

On top of San Gorgonio - In his second trip to Southern California's highest peak, Metro Bus Operator Gerardo Perez made it to the top in an impressive five hours.



## No Stranger to Danger

**Metro Bus Operator Gerardo Perez is an Avid Mountain Climber**

By LISA HUYNH

(August 16, 2002) Metro Bus Operator Gerardo Perez, 37, is no stranger to danger – he has been an avid mountain climber for quite some time now.

This active operator has scaled the tough terrains of Mt. Whitney, Mt. San Jacinto, Mt. San Gorgonio and Dragon Peak, despite back surgery.

Perez, who is assigned to West Valley Division 8, injured his back two years ago. He recovered for a year and immediately returned to the life he had missed – backpacking through various mountains in California.

He has climbed Mt. Whitney four times – the highest mountain in the contiguous 48 states. Its highest peak is 14,497 feet.

"I love climbing mountains especially in the Eastern Sierra," says Perez. "After working many hours in the city, it's nice to get away from it all. I wish I could do it more often."

### Climbed to the peaks

He has climbed the 11,502-foot high Mt. San Gorgonio in San Bernardino. He also has scaled San Jacinto in Palms Springs at 10,834 feet and the 12,995-foot Dragon Peak near Golden Trout Lake on the Sierra crest.

"The most difficult trail to hike is Mt. Whitney because it's 22 miles long and has an elevation of 6,000 feet," says Perez.

Perez plans to climb Mt. San Gorgonio again



Perez had a few more peaks to scale before calling it a day at the beautiful Dragon Peak in the Sierra crest.



on Sunday and Mt. Whitney the following Sunday for the fifth time.

Perez made sure not to look down after making it to the top of a steep peak at Dragon Peak.

"It's such an accomplishment when I make it to the top of each mountain," says Perez. "Tears came down my face the first time I stood on top of Mt. Whitney."

There's no stopping this father of two. His next goal is to climb 18,700-foot El Pico Orizaba, the highest mountain in Mexico.

"Eventually, if I have time, I would like to climb Mt. Aconcagua in Argentina, which is about 23,000 feet."

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