

Metro Rail's top operators, mechanics join the Winner's Circle

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Top Ops: back row from left, Rail TOS and instructor Chris Medina, Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, Rail Division Transportation Manager Rita Malone and Rail Transportation Superintendent Jess Diaz congratulate top-scoring train operators, foreground from left, Tu Phan, Robert Rodriguez and David Resendez.



Top Mechanics: Director of Rail Services Dave Kubicek, left, and Division 11 Rail Equipment Maintenance Instructor Russell Homan, at right, congratulate top-scoring mechanics Ronnie Burt, Eric Petersen, Kiet Tran, Juan Ruvalcaba.

PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

[Winners All:](#) Complete list of 2002 Competitors

2002 Rail Rodeo Puts MTA's Best to the Test

by ERIC RAPP

(April 24, 2002) MTA's best train operators and mechanics converged on the Red Line rail yard Saturday to compete in the 2002 MTA Rail Rodeo. Employees who attended the event enjoyed a barbecue, a hip-hop clown, and live music under sunny blue skies.

The winners, announced Tuesday at Red Line Division 20, will travel to Baltimore in May to represent the MTA in the International Rail Rodeo.

Gerald Francis, Rail General Manager, says that even though the competition is friendly, the contestants take it seriously. "They really want to go to Baltimore and represent us there."

Events challenged participants' knowledge and skills. All participants had to meet rigorous standards for attendance and job performance before they could compete.

Train Operators aim for perfection

Operators were first subjected to a strict check of their uniform and required documents.

Then they quickly completed a safety test, performed a thorough pre-departure check of a Metro Rail car, and coupled and decoupled two rail cars as perfectly as they possibly could.

Operators also spent about 45 minutes operating Metro Rail cars on a course that spanned from the south end of the yard to Union Station, performing precision stops, spotting potential hazards, dealing with problem customers (played by volunteers), and communicating with yard and main line controllers. Judges looked over their shoulder at every turn.

This year's top three scorers are all from the Red Line. Robert Rodriguez took first place with an amazing 899.5 points out of a possible 1,000. Hot on his heels were Tu Phan with 883 points and David Resendez with 817.

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[MTA Rail Rodeo was a Family Affair](#)

MORE! Martin Batistelli's blow-by-blow account on the [SCADA Systems Engineering & Maintenance web page](#) on the MTA Intranet.

Rodriguez and Phan, who represented MTA at last year’s international championship in Boston, will travel with coach and instructor Chris Medina to this year’s competition in Baltimore.

Rita Malone, Red Line Rail Transportation Manager, says “they are some of our best-trained operators. We wish them the best in the competition in Baltimore.”

Maintenance Specialists shoot for the gold

Mechanics participated in a series of events that tested their dexterity and knowledge of tools, electronics, and rail car components.

They also completed a written test that tested not only their knowledge of rail mechanics and electronics, but safety procedures as well.

Top honors for mechanics went to the Blue Line’s Ronnie Burt, whose 840 points out of 900 possible was the best this year.

Bringing in second place by a narrow margin of 6 points was Juan Ruvalcaba from the Red Line with 710 points, followed closely by Eric Petersen of the Blue Line with 704 points. All three will represent MTA in Baltimore, attended by instructor Russell Homan. Red Line maintenance specialist Kiet Tran qualified as an alternate with a strong showing of 677 points.

MTA Rail Rodeo 2002 Competitors	
Train Operators Michael Barnes, Blue Line Rogelio Chacon, Red Line Kevin Devlin, Red Line Raymond Mandujano, Red Line Tu Phan, Red Line Ruben Ramirez, Blue Line David Resendez, Red Line Robert Rodriguez, Red Line Darnell Taylor, Green Line Jesus Valdez, Red Line Kenneth Wilkerson, Blue Line	Mechanics Glen Abraham, Red Line Alan Addie, Green Line Ronnie Burt, Blue Line Tadeo Cubero, Red Line Eric Czintos, Blue Line Eric Petersen, Blue Line Jose Rodriguez, Blue Line Juan Ruvalcaba, Red Line Joselito Suarez, Red Line Andre Tran, Red Line Kiet Tran, Red Line

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