division employees for continuing to provide the public with reliable, safe and efficient transportation services.”

Richard Hunt, executive officer, Transit Operations, outlined a brief history of the division, the second oldest among the MTA’s 13 bus and rail divisions. Opened in 1901 as the Pacific Park Car House, it operated rail service for 48 years until it was switched in 1950 to bus operations.

Whether they expect to be around 100 years for the next party or not, the division’s guests took advantage, Saturday, of a mouth-watering barbecue, plenty of prizes and exhibits by the MTA’s DAC volunteers, the LA Fire Department and the Sheriff’s Department.

Among those involved in arranging the event were Jim Lukens, Helen Ortiz, Linda Wilkerson, Norma Carrasco, Reggie Ables, Gloria Stevens, Manny Guerra, Marissa Yeager and the DAC members.

GALLERY	Click on image to view	PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD



Ready to cut the 100th Anniversary cakes are, from left, Richard Hunt, Julian Burke, Jim Lukens, Pam O'Conner, John Catoe, Tom Conner, Ron Whitney and John Roberts.



Operator Melvin Braxton, (red shirt) with 34 years, and Mechanic Leader Joe Medrano, (grey shirt) with 23 years, are Division 6's most senior people. They're shown here with, from left, John Roberts, Yolanda Medrano, Richard Hunt and Rick Hittinger.



Division 6 Maintenance Manager Ron Whitney, left, and Operations Manager Jim Lukens received 100th Anniversary proclamations from the MTA Board and the County and City of LA. Board Member Pam O'Conner presented the resolutions.



It was a smokey barbecue, but it smelled really good as Darryl Henderson and Leroy Douglas tended the sausages, chicken, and burgers.



Richard Hunt, executive officer, Transit Operations, recounted the 100-year history of Division 6 from its beginnings as the Pacific Park Car House in 1901.



Board Member Pam O'Conner presented several proclamations to former Transit Operations Chief Tom Conner and his wife, Carol.



Julian Burke, Louis Maspero and his grandson, Timothy, 5, take a moment to check out the LA Fire Department's 1931 Seagrave hose wagon with firefighter Phil Weireter.



Staffing the DAC booth were volunteer Vanessa Carasso, Division 2's Robert Rodriguez and the RRC's Gabe Martinez.



CEO Julian Burke greets OCTA CEO Art Leahy.



Division 6 Operator Michael Burke brought his daughters, Briana, 11, and Morgan, 7, to the Anniversary celebration.



Jeremy Helliwell had something special to tell Gloria Stevens of Division 6.



Emelly Campos, 3, was a lucky girl to win a Raggedy Ann doll during the drawing for kid's toys. Her father, Roger, is a bus operator at Division 6.

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