



- 300 pole banners with bilingual safety messages begin appearing at selected rail crossings for 'Metro Blue Line Safety Month.'

MTA Declares September 'Metro Blue Line Safety Month' as Kids Head Back to School

By ED SCANNELL

(Aug. 30, 2001) - As thousands of children living near the Metro Blue Line tracks head back to school, the MTA is moving safety to the head of the class by declaring September 'Metro Blue Line Safety Month.'

The month-long campaign will augment the MTA's ongoing public safety awareness program. The campaign is aimed at promoting safety along the 22-mile-long line and reducing the number of accidents.

Metro Blue Line Safety Month is strategically timed to remind returning students about safety around tracks and trains. The program's key features are:

- 300 pole banners with bilingual safety messages at selected rail crossings
- Safety messages on electronic signs at Metro Rail station platforms
- An origami piece with a safety quiz/messages to be distributed to K-5 students
- A student planner featuring a calendar, anti-graffiti message, Metro Rail map with safety messages to be distributed to junior high and high school students
- Distribution of rail safety brochures on Metro buses and trains
- Distribution of coloring and activity books, safety bookmarks to schools

"This is an excellent opportunity to deliver the safety message to thousands of young people in a short span of time," said Abdul Zohbi, manager, System Safety. "If we can make the connection now, our children will carry those lessons with them into their adult years."

The MTA's ongoing public safety awareness program has resulted in a significant decrease in recent years in the number of train vs. vehicle and train vs. pedestrian accidents.

Door-to-door contact

Staff members have made door-to-door contact with residents living along the Metro Blue Line alignment and conducted safety presentations to numerous schools, community organizations, homeowner groups and safety fairs.

The staff conducts a Metro Rail safety tour program in which students

along the Metro Blue Line alignment are invited to ride the trains and learn about the rail system and how they can be safe near train tracks.

In addition, safety brochures have been distributed to Department of Motor Vehicle offices and public libraries, and signs have been posted on trains to reinforce the safety message.

Technological improvements, law enforcement and MTA-sponsored legislation also have played a large role in reducing the number of Metro Blue Line accidents.

The technological improvements include the use of photo enforcement at selected crossings, swing gates, pedestrian gates, train-activated "No Left Turn" signs, media islands, additional active warning lights at various crossings, and installation of the ARC (Alternating Rail Car) light system on the rail vehicles.

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