

## **MTA Chairman, CEO Respond to Viewers on Live Cable TV Show**

By GARY WOSK

Nearly 30 questions were fired in rapid succession at MTA Board Chairman John Fasana and CEO Roger Snoble, Sunday evening, during a live TV show entitled "L.A. Traffic Jam – Is There a Way Out?"

But, during the hour-long presentation, the two were quick to respond to queries about a wide range of the MTA's responsibilities in curbing traffic congestion, as well as planning, funding and operating mass transit and other transportation programs.



Television show host Lee Kanon Alpert, right, fields questions on traffic congestion to CEO Roger Snoble and MTA Board Chairman John Fasana during live broadcast of Parallax Forum on Time Warner Cable Network. PHOTO: JOSÉ UBALDO

Candor was the underlying theme of the show, which aired on cable channels throughout Los Angeles County. One purpose of the show was to emphasize that the MTA is more than just a bus company.

This was the first time MTA has participated in a TV show on traffic issues since the agency was formed in 1993 and the first time that it had participated in a TV show that dealt exclusively with traffic issues.

"Traffic is tough today and it's only going to get tough tomorrow," said Fasana. "The emphasis in coming years will be how to better make use of the (transportation infrastructure) system we have now...to use it more efficiently, including making buses more attractive."

### **Lot of inroads**

"We've made a lot of inroads over the years even though it seems like we're waging a losing battle at times," he said.

Questions covering most aspects of the MTA's role in regional transportation reached the TV studio in the form of call-ins, faxes and e-mails from the public and from program host Lee Kanon Alpert, who was joined by LA Times reporter Kurt Streeter.

Subjects included the MTA's Long-Range Transportation Plan, expansion of Metro Rail, ride sharing, the possibility of a monorail and the ramifications on transit funding as a result of the Sept. 11 World Trade Center disaster.

"The full impact of the tragedy has yet to be assessed and tallied," said Fasana. "This is something we will be watching very carefully. This will have implications as far as funding."

In his first appearance as MTA CEO, Snoble – relaxed and exuding a level of confidence belying a person about to start one of the most important jobs in LA County – called the MTA's new Long-Range Transportation Plan "excellent." He said he is impressed by the Metro System and the number of people who depend on it."

Asked why he left the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Authority for the MTA, Snoble cited family ties and used a sports metaphor. "If you have a

chance to play in the World Series, you should take it."

### **Not a one-man job**

On whether LA's transportation woes could all be fixed by the time his contract runs out in four years, Snoble explained that it isn't a one man job. It comes back to everyone, including members of the public, who need to seriously consider using all forms of public transit.

Fasana, meanwhile, was challenged by a question about the impacts of the San Fernando Valley East-West Busway on the community and other similar MTA projects.

"We encourage those who live along the busways to continue to be involved in the process," he said. "We will meet the needs of the region but be good neighbors at the same time. The MTA wants to be the best neighbor, offer the cleanest technology and be sensitive to noise control."

Most objectives of the show were accomplished, said producer Marc Littman, MTA Public Relations Director.

"We are pleased by the way the show worked out from a technical standpoint, by the overwhelming response from the public and the fact that we were able to put our officials on the spot and really expand public awareness on traffic issues," he said.

Littman said Fasana and Snoble expressed a willingness to participate in future shows but with a focus on geographic areas, transit corridors and particular transit modes.

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