

Metro Report Archives

July 2002 Articles

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[When the Chips are Down: Anti-Terrorist Exercise Stressed Inter-Agency](#)

Cooperation (July 31, 2002) The scenario for an anti-terrorism exercise hosted by the MTA, Tuesday morning, was grim: A mid-afternoon explosion in the tunnel connecting Union Station and the East Portal kills and injures passengers and causes extensive damage to the rail complex.

[Metro South Bay Trip to McDonald's is Community Outreach Effort](#) (July 30, 2002)

Metro South Bay went to McDonald's, last Tuesday, but not for burgers and fries.

[Saudi Transportation Officials Visit MTA](#) (July 30, 2002) A high-level delegation of transportation officials from Saudi Arabia visited Los Angeles, last week, to gather information for use in the development of transportation systems to serve the kingdom's capital city of Riyadh.

[LA Sparks' Lisa Leslie Goes for 3 Points: Look, Listen, Live](#) When WNBA star Lisa Leslie walked into her old Alma Mater's gym, the crowd at Morningside High School in Inglewood went wild.

[Poll of 35,000 Riders Shows Metro Bus Service Improving](#) It is getting better on the bus. A recent survey of 35,000 Metro Bus riders in Los Angeles County found that seven out of 10 customers (69 percent) agree Metro Bus service is improving on a variety of fronts.

[Metro San Fernando Valley Sector Celebration](#) The Valley may be known for its outrageous heat, but West Valley Division 8 is known for its over-the-top barbeques – a menu featuring fire grilled chicken, beef strips, links and a killer cherry cobbler.

[Board Honors Five](#) The MTA Board commended five Metro Bus operators, Thursday, for three separate acts of courage in providing life-saving assistance to members of the public. They are Operator Myra Jackson of Division 3, Operator Garry Brown of Division 10, Operator Sara Bernal and Trainee Tamara Houston of Division 3 and Don Smith of Division 10.

[Board to Consider CNG Facilities, Parking Garage Lease](#) (July 24, 2002) The MTA Board will consider plans at its monthly meeting, Thursday, to expand CNG fueling facilities at Metro Bus divisions 3 and 8 in order to accommodate more buses at both locations.

[Quick-Thinking Operator Myra Jackson Rescues Gunshot Victim](#) (July 24, 2002) A full moon hung in the cloudless sky just before midnight, Monday, as Metro Bus Operator Myra Jackson piloted her Line 81 bus southbound on Figueroa.

[Rail Operations Control Prepares for the Future](#) (July 23, 2002) With the opening of the Metro Gold Line scheduled in 2003, the Rail Operations Control center has started making room for new equipment needed to operate the line.

[Report to the Special Master: MTA Buying High-Capacity Buses, Pursuing Options to Further Reduce Overcrowding](#) (July 18, 2002) MTA continues making progress in reducing overcrowding on Metro buses, but has reached the point where it needs higher capacity buses, exclusive busways and more Metro Rapid bus lines to improve service even more.

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structure on the site of Terminal 17 in downtown Los Angeles.

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[MTA / Sheriff's Search and Rescue Dog Starts His Training](#) (July 5, 2002) The newest addition to the MTA's transit safety efforts is a four-legged friend named "Jack."

[New Ad Campaign Will Highlight MTA Successes](#) (July 5, 2002) As FY 2003 gets underway, MTA will turn the spotlight on its programs, services and accomplishments through the most extensive on-going advertising campaign in the agency's history.

[2002 Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair Breaks Several Records](#) (July 2, 2002) The ninth annual Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair, held for the first time at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel, was the most successful LA Vendor Fair ever.

Bulletin Board

- **[Accounting Scores 3-Peat](#)** (July 31, 2002) For the third year in a row, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has presented MTA with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.
- **[Division 9 Employees Commended for Returning Lost Wallet](#)** (July 31, 2002) "I'm writing to commend the honesty, integrity and genuine caring of two MTA employees," writes Dorothea Mynster of Arcadia in a letter to Mace Bethel, transportation division manager at San Gabriel Valley Division 9.
- **[Luncheon Honors HR Employees for Hard Work](#)** (July 30, 2002) MTA's Human Resources staff gathered at a special luncheon, July 25, to honor Aida Lagrimas, acting Director of Human Resources who is retiring. The occasion was also an opportunity to congratulate HR employees for outstanding work
- **[North Los Angeles Division Raising Money for Less-Fortunate Kids' Holiday Gifts](#)** (July 23, 2002) North Los Angeles Division 3 is giving back to the community by raising money to buy Christmas toys for less fortunate children in Cypress Park and Highland Park.
- **[Non-Contract Pay Ranges Increased 4.4 Percent Effective July 1](#)** (July 19, 2002) MTA management has approved a 4.4 percent increase in non-contract employee salary ranges. The increase was effective July 1.
- **[Figures of Speech](#)** (July 19, 2002) MTA Toastmasters ring in the new fiscal year with new officers and fast-track agenda for 2002-03.
- **[Abdul Zohbi was 'Quiz Master' at High School Event](#)** (July 19, 2002) It was a Hollywood "quiz show" and Rail Systems Safety Manager Abdul Zohbi was the "quiz master" when 175 high school students got together recently at the Egyptian Theater.
- **[North Los Angeles Division Celebrates Opening of Metro San Gabriel Valley](#)** (July 17, 2002) North Los Angeles Division 3 kicked off it's opening of Metro San Gabriel Valley with a barbecue, Tuesday.
- **[Birth of San Gabriel Valley Sector](#)** calls for Celebration (July 17, 2002) It was a day like no other, last Friday, at San Gabriel Valley Division 9.
- **[West Hollywood Division 7 Boogies Down](#)** (July 17, 2002) Operators, mechanics, service attendants, and management came together, last Friday, at West Hollywood

Division 7 to sing, eat, and be merry.\

- [Five Arthur Winston Division](#) Mechanics to Retire
- [MTA Employees, Safety Volunteers Meet the Public at Community Fairs](#) (July 15, 2002) Metro South Bay, along with a number of safety volunteers, participated in two community fairs in South Central Los Angeles and the City of Lennox on Saturday, July 13.
- [Bus 101](#) - MTA Maintenance Specialists Teach Basic Bus Operations in Community College Course
- [Cheuk But](#), a brake shop leader at South Bay Division 18, was the unanimous choice of his colleagues for June Maintenance Employee of the Month.
- [Employees Attend First in Series of Safety Skill-Building Seminars](#) (July 11, 2002) Operator Robert Gonzalez sprained his ankle badly. Operator John Ray hurt his back. Both are on light duty, and on Monday, they participated in the first in a series of Safety Skill-Building Seminars.
- [Gateway Division 10 Set to have off-site Holiday Party](#) (July 11, 2002) Year after year, Gateway Division 10 celebrates the Holiday season with a traditional party. Families of the employees attend and the staff pitches in by cooking, serving food and cleaning up. And it is always held at the division.
- [Retiree Leo Levy Gives His Time to Keeping Operators on Time](#)
- [MTA's New Defibrillators Can Save Heart Attack Victims](#) (July 9, 2002) The MTA has installed 13 Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) units on selected floors at MTA Headquarters and plans to provide units at each operating division.
- [RRC Employees Can Report Hazards on New 'Safety Hotline'](#) (July 5, 2002) Management and employees at the Regional Rebuild Center are taking the Safety's First program very seriously, and the results speak for themselves – a dramatic reduction in employee injury claims and a safer workplace.
- [Division 5 Manager Mike Lensch Retires After 30 Years' Service](#)
- [Philippines Environmental Specialist Visits MTA](#) (July 2, 2002) An environmental management specialist from the Philippines visited the MTA, June 28, to learn how the agency uses CNG to operate its bus fleet.
- [OBITUARY](#) Funeral Services Set for Former Operator Donald Deboe
- [Safety Precautions Prevent Serious Injury](#) (July 2, 2002) In 1998, a minor incident involving a dangerous chemical led to safety precautions that – four years later – kept an MTA employee from being seriously injured on the job.
- [Advance tickets](#) on sale in Metro Cafe for outdoor Farmers Market and Barbecue July 10
- [Transit Librarians Impressed with MTA Library's Collection](#) (July 2, 2002) Some 30 members of the Special Library Association's transportation division recently toured the MTA Library, one of the few libraries in the nation maintained by a transit agency.

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■ Board Honors Five for Life-saving Actions



IN THE LINE OF DUTY - The MTA Board commended five Metro Bus operators, Thursday, for three separate acts of courage in providing life-saving assistance to members of the public. From left are Operator Myra Jackson of Division 3, Operator Garry Brown of Division 10, Operator Sara Bernal and Trainee Tamara Houston of Division 3 and Don Smith of Division 10. PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

SEE NEWS REPORTS:

- [Operator and Trainee Prevent Passenger's Massive Blood Loss](#)
- [Quick-Thinking Operator Myra Jackson Rescues Gunshot Victim](#)
- [Division 10 Operators' Freeway Actions Protected Fallen Motorcyclist](#)

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Figures of Speech

MTA Toastmasters ring in the new fiscal year with new officers and fast-track agenda for 2002-03. Foreground, outgoing president Pauline Lee turns over the gavel to incoming president Elbert Smith.



PHOTOS: New officers [click here](#). Outgoing officers [click here](#).

A Perfect 10: Pauline Lee's tenure as 2001-02 president - which upped the roster with 23 new members and achieved 10 out of 10 goals - earned the MTA chapter the "President's Distinguished Club" award from Toastmasters International, presented here by outgoing Division D Governor Frank Clarke.



Toastmaster Generals

MTA Toastmasters who serve as presidents reflect a long-term commitment to Toastmasters goals of improving communication and leadership skills. From left, new president Elbert Smith, and former presidents Frank Clarke, Gene Hargreaves and Pauline Lee.



Best of the Best

Gene Hargeaves, at left, presents top district award to Frank Clarke. Honored for his active and innovative outreach programs as District Governor, Clarke was voted "Toastmaster of the Year" by the membership of District 52, which represents some 80 clubs in the Greater Los Angeles Region.



PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

CHECK IT OUT: MTA

Toastmasters Chapter meets every Tuesday in the Board Overflow Room at noon.

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New officers: from left, Patricia Clark, Treasurer; Delores Luevano, VP Public Relations; Richard Andersen, Sergeant of Arms; Elbert Smith, President; Yvonne Price, VP Education and Wanda Davis, VP Membership. Not pictured: Cheryl Brown, Secretary.

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President's Distinguished Club 2001-02: Outgoing officers, back row, from left, Thomas Traylor, Treasurer; Joseph Reyes, Sergeant of Arms; George Lee, VP Membership, and foreground, Pauline Lee, President, and André Villaseñor, VP Education. Not pictured: Dorothy Dunson, Secretary and Diana Estrada, VP Public Relations.

2002 Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair Breaks Several Records

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(July 2, 2002) The ninth annual Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair, held for the first time at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel, was the most successful LA Vendor Fair ever.

Themed "The Spirit of Optimism," the event was co-hosted by the MTA, County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, Metropolitan Water District, and the Los Angeles Unified School District.

The Greater LA Vendor Fair provides a unique opportunity for small, medium and large companies to learn how to do business with the MTA and its co-host agencies, as well as with the cities, agencies and firms represented at the event.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The annual Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair, co-hosted by the MTA on April 25, is one of the largest business outreach events in the United States. This report, by Dave Hershenson, also appears in the July issue of the MTA's Metro Business Outlook.



LA County Supervisor Yvonne Burke, joined by members of the Vendor Fair committee, cuts the ribbon to open the ninth annual event. MTA members of the committee were Dave Hershenson and Pat Lane-Goodson. Below, CEO Roger Snoble welcomes participants to the Vendor Fair on behalf of the MTA, an event co-sponsor.



This year's Vendor Fair featured an exhibit floor with 172 exhibitors and a workshop area that hosted close to 20 different business seminars, a record number of workshops.

Workshop topics included "Building a Website and Using the Internet to Increase Business," "Marketing on a Shoestring Budget," "Raising Your Company's Financial IQ," and various "how to do business with" workshops presented by the host agencies.

Supervisor Yvonne Burke presided over the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The Vendor Fair Luncheon, attended by a record number of almost 1,200 participants, was highlighted by a keynote address by Victoria Lowe, CEO of Alert Staffing. Other speakers included executives from the host agencies and MTA CEO Roger Snoble. KFWB news anchor Tracie Savage was MC of the luncheon.

Plans are already underway for the 2003 Greater Los Angeles Fair.

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New Ad Campaign will Highlight MTA Successes

By WARREN MORSE

(July 5, 2002) As FY 2003 gets underway, MTA will turn the spotlight on its programs, services and accomplishments through the most extensive on-going advertising campaign in the agency's history.

A series of ads entitled "Metro Briefs" will start, July 8, and appear in 105 publications several times each month.

As the name implies, "Metro Briefs" offer quick glimpses into a variety of projects throughout MTA. Topics in the first round of ads range from the opening of the Service Sectors to a description of Freeway Service Patrol services to the dedication of a new bicycle bridge.

In addition, the ads are regionalized into six versions, allowing emphasis to be placed on projects that are important to various areas. So, publications distributed in the San Fernando Valley might mention the new Universal City freeway overpass, while publications distributed in the Southbay might highlight Harbor Transitway service.

The ads are appearing in nine languages including Korean, Thai and Armenian as well as English and Spanish. Produced by the MTA's new Communications Unit, the team includes Elizabeth McGowan, Jeff Ringsrud, Lydia Iacono, Cici Gonzalez, Marc Littman and Annelle Albarran.

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briefs

WESTSIDE/CENTRAL

MTA Localizes Operations
To improve service, MTA is decentralizing management of its Metro Bus service into five local sectors, each with its own general manager. San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, South Bay, Central/Westside, and Gateway Cities sectors will be in place by the end of the year.

An 'EZpass' For All Buses
A new regional "EZpass" will go on sale this fall, good on Metro Bus and Metro Rail along with most other bus lines in the county. It simplifies transfers and costs just \$58 monthly (\$29 for seniors/disabled/Medicare.)

More Service For Less Money
MTA will spend \$126 million less this year but deliver more Metro Bus and Rail service to its customers — all without increasing the fare.

Freeway Woes? Here's Metro
The MTA-funded Metro Freeway Service Patrol program of assisting stranded vehicles on Southland freeways has helped 2.6 million motorists since it started in 1991. The service keeps traffic moving by providing an average of 30,000 assists per month.

Fast Service To Red Line
What's red and white, makes fewer stops and is 25% faster? Answer: Metro Rapid bus service, which will serve the Metro Red Line on Vermont Avenue starting this fall. In all, 23 new Metro Rapid lines are planned countywide for the next several years.

If you'd like to know more, please call us at 1-800-454-2111, or visit www.mta.net

• Now in a publication near you...

MTA / Sheriff's Search and Rescue Dog Starts His Training

By MIKE PARKER

(July 5, 2002) The newest addition to the MTA's transit safety efforts is a four-legged friend named "Jack."

Jack is a black Labrador Retriever who was specially bred in Europe to be among the best and brightest dogs capable of rigorous and demanding search and rescue training.

Arriving at LAX on June 21, the Sheriff's Department rolled out the red carpet for 15-month-old Jack. Within his first few days, he had met with other "top dogs," including CEO Roger Snoble and Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau Capt. Dan Finkelstein.

The LASD and MTA were fortunate to have obtained Jack. Although law enforcement agencies are given priority for search dogs, there is a shortage. Many dogs from across the nation were injured searching at the World Trade Center site in New York, and demand for new dogs is high.

And, since the LASD found the dog for the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) instead of the other way around, the MTA and Sheriff's Department were placed at the top of the priority list for a FEMA grant, which pays for the dog and all training.

The first exam Jack had to pass was a demanding series of tests held locally to assess his temperament and intelligence.

Physically strong and healthy

Search dogs must have a strong drive and be physically strong and healthy, as well as have a good command presence. A dog must not bite even when provoked, and has to stay focused on the search mission. Only one out of 100 dogs can pass the screening test, but Jack's special breeding helped him succeed.

The new search dog's missions will include finding people in collapsed buildings as well as tracking missing persons. A well-trained search dog's tracking abilities are better than even the most technologically advanced mechanical devices.



■ Above, Jack takes a meeting with CEO Roger Snoble, right, and Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau Capt. Dan Finkelstein. Below, Jack tours Rosa Parks Metro Rail Station with Sheriff's Deputies, from left, Jason Buckley, Tomas Rodriguez, Bob Nuse and Mark Lindsey.



A trained dog can be used to track a lost child through eight successive rail passenger stations. In fact, a search and rescue dog recently tracked the path of a lost Alzheimer's patient for over eight miles.

Jack's duties also will include spending time in local classrooms educating youths about rail and bus safety, as well as respect for the MTA employees who make the system run. Dogs have a way with kids and adults, and Jack and his soft fur can help send the right message.

After being hounded by fans all week, Jack started his six months of challenging training in Northern California, June 25th. Once he graduates, Jack will be visiting Metro Bus and Metro Rail divisions to check out his new digs and meet his MTA family.

In the meantime, look for periodic updates on Jack's progress towards earning his canine deputy sheriff's badge as the MTA's and Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau's first Search and Rescue dog.

- Mike Parker is a lieutenant in the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.

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MTA's 'Metro Motion' Cable TV News Show Debuts July 16

By ED SCANNELL

(July 9, 2002) Ask people what the MTA is and what it does and some will say, "MTA? It's the bus company." Others might add that the MTA operates "a train or two."

The MTA hopes "Metro Motion," a series of 30-minute television shows that debuts July 16 on CityTV in Santa Monica and Channel 36 in Los Angeles, will fill in the information gaps, encourage viewers to become more involved in the future of transportation in Los Angeles County and to try public transit.

The first show in the series will cover general countywide transportation topics and focus on specific issues and projects in the South Bay and Westside.

"Metro Motion" is a joint production of the MTA and CityTV which is owned and operated by the City of Santa Monica. Marc Littman, MTA's deputy executive officer for public relations, believes television will prove to be an excellent way to reach large numbers of people.

Traffic is an important issue

"Concern about traffic is the one issue that the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County agree on," says Littman. "Given that common interest, MTA is using cable television as a vehicle for allowing viewers to explore the array of mobility options MTA is funding in various parts of the county. The hope is that commuters and others will give public transit or other ride-sharing options a try after learning they have choices besides driving solo."

Story topics will include the growing network of MTA-funded carpool lanes, the video security system on board Metro buses, the Metro Rapid Bus Program and the EZpass regional transit pass program, among others.

Three public service announcements will feature information about free services provided by MTA, including the Metro Freeway Service Patrol, the 1-800-COMMUTE customer relations line, and the Metro Trip Planner on MTA's web site.

MUST SEE TV- "Metro Motion" Air Times on Santa Monica CityTV and L.A. Channel 36
 July 16 at 8:30 p.m. July 20 at 6:30 p.m.
 July 25 at 9:30 p.m. July 28 at 8:30 a.m.



Anchors Kena Chin and Neal Oshay deliver the news in "Metro Motion," a 30-minute television news show that debuts July 16. Below, Chin interviews MTA Board Member Pam O'Conner during a segment of the first show.



PHOTOS BY ED SCANNELL.

The first "Metro Motion" show also will feature an interview with MTA Board member and Santa Monica City Councilwoman Pam O'Connor.

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MTA won't hire those with criminal records, Catoe says

(July 10, 2002) Deputy CEO John Catoe told reporters attending a news conference, Wednesday, that the MTA will revise its recruitment and selection policy to state that the agency will not hire individuals with criminal records. The MTA's disciplinary policy recently was updated to permit termination of employees who violate local, state or federal laws. The recruitment and selection policy revision was announced in response to a case in which a former operator with a criminal record was convicted of abusing a young male passenger. Metro.net is preparing an expanded story on the policy revision for later this week.

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Board Committees will consider Range of Items in July

- [Operations Committee](#): 1 p.m., Wednesday, July 17
- [Construction Committee](#): 2 p.m., Wednesday, July 17
- [Finance and Budget Committee](#): 9:30 a.m., Thursday, July 18
- [Executive Management Committee](#): 11 a.m., Thursday, July 18

(July 12, 2002) MTA Board committee meetings scheduled next Wednesday and Thursday will include agenda items ranging from advertising on the Metro Bus fleet to a proposal for a seven-story parking structure on the site of Terminal 17 in downtown Los Angeles.

The full Board will meet at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, July 25.

Operations Committee: 1 p.m., Wednesday, July 17

The committee's agenda includes a motion to award a contract to provide a new Light Rail Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system and a motion to award a five-year contract for advertising on the Metro Bus fleet.

Construction Committee: 2 p.m., Wednesday, July 17

The committee's agenda includes an item on maintenance of light-rail cars and a motion authorizing the CEO to solicit and award design-build contracts renovation, repair and construction of MTA facilities.

Finance and Budget Committee: 9:30 a.m., Thursday, July 18

The committee's agenda includes a motion authorizing the CEO to negotiate a 70-year lease of MTA property on the site of Metro Bus Terminal 17 on Maple Avenue in downtown Los Angeles for a seven-story parking structure. The first floor of the building would be reserved for parking up to 10 buses and would have restroom and lounge facilities for bus operators.

Executive Management Committee: 11 a.m., Thursday, July 18

The committee's agenda includes items on proposed state legislation and reports on Metro Gold Line construction progress and management audit recommendations.

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Catoe Says MTA Ranks Closed to Persons with Criminal Records

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 15, 2002) Responding to concern about public safety aboard Metro buses and trains, Deputy CEO John Catoe declared Wednesday that the MTA no longer will hire individuals with certain criminal records no matter how long ago the convictions occurred.

Speaking at a news conference, Catoe said the agency's recruitment policy is being revised to preclude employment of persons convicted of a felony or of certain misdemeanors, including misdemeanor charges that result from felony plea bargains.



■ Deputy CEO John Catoe reaffirms hiring policy at press conference in Patasouras Plaza.

"I don't care if it occurred 30 years ago," he said. "If that conviction is there, that person will not be employed by this agency." Both as a matter of public safety, he said, and because it would be "a negative reflection on...the outstanding employees we have operating our transit services."

Catoe spoke to reporters inquiring about a lawsuit filed by the family of a teenage boy who was molested by a former Metro Bus operator in June 2001. The operator, who had a criminal record, was found guilty of the incident.

"It's deplorable what happened," Catoe said. "But, I can assure you that systems are in place...to ensure that we do not recruit anyone with a felony conviction or certain misdemeanors."

Criminal records reported

The MTA's previous hiring policy required job candidates to report their criminal records. The policy took into account whether the candidate was a minor at the time of the offense, the nature of the offense and how recently it had occurred.

A candidate who had multiple convictions that demonstrated a pattern of criminal behavior could not be hired.

Since 1996, the MTA has submitted job candidates' fingerprints to the California Department of Justice for a criminal background check.

The revisions to the MTA's recruitment and selection process will apply equally to all employees, according to Carolyn Flowers, executive officer, Administration. The agency's disciplinary policy recently was updated to permit termination of employees who violate local, state or federal laws.

Catoe said the policy change is not retroactive. Current employees who have maintained satisfactory work records and have not violated local, state or federal laws while employed at the MTA will not be impacted by the policy changes.

"We're looking for a lot of good people to drive our buses," he said, "but

if you have a (record), don't bother applying here because you're not going to get hired. The safety of our customers is far more important to us."

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The staff of the new Employer Programs unit is, rear row from left, Supervisor Donna Blanchard, Norma Elston-Adams, Dominic Menton, Tony Hernandez, Manager David Sutton and Al Rangel. Center row, Robert Lew and Martin Buford. Front row from left, Supervisor Sarah Zadok, Aileen Landau, Valerie Rader and Teresa Milliken. Not shown: Brenda Stevenson.



PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

12 Employees Staff MTA's New Employer Programs Unit

(July, 17, 2002) A dozen new employees reported for work at MTA earlier this month, bringing with them the makings of a department whose goal is to increase rideshare, vanpool and transit use in Los Angeles County.

The 12 employees will staff the Communications Department's new Employer Programs unit. Previously employed by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), they have a total of 170 years' experience in rideshare programs and employer support.

"A study completed earlier this year analyzed MTA's rideshare program and others around the nation," says Employer Programs Manager David Sutton. "The study recommended bringing the program in-house so we could increase employer participation and do it more efficiently."

Bringing rideshare function into MTA coincides with efforts to develop the universal fare system, EZ Pass and other innovative pass programs. It also gives the agency the staff it will need to work with employers, schools, colleges and others to encourage ridesharing and transit use.

The Employer Programs staff is divided among sales and client support services – five employees in each area – with two supervisors. Together, they currently serve corporations and businesses in the greater Los Angeles County area.

One of the goals for the Employer Programs staff is to double sales of MTA passes to local corporations. The agency also intends to aggressively market vanpool use.

"We want to attract those riders who have the option of using transit or not," Sutton says. "Regionwide, it's important to reduce the number of vehicles with drive-alone commuters."

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REPORT TO THE SPECIAL MASTER:**MTA Buying High-Capacity Buses, Pursuing Options to Further Reduce Overcrowding**

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(July 18, 2002) MTA continues making progress in reducing overcrowding on Metro buses, but has reached the point where it needs higher capacity buses, exclusive busways and more Metro Rapid bus lines to improve service even more.

That's the message MTA will deliver next week to the special master who oversees the Consent Decree MTA signed nearly six years ago to ease overcrowding on Metro buses.

Since the decree went into effect in October 1996, MTA has spent close to \$1 billion on new buses and expanded service.

The agency has purchased 2,000 new compressed natural gas buses and, while many of these replaced aging diesel buses that were prone to breakdowns, MTA also has expanded peak hour bus service by nearly 500 buses. This year MTA has budgeted for a record amount of bus service that will be operated by MTA and its contract carriers.

MTA also launched Metro Rapid service that cut travel times by about 25 percent on Wilshire and Whittier boulevards and on Ventura Boulevard in the San Fernando Valley. The MTA Board has approved expanding Metro Rapid by 23 more lines starting in December.

Metro Rail expansion also has helped ease bus overcrowding.

In addition, the transportation agency began decentralizing its bus operations this summer in an effort to be more responsive to local community needs.

MTA acknowledges overcrowding

Yet, some overcrowding persists on the busiest Metro bus lines. In its latest quarterly report monitoring the Consent Decree, MTA will acknowledge that. However, MTA officials note the solution is not just adding more regular buses.

"On busy streets such as Olympic Boulevard, we're running buses every 80 seconds during peak hours and we still can't keep up with demand," noted MTA Deputy CEO John Catoe. "That's an example where we need to be creative and switch to higher capacity vehicles or run Metro Rapid buses that can extend green lights for us."

MTA has gone out to bid for up to 200 articulated buses that are 60-feet long and can carry about half as many more passengers than a regular 40-foot bus.

In addition, the first of 30 45-foot "CompoBUS" coaches will begin arriving in summer 2003. The CompoBUS can transport 47 seated passengers.

Adding lines to busy routes

"Another way to increase capacity is Metro Rapid and starting in December we will add at least two new lines on our busiest routes every six months as the signal priority equipment is installed in the streets and buses," Catoe noted.

Catoe said the optimum solution is to build exclusive busways along former railroad rights-of-way MTA owns, and that's what the MTA is doing in the San Fernando Valley. In other areas, MTA is seeking bus-only lanes on existing streets so the buses don't compete with traffic.

"The reality is MTA buses operate 12 percent slower on crowded Los Angeles area streets than they did 15 years ago because of worsening traffic which we can't control," Catoe said.

Conditions beyond MTA's control

Indeed, Washington, D.C. lawyer Donald Bliss, the special master who oversees implementation of the Consent Decree, recently acknowledged that there are circumstances beyond MTA's control that cause buses to become overcrowded and adding more buses in those cases may not be justified.

Under the Consent Decree, MTA must meet load factor targets that limit how many passengers can stand, on average, on MTA buses.

Before the Consent Decree was signed six years ago, an average of 18 people stood during rush hours on some busy bus lines. Today, the load factor targets have cut that at least in half.

MTA schedules extra service

Like other transit agencies, MTA meets load factor targets by scheduling sufficient service. MTA schedules extra service far beyond what is necessary to meet the targets.

"We meet those targets 98 percent of the time systemwide, but there is no way any transit agency can do so 100 percent of the time because of circumstances beyond our control," Catoe said. "That doesn't mean we shouldn't strive to do better and we are."

He said MTA is concentrating on factors it can control such as deploying new coaches, preventive maintenance and better on-street supervision of drivers to adhere to schedules.

"Our plans for articulated buses, Metro Rapid expansion and construction of new busways, as well as new Metro Rail service, all are critical elements in that effort," Catoe added.

It's an expensive undertaking. This fiscal year MTA has budgeted more than \$1.2 billion, nearly half its total budget, for buses although the agency is responsible for streets and highway improvements, rail, paratransit for disabled persons and many other mobility programs that serve the 10 million residents of Los Angeles County.

"It's a tough balancing act but we're doing our best to continue improving bus service while fulfilling the other programs which MTA is mandated by legislation to fulfill," Catoe noted.

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Metro Bus Operator Socorro Alvarez-Mitchell, center in T-shirt, is joined by fellow DAC members and many of the Division 3 operators who are making the Holiday toy drive possible.
PHOTO BY LISA HUYNH



Division 3 Raising Money for Less Fortunate Kids' Holiday Gifts

By LISA HUYNH

(July 23, 2002) North Los Angeles Division 3 is giving back to the community by raising money to buy holiday gifts and toys for less fortunate children in Cypress Park and Highland Park.

Metro Bus Operator Socorro Alvarez-Mitchell is co-chair of the Division Advisory Committee (DAC). She and other DAC members – Florence Bingham, Barbara Davis, Manny Haro, Gabriel Jimenez, Rosalia Medina, Albert Parker, and Margaret Russell – are devoting their off-duty time to selling raffle tickets.

"It's my day off today and I've been selling tickets since four in the morning," says Alvarez-Mitchell. "I also came in last week on my vacation to sell the tickets."

The group's efforts already have brought in more than \$1,000 in one month. They hope to raise \$3,000 by the end of November, enough to buy 150 to 200 presents.

"I couldn't have done this without the rest of the DAC members, who have been supportive of me, but most of all, our operators here at Division 3 are mainly the ones who buy the raffle tickets," Alvarez-Mitchell says.

Some operators already have volunteered to donate wrapping paper and their time to wrapping the gifts.

Family-oriented division

"We have always been a family-orientated division and, thanks to the operators, we're able to do this," she says.

Alvarez-Mitchell is grateful that she has a good job and is able to buy presents for her own children.

"It breaks my heart that other children do not get anything for Christmas.

That's why we thought a toy drive would be a good idea," she says.

When the school year starts again, she plans to visit various schools in Cypress Park and Highland Park to get names of needy children from social workers. She also is receiving help with names of under-privileged children from Saint Ignatius Church in Highland Park.

"If we receive a positive outcome or feedback from the community, then we would like to continue to raise money every Christmas," Alvarez-Mitchell says.

Employees interested in buying raffle tickets may contact Socorro Alvarez-Mitchell at 26289.

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Non-Contract Pay Ranges Increased 4.4 Percent Effective July 1

(July 19, 2002) MTA management has approved a 4.4 percent increase in non-contract employee salary ranges. The increase was effective July 1.

The move by management brings pay scales back in line for those who have exceeded their maximum salary range. It also will keep MTA's salaries competitive with those of employees in comparable government agencies.

The MTA Board approved the salary range increase in May along with the FY 2003 budget. This fiscal year's non-contract salary improvements also include a merit increase of a minimum 2.85 percent to a maximum 6 percent based on individual job performance.

"Increasing the pay ranges will maintain MTA's competitive market positioning at approximately 65 percentile of the survey group and will provide employees an opportunity for salary growth," says Acting Human Resources Manager Carmen Mayor. "This change also allows us to bring employees whose salaries were above the maximum back within the range."

Surveyed 23 government agencies

The increase in salary ranges is based on a study by MTA consultants. The Hay Group surveyed 23 different government organizations – 17 transit agencies and six other public sector agencies.

The 4.4 percent increase affects each level of the annual minimum, mid-range and maximum salary ranges. The increase in the ranges, however, does not change an individual employee's current pay.

A simple example of the salary range increase is the changes in the salary range for pay grade H1A.

Previously, the minimum salary for H1A employees was \$20,789, mid-range was \$25,989, with a maximum salary of \$31,185. The new scale sets the minimum salary at \$21,704, the mid-range at \$27,133 and the maximum at \$32,558.

The new salary ranges can be found on the Human Resources web pages of the employee Intranet. At the HR home page, mouse over the Information heading and click on the Pay Table link.

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Rail Operations Control Prepares for the future

By ALISHA GOMEZ

(July 23, 2002) With the opening of the Metro Gold Line scheduled in 2003, the Rail Operations Control center has started making room for new equipment needed to operate the line.

ROC Manager Hector Guerrero says the Pasadena rail line control equipment will start to come in around the end of this year.



Metro Gold Line winds through Chinatown to Pasadena and its opening in 2003.

Some of the equipment scheduled for the ROC will be an upgrade to current Metro Blue Line computer equipment. "It's part of the same project," says Guerrero.

The reconfiguration of the building, located adjacent to the Rosa Parks Metro Rail station, includes the possibility of tearing down some walls, taking out one of the offices in the control center and moving chillers and cold water lines that cool the floor and the computer equipment.

Computers, printers and copy machines are just some pieces of equipment that already have been moved. Guerrero estimates there is enough floor space to bring in the equipment for the Metro Gold Line.

"It's just a matter of moving things around," says Guerrero. "We have enough room downstairs for the additional computers and other equipment."

With planning underway for the Eastside Extension and the Exposition Rail Line, the Metro Rail Operations must start preparing for the location of additional equipment in the ROC building.

"We've made the changes we can," says Guerrero. "With the Eastside and Exposition segments, we now have to look at the whole project as an expansion of the building."

There are four options for the ROC. They include constructing a larger building, reconfiguring the current structure, adding a third floor or adding space on three sides of the existing building.

The design phase of the reconfiguration project has been funded. Once that phase is completed, a package is ready for bid, and cost has been estimated, capital funding can be requested.

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Board to Consider CNG Facilities, Parking Garage Lease

(July 24, 2002) The MTA Board will consider plans at its monthly meeting, Thursday, to expand CNG fueling facilities at Metro Bus divisions 3 and 8 in order to accommodate more buses at both locations.

The Board also will take up a motion to lease MTA property at Terminal 17 on Maple Avenue in downtown LA for construction of a parking garage with space for a bus layover facility.

Originally constructed in 1996, the CNG facility at West Valley Division 8 in Chatsworth has capacity to fuel only 60 buses and has no backup capacity when a compressor is taken out of service for maintenance. Given its age and design, plans are to completely replace the equipment for a total cost of \$14.2 million.

The CNG fueling station at North Los Angeles Division 3 was built in 1999, but can no longer handle the number of buses assigned to the division and also has no backup capacity. Built to a newer design, the facility will be expanded at a total cost of \$12.3 million.

Both fueling facility expansions are to be design/build projects in partnership with private firms. This approach has been used at six operating divisions – divisions 1, 2, 5, 7, 9 and 15 – and has become a model for other transit operators.

The lease agreement the Board will consider for Terminal 17 includes construction of a seven-story commercial parking building by a private real estate developer. The first floor of the structure would be reserved exclusively for bus parking.

Terminal 17, located in the 600 block of Maple Avenue, currently serves as a layover zone for four buses, but can accommodate up to 10 coaches. Facilities for use by bus operators would include restrooms and a lounge.

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Quick-Thinking Operator Myra Jackson Rescues Gunshot Victim

By BILL HEARD and LISA HUYNH

(July 24, 2002) A full moon hung in the cloudless sky just before midnight, Monday, as Metro Bus Operator Myra Jackson piloted her Line 81 bus southbound on Figueroa.

As she approached the bus stop at 104th Street, a small green car pulled ahead of her. Suddenly, an occupant of the car thrust a pistol out the window and blazed away at a man standing on the nearby corner. The victim was hit several times in the legs.

As the car sped away, Jackson pulled her bus up beside the wounded man. Her sole passenger fled as the victim, a man in his early 20s, dragged himself aboard the bus and collapsed on the floor, bleeding profusely.

Jackson, who is assigned to North Los Angeles Division 3, closed the doors and drove quickly away, activating the silent alarm to notify Bus Operations Control of the emergency.

"At the time, I just did what I thought I was supposed to do," says Jackson, who joined the MTA in December 1997. "I didn't think about it, I just did it."

As she headed toward her layover zone at 117th Street, Jackson saw that the green car was headed back toward the bus stop, its occupants apparently unaware that their victim was aboard her bus.

At the layover zone, she worked with the BOC to summon paramedics and police. The victim was transported to Martin Luther King Hospital where he was reported to be in good condition Tuesday morning. Police are investigating the shooting.

"I'm proud of Myra because she's looking at the public as if they were family," says Division Transportation Manager Dan Frawley. "It's not often that someone would go to the extent that she did to ensure that somebody's life was protected."

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UPDATE:

[Board Honors North Los Angeles Division Operator Myra Jackson](#)



North Los Angeles Division Transportation Manager Dan Frawley and Operator Myra Jackson PHOTO BY LISA HUYNH



From left, Board Chairman Hal Bernson, CEO Roger Snoble, Metro Bus Operator Myra Jackson, Deputy CEO John Catoe and General Manager Tracy Daly.

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Board Honors Metro Bus Operator Myra Jackson

UPDATE: (July 25, 2002) The MTA Board commended Metro Bus Operator Myra Jackson, Thursday, for her courage in stopping to help a young man wounded in a drive-by shooting the night of July 22.

See News Report:
[Quick-Thinking
Operator Myra
Jackson Rescues
Gunshot Victim](#)

Jackson, who is assigned to North Los Angeles Division 3, was joined in the Board Room by Division 3 Operator Sara Bernal and Trainee Tamara Houston and by Gateway Division 10 operators Don Smith and Garry Brown.

Bernal and Houston were commended for assisting a woman who was bleeding badly on their bus. Smith and Brown received the Board's appreciation for preventing further injury to a biker who lost control of his motorcycle on the I-10 Freeway.

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From left: CEO Roger Snoble, Operator Garry Brown, Deputy CEO John Catoe, Metro Bus Operator Don Smith, Board Chairman Hal Bernson and General Manager Tracy Daly.

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Division 10 Operators' Freeway Actions Protected Fallen Motorcyclist

By BILL HEARD

(July 25, 2002) "When I looked up from changing lanes, I saw this motorcycle tumbling right in front of me." That was Metro Bus Operator Don Smith's first glimpse of an accident that could have cost a young man his life early the morning of June 28.

Smith, driving a Line 3 bus and Operator Garry Brown, right behind him in a Line 2 bus, immediately braked to a halt to block two lanes of the westbound I-10 Freeway and protect the fallen rider. Both men are assigned to Gateway Division 10.

"When we saw him tumbling, we reacted by shutting the buses down in those two lanes," recalls Smith. "If we hadn't been there, he would have been a statistic."

As cars continued to speed around the accident scene, Smith and Brown jumped out of their buses and rushed to help the stunned biker.

Eased his breathing

The young man staggered to the freeway shoulder, where the operators made him lie down. "He couldn't talk," says Brown, so the operators opened the visor of his helmet, loosened his clothing to ease his breathing and comforted him.

Smith also had called the Bus Operations Control Center to report the accident and request assistance. A motorist, who had stopped to help, phoned the police.

Minutes later, an ambulance arrived to transport the injured man and within a half hour after the accident, Smith and Brown were able to continue to the start of their morning runs.

On Thursday, the MTA Board commended Smith and Brown for their actions in assisting the injured man – actions that almost certainly prevented an even worse accident and probably saved a life.

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From left: Board Chairman Hal Bernson, CEO Roger Snoble, BDOF Bus Operator trainee Tamara Houston, Deputy CEO John Catoe, Metro Bus Operator Sara Bernal and General Manager Tracy Daly.

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Operator and Trainee Prevent Passenger's Massive Blood Loss

By LISA HUYNH

(July 25, 2002) Metro Bus Operator Sara Bernal and BDOF Bus Operator trainee Tamara Houston may have saved an elderly woman's life, Tuesday afternoon, while driving Line 180 in Glendale. On Thursday, the MTA Board commended the women for their actions.

As the bus was on route, Houston noticed a large pool of blood on the floor. She realized that passenger Lois Tolrdge, 79, was bleeding. Tolrdge was unaware that a varicose vein in her lower right leg had burst.

When Houston calmly informed Bernal that the passenger needed immediate medical attention, Bernal pulled her bus to a secure area and called Bus Operation Control Center for help.

As Houston ran to a near-by restaurant for paper towels, Bernal asked her other passengers to move to the rear of the bus to give Tolrdge air and space.

With Tolrdge's leg continuing to spurt blood, Bernal tore off her uniform shirt and wrapped it around the passenger's leg to stop the bleeding. Bernal also elevated the woman's leg to help reduce the blood loss.

Gushing like a faucet

"Blood was gushing out like a faucet," says Bernal, who is assigned to North Los Angeles Division 3. "I was shocked at the moment, but I had to stay calm for her and to clearly communicate with BOCC."

When Houston returned to the bus with paper towels, Bernal radioed for a back-up bus for the other passengers.

The paramedics and the fire department arrived and transported Tolrdge to Verdugo Hills Hospital, where she was treated and released later that evening. Tolrdge is reportedly doing well.

Meanwhile, the passengers boarded the back-up bus and continued to their destinations with Houston as bus operator.

"I am extremely proud of Operator Bernal and her student Houston. They showed initiative and were proactive," says Division Transportation Manager Dan Frawley. "They are well deserving of being commended for their heroism."

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LA Sparks star Lisa Leslie makes a point about bus and rail safety during an MTA-sponsored presentation at Morningside High School.

LA Sparks' Lisa Leslie Goes for 3 Points: Look, Listen, Live

By ALISHA GOMEZ

(July 26,2002) When WNBA star Lisa Leslie walked into her old Alma Mater's gym, the crowd at Morningside High School in Inglewood went wild.

But Leslie was speaking on a serious topic, Thursday morning – she was helping to promote safety around Metro Buses and Metro Rail trains.

MTA and the Los Angeles Spark's Women's National Basketball Association team have joined forces to promote safe behavior and the press conference with Leslie helped kick off the new campaign.

"I love scoring out there on the court and when they put in that three-point line that just really opened up my game," said Leslie. "And today, I am here about three points: Look, Listen and Live."

"I know you think about that saying," she added. "And it might seem elementary to you, but a lot of kids take the bus. You have to be observant of what's going on around you because there are a lot of dangers out there. It's important for you to remember that."

Also at the press conference was South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey.

Poll of 35,000 Riders Shows Metro Bus Service Improving

By MARC LITTMAN

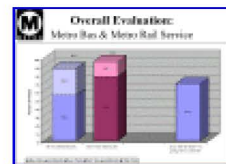
(July 26, 2002) It is getting better on the bus. A recent survey of 35,000 Metro Bus riders in Los Angeles County found that seven out of 10 customers (69 percent) agree Metro Bus service is improving on a variety of fronts.

Between June and December of last year, MTA conducted the largest customer satisfaction survey in its history.

Besides the 35,000 Metro Bus riders, 15,000 Metro Rail riders were polled along with 7,000 people who rode buses operated by municipal bus operators in Los Angeles County, such as the Big Blue Bus in Santa Monica and Foothill Transit. Passengers were surveyed on board buses and trains and in follow-up telephone interviews.

The overall score

Overall, 88 percent of Metro Bus riders rated Metro Bus service as fair or better with 56 percent saying service is good or very good. Metro scored good or very good for bus safety (66 percent), route convenience (67 percent), travel time (54 percent), driver courtesy (58 percent), operator knowledge of routes (81 percent), and other measures.



"We're encouraged that our customers are responding positively to the massive bus improvements MTA has delivered in the past six years, but we clearly have areas where we need to improve," said CEO Roger Snoble.

"The expansion of Metro Rapid, the purchase of high capacity buses and construction of new busways, coupled with better supervision of operators on the street, should boost Metro Bus performance where customers are telling us we still need improvement," he said.



On-time performance

Snoble noted bus on-time performance scored 75 percent fair or better with 43 percent of those surveyed saying Metro rated good or very good in this category.

Frequency of service scored 76 percent fair or better (43 percent good or very good). Seat availability was rated 78 percent fair or better (48 percent good or very good), while cleanliness scored 78 percent fair or better (48 percent good or very good).

Satisfaction with rail service

Metro Rail riders almost universally expressed satisfaction with the Metro Red, Blue and Green Lines.

Overall, 96 percent rated the service as fair or better with 78 percent saying the service is good or very good. Among categories receiving good or very good marks were safety (82 percent), travel time (76 percent), cleanliness (70 percent), cost of fare (67 percent) and seat/space availability (61 percent).

Ability to hear the train operator announce stops on the public address system is an area where riders see need for improvement (76 percent rated it fair or better with 49.5 percent saying it was good or very good).

Buying tokens, passes easy

Ease in purchasing Metro tokens and passes and access to customer information are two areas where both Metro Bus and Metro Rail scored uniformly high marks. Customers cited easy access to Metro information through the 1-800 COMMUTE phone line, Metro Customer Service Centers and the MTA's interactive trip planner on the Internet.

A surprising number of Metro customers have access to the Internet: 44 percent of Metro Bus riders (up from 12 percent in 1996) and 63 percent of Metro Rail riders.

Latinos largest group of riders

Metro Bus and Metro Rail share other characteristics. According to the survey, riders on both Metro Bus and Metro Rail are predominantly low-income and minority persons with Latinos making up the largest ethnic group.

The extensive customer survey data will be used to help MTA better plan and schedule service, help train operators, for marketing and other purposes. The results also will help create a customer profile of who uses public transit regularly in Los Angeles County.

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General Manager David Armijo joined Division 8 bus operators for lunch.

Metro San Fernando Valley Sector Celebration

By LISA HUYNH

(July 26, 2002) The Valley may be known for its outrageous heat, but West Valley Division 8 is known for its over-the-top barbeques – a menu featuring fire grilled chicken, beef strips, links and a killer cherry cobbler.



Back row from left to right: Bruce Alston, Grant Meyers, David Armijo, Tom Impliazzo. Front row: Marta Maestas-Mack, Karen Pedini, Gwen Henry, Laura Soberones, and Fidel Mendoza. Photos by LISA HUYNH.

Division 8 held a barbeque, Wednesday, to celebrate the opening of Metro San Fernando Valley. The sector staff, bus operators, mechanics and service attendance all attended the event.

General Manager David Armijo says the sector will give the community a

local voice, making it easier to communicate with individuals in the community, as well as the employees.



Fidel Mendoza and Scott Manco taking the heat!

"We must convey to our employees that they will play a vital role in the sector outreach team," says Armijo. "They are a valuable resource, given their knowledge of the bus services and logistics of the sector."

"We intend to tap in on that resource," he adds.

"I've had the opportunity to meet with some of the employees at both divisions 8 and 15, and you get a sense of pride and unity here in the Valley," says Communications Manager Marta Maesta-Mack.

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Luncheon Honors HR Employees for Hard Work

By ALISHA GOMEZ

(July 30, 2002) MTA's Human Resources staff was all smiles at a special luncheon, July 25, to honor HR employees for their outstanding work during the past months in successfully handling assignments that included processing department reorganizations and service sector recruitments.



"I want to thank everyone for all of your hard work," said Carolyn Flowers, Executive Officer, Administration. "HR has done a phenomenal job of supporting the service sectors as well as all the other areas and agencies. I am very proud of everyone here and privileged to be on your team."

EO Carolyn Flowers, left, and retiring Director of Human Resources Aida Lagrimas at luncheon commending HR staff on a job well done.

Also at the luncheon was Aida Lagrimas, Human Resources director who is retiring after a 20-year career that began in government affairs.

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> Hosting the visitors were MTA's Dana Woodbury, left, and Peter Liu, far right. Visiting from Saudi Arabia were, from left, Jalal Nafakh, director of transportation for Riyadh, and Ahmed Assubail, urban system program manager. They were escorted by Hamed Benouar of UC Berkeley. Also presenting information was Naresh Amatya of SCAG.



Saudi Transportation Officials Visit MTA

(July 30, 2002) A high-level delegation of transportation officials from Saudi Arabia visited Los Angeles, last week, to gather information for use in the development of transportation systems to serve the kingdom's capital city of Riyadh.

Riyadh's population of 4 million is expected to more than double in the next few years. The Saudi officials have visited a number of transportation agencies in the U.S. to discuss ways to respond to their country's growing transportation needs.

MTA officials gave presentations on the Metro Rapid bus system, the ATMS "Smart Bus" project and the Universal Fare System. A Southern California Association of Governments representative gave a presentation on the regional transportation plan.

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> Metro South Bay transportation operations supervisors Joyce McKenzie and Emanuel Wilson with McDonald's representative Cookie Ruby. Photo by Victoria Woods.

Metro South Bay Trip to McDonald's is Community Outreach Effort

By RICH MORALLO

(July 30, 2002) Metro South Bay went to McDonald's, last Tuesday, but not for burgers and fries.



"We were there basically to talk to the community and answer questions about Metro Bus and Metro Rail services," says Transportation Operations Supervisor Joyce McKenzie of South Bay Division 18.

McKenzie and a team of MTA staff, train safety volunteers and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department representatives visited the Long Beach McDonald's franchise near the intersection of Willow Street and Long Beach Boulevard to distribute information to families and residents.

"This particular McDonald's was selected for our community outreach work because a bus stop for Line 60 out of Divisions 10 and 18 is right at the corner, and the Metro Blue Line Willow station is across the street," says Victoria Woods, Metro South Bay communications officer

Anti-graffiti literature

The team set up an information table near one of the entrances at mid-morning and for the next three hours handed out anti-graffiti, vandalism and safety pamphlets to McDonald's customers stopping by for food, refreshments and beverages.

"We also talked to the children about bus and rail safety," says McKenzie. "The children really liked the coloring books, and they'll talk to their parents about the safety tips on the pages that they color in."

"We are a children-oriented business and we believe and promote child safety," says Cookie Ruby, a McDonald's franchise customer relations representative. "Even Ronald McDonald has a safety show."

Other MTA team members at the educational outreach event were train safety volunteer Yolanda Rosales, Sheriff's Deputy Gary DeBondt, Sheriff's Department civilian volunteer Mark Gerin and Division 18 Transportation Operations Supervisor Emanuel Wilson.

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When the chips are down...

Anti-terrorism exercise puts participants from local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, fire and emergency services agencies, transit agencies and tenants of USG through their paces at Union Station.



Photos by Gayle Anderson

Anti-Terrorist Exercise Stressed Inter-Agency Cooperation

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 31, 2002) The scenario for an anti-terrorism exercise hosted by the MTA, Tuesday morning, was grim: A mid-afternoon explosion in the tunnel connecting Union Station and the East Portal kills and injures passengers and causes extensive damage to the rail complex.

Rail and bus service at Union Station Gateway is disrupted. Soon, other explosives are found. How should law enforcement, fire departments, emergency services and transit agencies respond?

For three hours, some 80 participants from 30 local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, fire and emergency services agencies, transit agencies and tenants of USG worked feverishly to answer that question.

As the scenario unfolded, phantom police, fire and emergency units were dispatched to the "disaster scene," Union Station and MTA Headquarters were "evacuated," while the MTA and other transit agencies scrambled to maintain rail and bus service, provided bus bridges and coaches to transport "evacuees."

"This...exercise is a good opportunity to test and evaluate our ability to respond in a fully coordinated, effective and timely



ROC Assistant Manager Doug Jackson and Rail Operations Controller Luis Canel help map out MTA response.

manner to a security incident," CEO Roger Snoble wrote in a memo to participants.

The crisis exercise was important because the USG transportation complex is the largest of its kind in the western U.S. It has been identified as "critical infrastructure" of national significance to the region's transportation system and economy.

"We had 80 people who were educated on what could happen in a real incident," said Paul Lennon, MTA chief of Security and Law Enforcement. "This was really a good exercise because it made the agencies that participated realize how dependent they would be on other agencies for assistance and expertise in a real incident."

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DREAM TEAM - From left, Terry Matsumoto, Executive Officer, Finance; Harvey Saulter, Accounting Manager, Basil Panas, Accounting Manager; Dave Wakeling, Payroll Manager; Josie Nicasio, Controller; Richard Brumbaugh, Chief Financial Officer. Photo by Bill Heard.

Accounting scores 3-peat!

MTA Receives Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting

By ED SCANNELL

(July 31, 2002) For the third year in a row, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has presented MTA with a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

"The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in government accounting and financial reporting," said Stephen J. Gauthier, GFOA director. "Its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management."

GFOA established the certificate program in 1945 to recognize and encourage excellence in financial reporting by state and local governments.

"I am pleased that MTA continues to be recognized for its high standards and accounting practices," said MTA CEO Roger Snoble. "Richard Brumbaugh, MTA's chief financial officer, and his staff are deserving of this recognition for their hard work and professionalism."

"The credit for this achievement goes to our controller, Josie Nicasio, and to her hard-working staff," Brumbaugh said. "They've proven year after year that they are top-notch professionals in the field of finance."

Based in Chicago, Ill., the Government Finance Officers Association was founded in 1906 "to enhance and promote the professional management of governmental financial resources by identifying, developing and advancing fiscal strategies, policies and practices for the public benefit."

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San Gabriel Valley Division Employees Commended for Returning Lost Wallet

(July 31, 2002) "I'm writing to commend the honesty, integrity and genuine caring of two MTA employees," writes Dorothea Mynster of Arcadia in a letter to Mace Bethel, transportation division manager at San Gabriel Valley Division 9.

Mynster thanked Metro Bus Operator Jeffrey Bingley and Acting Transportation Operations Supervisor Rose Graves for returning her mother's wallet. Bingley found it on his bus, July 6, and turned it in to Graves.

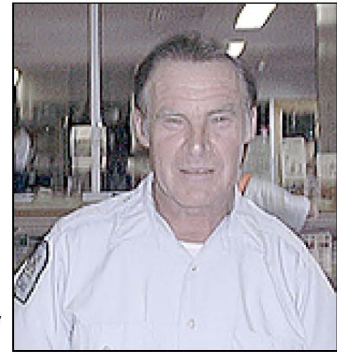
Mynster's letter reads:

"I am writing to commend the honesty, integrity and genuine caring of two MTA employees.

"My mother apparently lost her wallet this past Saturday, July 6, 2002 on an MTA bus. Operator Jeffrey Bingley found the wallet and returned it into Supervisor Rose Graves who notified a friend whose number was in the wallet. That friend notified me and I contacted Ms. Graves.

"The wallet was returned, just as mother remembers it to have been – money, I.D., credit card. We are so very appreciative and thankful to Mr. Bingley and Ms. Graves."

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■ Metro Bus Operator Jeffrey Bingley found the wallet on his bus.



■ Supervisor Rose Graves returned the lost wallet to the rightful owner.