



Deputy CEO John Catoe explains service sector concept at all-staff meeting.

MTA on a Mission to be World-Class, Snoble and Catoe Tell Employees

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(Dec. 11, 2001) The MTA is on a mission to become a world-class transportation system, CEO Roger Snoble and Deputy CEO John Catoe declared to an SRO all-staff meeting, Monday afternoon. And the service sector concept, they said, is the way to accomplish that goal.

The MTA can be more responsive to customers and to the community when responsibility and accountability are placed at the local level, Catoe explained. Reorganizing into service sectors also should foster an improvement in service quality and allow employees to be more

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creative in shaping and operating service.

"Keep in mind as we go through this that it is a work in progress," said Snoble, noting that the proposal is not revolutionary. "This is a gleam in our eye and we need to do everything we can do to make it successful."

Catoe said plans are being laid for four or five service sectors in major regions of the MTA's service area. He identified them as the San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, Central Los Angeles, the Southbay and the Gateway Cities in the southeast part of the county.

Starting with the opening of the first service sector next July, Catoe said he hopes to "roll out all five within a year." Meanwhile, he said, the recruiting process for sector general managers would proceed and would be open to both internal and external candidates.

'Vision and dream'

The deputy CEO said it's his "vision and dream" that one day MTA employees will be praised as working for an agency whose transportation system is admired by the public. "I think we will get there by being committed to excellence and providing good service," he said.

Catoe, who was general manager of Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus before joining the MTA, compared the proposed structure of a service sector to that of a municipal operator. Although the sectors would operate semi-independently, the MTA would continue to own all services and facilities.

A sector, headed by a general manager, would include "all the personnel resources needed to run a bus agency."

Among the employees Catoe singled out as possibly shifting from MTA Headquarters to a sector included some from customer relations, public affairs, Human Resources recruiting, security and service planning and scheduling.

A sector also could incorporate two or three operating divisions that would be responsible for a total of 500 to 600 buses deployed on local

routes, called Tier Two lines. It would have "broad control" over bus routing, scheduling, service mix and frequency. In some cases, a sector might operate an inter-regional – Tier One – bus line.

System-wide service standards

The MTA also would establish system-wide service standards and would operate Metro Rail, Metro Rapid and express bus – Tier One – lines. The agency would continue to be responsible for countywide planning, construction, and general administration, among other regional functions.

Employees from different departments within the agency have been named to a task force that is developing an organizational framework for the sectors, Catoe said. Members are interviewing employees and conducting focus groups to solicit ideas.

He also noted that sub-committees of the task force will be formed to develop details on such specifics as sector budgets, human resources, planning, scheduling, governance, facilities and computer network services.

"I guarantee you we'll make some mistakes," Catoe said, "but we'll have many successes as we go through this process."

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