

## Metro Report Archives

### September 2002 Articles

#### [MTA Report](#)

#### [Bulletin Board](#)

**[Board Approves Speed-Up of Metro Rapid Expansion Plan](#)** (Sept. 26, 2002) The MTA Board of Directors today unanimously approved acceleration of the planned expansion of the Metro Rapid Bus Program. The 24-line expansion, slated to begin in December with new lines on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway, would be completed by 2008.

**[Board Approves 'Chick Hearn' Station on Metro Blue Line](#)** (Sept. 26, 2002) The legend of Los Angeles Lakers sportscaster Chick Hearn will live on at the Metro Blue Line Pico station.

**[MTA Expands Bike Access on Metro Rail, Effective Oct. 29](#)** (Sept. 26, 2002) The MTA Board of Directors has approved a plan to expand bicycle access on Metro Rail trains to aid patrons who are bike commuters. The policy takes effect, Oct. 29.

**[Governance Councils, Memorial to Chick Hearn on Board Agenda](#)** (Sept. 25, 2002) Motions establishing service sector governance councils and a motion to name a Metro Rail station for a legendary local sports announcer are on the MTA Board's agenda for consideration Thursday.

**[Bus Operators' Mirror Suggestion Reflected on NABI Buses](#)** (Sept. 20, 2002) Safety comes first at Central City Division 1, especially when it comes to boarding passengers onto Metro Buses.

**[The Nose Knows: LAPD's Bomb-Sniffing Dog Tosca](#)** (Sept. 19, 2002) Tosca, a seven-year-old Belgium Malinois trained to sniff for bombs and explosives, has been working alongside LAPD Officer Don Bender for six years and recently helped LAPD Transit Group with random checks on Metro Rail.

**[Bus Operator Survey to Pinpoint On-Time Performance Problems](#)** (Sept. 18, 2002) Why do some Metro Buses run late or ahead of schedule? Can bus operators improve their on-time performance? What should MTA management do? How do you define "on-time performance?"

**[Metro South Bay Offices, Metro Rapid, Bike Access on Committee Agendas](#)** (Sept. 17, 2002) MTA Board committees will consider some 40 issues, this week, including an office lease for the Metro South Bay sector, approval of a five-year plan to expand Metro Rapid service and expands bicycle access on Metro Rail.

**[MTA, Operation Clean Sweep Team with LA Galaxy Star to 'Kick Graffiti'](#)** (Sept. 17, 2002) MTA and Operation Clean Sweep, a program sponsored by the Los Angeles Department of Public Works, are teaming up with LA Galaxy soccer team star Cobi Jones to help deliver the message, "Kick Graffiti."

**[Chess Champ Plans to Checkmate MTA's Worker's Comp Costs](#)** (Sept. 12, 2002) Like the champion chess player he once was, MTA's new executive officer for Risk Management and Safety Services – Michael Koss – will have to think several moves ahead in his new job.

**SEPTEMBER 11, 2002 - [Honoring Our Heroes:](#)** MTA will observe a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m.; Employees rally for blood drive; Metro Buses turn 'Lights on for Freedom'

**[MTA San Fernando Valley Plans More Community Meetings](#)** (Sept. 5, 2002) MTA San Fernando Valley held its first Community Transit Meeting, Aug. 28. Encouraged by its success, the sector staff is planning even more community meetings for the future.

**[Division 15 Says 'No Tanks' To Leaky Fuel Cylinders](#)** (Sept. 4, 2002) Sun Valley Division 15 Maintenance had a big problem that was taking CNG buses out of service. But by working hard, the mechanics at this division were able to accomplish what seemed to be impossible in only a few short months.

**[Labor Day Weekend of Service for Metro South Bay](#)** (Sept. 4, 2002) Metro South Bay team members took time off from their Labor Day weekend to participate at three community events.

**Pilot Program: Bus Stop Decals Have Schedules, Route Maps** (Sept. 3, 2002) In an effort to provide bus schedule information where it's needed most, MTA has begun a pilot program of installing route map and timetable decals at bus stops on two Metro Bus lines.

## Bulletin Board

- **Orange County Grand Jury Visits MTA** (Sept. 25, 2002) Members of the Orange County Grand Jury visited MTA, Sept. 20, for briefings on Metro Rail and the agency's rail safety education efforts.
- **Division 18 Mechanics Place 7th at International Bus Rodeo** (Sept. 24, 2002) The results from the 2002 International Bus Rodeo in Las Vegas are in and the news is good for MTA's maintenance team.
- **West Hollywood Division 7 Keeps Energy Alive with Sector Staff** (Sept. 24, 2002) An energetic crowd of employees from West Hollywood Division 7 welcomed MTA Westside/Central General Manager Tracy Daly and her staff, last Friday, with a celebration hosted by the division.
- **Seniors and Kids were MTA's Audience at Weekend Events** (Sept. 24, 2002) Metro South Bay spent last weekend in Torrance distributing transit information to two special audiences – senior citizens and children.
- **Just Helping a Customer Can Be Reward Enough** (Sept. 20, 2002) Sometimes it can be worth it just to make the effort for a customer in need, as Huey-Ling Leung of MTA Payroll recently learned.
- **Transit Golf Club: [An Update on Recent Tournaments](#)**
- **Triple Play: Division Celebrations Mark Service Sector Openings** (Sept. 19, 2002) With the Sept. 1 opening of three new service sectors, general managers have been sponsoring teambuilding events for operating division and sector staff personnel. metro.net reporter Alisha Gomez made the rounds of several employee events.
- **Employee 'Models' Needed** for MTA Photo Shoots
- **Operator Jack Bailey:** He's No. 2 in Seniority at MTA
- **Vacation Turns Tragic When MTA Family's Home Burns** (Sept. 13, 2002) A vacation for two MTA employees was interrupted by tragedy, Sept. 3, when their home burned to the ground during a fierce brush fire that swept through Bouquet Canyon.
- **Metro South Bay Stresses Reading and Safety to Elementary Kids** (Sept. 13, 2002) The kids at John Ritter Elementary School in Los Angeles recently got two valuable tips from Metro South Bay – read more books and be safe around buses and trains.
- **Members of MTA's Accounting Department** recently participated in a teambuilding retreat.
- **5 Divisions Give Blood to 'Honor Our Heroes'** (Sept. 12, 2002) Dozens of Metro South Bay employees stepped forward at South Bay Division 18, Sept. 10, to donate blood during the American Red Cross "Honoring Our Heroes" blood drive. Scores more were scheduled to give blood, Thursday, at Central City Division 1, North Los Angeles Division 3, Arthur Winston Division 5 and Gateway Division 10.
- **New! Scary Moment: Employees Reunite Chicago Girl with Family** (Sept. 12, 2002) It was a scary moment for a 9-year-old Chicago girl when she was left all alone on a Metro Blue Line platform, recently, as the train pulled away with her family still aboard.
- **84 Employees Honored for Renovating Sector Staff Offices** (Sept. 10, 2002)

Eighty-four employees who worked as a team on projects to renovate buildings for two service sector offices were honored, last week, at an event at Division 4. Eight were named Employees of the Quarter.

- [Gateway Division: Getting to Know the Westside/Central Sector](#) (Sept. 10, 2002) It took almost 900 eggs to satisfy the 300 employees who gathered for breakfast at Gateway Division 10, last Friday, to mark the opening of the MTA Westside/Central service sector.
- [A Busy Weekend Promoting Safety for South Bay Volunteers](#) (Sept. 10, 2002) Metro South Bay volunteers set up information tables in south Los Angeles, Inglewood and San Pedro, last weekend, to distribute bus and train safety messages to about 6,000 residents.
- [Employee Team Converts Rail Radio System to ATMS Use](#) (Sept. 5, 2002) The Metro Rail radio system crossed a major threshold, Sept. 1, when an employee team completed a two-month project that switched off a problem-plagued system and shifted service to other radio channels.
- [No More Broken Air Lines: West Valley 8 Mechanics Design Innovative Tool](#) (Sept. 5, 2002) Metro Bus mechanics know how difficult and frustrating it can be to replace a brake application valve without damaging an air line or two.
- [Lydie Colonello is Purchasing's 'Buyer of the Quarter'](#) (Sept. 4, 2002)
- [Metro Bus Operator Reunites Mother and Daughter](#) (Sept. 3, 2002) Arthur Winston Division 5 MTA Operator Rhonda Newsome helped reunite a 3-year-old girl and her mother who got separated at the Pacific and Florence bus stop.

[Back to Archives](#)

Arthur Winston Division Metro Operator Rhonda Newsome helped reunite a 3-year-old girl and her mother who got separated at the Pacific and Florence bus stop.



PHOTO BY ALISHA GOMEZ

## **Metro Bus Operator Reunites Mother and Daughter**

By ALISHA GOMEZ

(Sept. 3, 2002) Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 20, was just like any other day for Arthur Winston Division 5 Metro Operator Rhonda Newsome.

Going east at Pacific and Florence, the bus was relatively full – typical around 4 p.m. Everyone kept to themselves and no one looked lost or out of place.

So when she noticed a little 3-year-old girl sitting all by herself on her bus that afternoon, she did what any mother would do – she followed her motherly instincts and started interrogating her passengers as to where the little girl's mother was.

"My passengers didn't know and they just looked at me like 'why are you asking us?'" says Newsome. "Then one of my passengers, told me he saw her board the bus alone from the rear door at Pacific and Florence. We thought the lady she was sitting next to was her mother until that lady got off the bus without her."

Newsome then called the BOCC who instructed her to pull over and wait at the Pacific and Eastern stop.

### **Her mother was left behind**

"I asked the little girl where her mother was and she pointed behind her, like her mother was left behind," says Newsome. "But she couldn't tell me how they got separated."

Newsome stopped an LAPD officer and told him what was going on. That officer informed another officer who began searching for the mother.

"About 20 to 30 minutes into my wait at Pacific and Eastern, this guy came onto my bus off another one behind me and said the little girl's mother was back there," says Newsome. "And I said to him, 'Well, you can't do anything and I'm not releasing her to you.' I think he thought I was just going to give him the little girl and there's no way I was going to do that."

Two officers then approached Newsome's bus and informed her they had found the mother. After everyone exchanged information, Newsome released the little girl to the police so the two could be reunited. She also informed the BOCC.

With no experience in handling such a potentially tragic situation before, Newsome did what came naturally to her.

"I'm a mother and I would do that for any child. This has never happened to me before and when she started crying, I felt a tear in my eye. I mean, to lose your child like that – wow."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## Bus Stop Decals Have Schedules, Route Maps

By ALISHA GOMEZ

(Sept. 3, 2002) In an effort to provide bus schedule information where it's needed most, MTA has begun a pilot program of installing route map and timetable decals at bus stops on two Metro Bus lines.

Bus stop posts along Metro Bus lines 70 and 260 were the first to get the new decals. If the pilot program proves to be successful, it will be expanded over the next 18 months to most of MTA's 18,000 bus stops. The decals will supplement 850 information cubes mounted at bus stops in MTA's central service area and along major transit corridors.

The decal program was initiated in response to a motion earlier this year by Supervisor Gloria Molina. She asked the MTA staff to find ways to include cost-effective information displays and to develop an accelerated program for installing them at MTA bus stops.

MTA also makes route and schedule information available to customers in many other ways – through timetables distributed on-board, via telephone at 1-800-COMMUTE, over the Internet, through employers and at MTA's Customer Centers.

"This is another way to provide information to customers," says Warren Morse, deputy executive officer, Communications. "The information on the decals is designed to reassure customers regarding the route they need to take and the frequency of service at various hours."

## Yellow, adhesive decals

The decals are yellow self-adhesive signs that measure 3.5 inches wide by 8 inches long. The decals are only being placed on bus stops that have an MTA-owned pole. About 10 percent of MTA bus stop signs are attached to city streetlights.

"The pilot program for lines 70 and 260 will be evaluated based on customer feedback, maintenance cost, decal durability and other factors," says Stops and Zones Manager Peter Serdienis.

"We'll also do a series of brief 'intercept' surveys with customers at these stops, questioning them in person to get their comments on the decals," says Morse.

Since half of Metro Bus stops are served by only one bus line, the decals were deemed a more cost-effective way of providing basic information than placing a \$120 cube at each bus stop.

The decal program is a coordinated effort between Communications and

## PILOT PROGRAM



Henry Mendez of Stops and Zones puts up a decal at the Garvey and Atlantic stop of Line 70.



Decals are part of a new pilot program by MTA to give passengers more information at bus stops.

PHOTOS BY ALISHA GOMEZ

Stops and Zones.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Lydie Colonello is Purchasing's 'Buyer of the Quarter'

By RON DUPUIS

(Sept. 4, 2002) Lydie Colonello has been named the Materiel Department's Purchasing "Buyer of the Quarter" for her commitment and dedication to providing outstanding service to her clients.

During Colonello's tenure as an MTA buyer, she was given responsibility for purchasing material and supplies such as hoses and fittings, safety items, shop uniforms, CNG fuel island parts, nuts and bolts, drills and taps, bus decals and numerous other supplies.

Due to her efforts over the last year, the MTA recognized savings on these commodities of more than \$90,000 over previous pricing.

Colonello has recently been assigned responsibility for procurement of parts required for support of the Detroit Diesel engines and Allison transmissions used in the majority of the bus fleet.

Colonello approaches all of her assignments with a positive, professional attitude. Her communication style and friendly personality has worked effectively in dealing with all of her internal and external clients and suppliers.

The quality of her work is outstanding and exemplary. She is always willing to take on new assignments and assist others.

Colonello has distinguished herself as being dependable, highly motivated and a true asset to the Purchasing Section, Procurement Department and the MTA.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Congratulating Purchasing's "Buyer of the Quarter" Lydie Colonello, from left, are Deputy Executive Officer Ted Montoya, Purchasing Director Ron Dupuis and Purchasing Contract Manager Al Mitchell.

## Sun Valley Division Says 'No Tanks' To Leaky Fuel Cylinders

By ERIC RAPP

(Sept. 4, 2002) Sun Valley Division 15 Maintenance had a big problem that was taking CNG buses out of service. But by working hard, the mechanics at this division were able to accomplish what seemed to be impossible in only a few short months.



PHOTO BY ERIC RAPP

Mechanic Leader Julio Vargas with some recently removed CNG fuel cylinders.

The problem began with compressed natural gas fuel cylinders on 1995 model year Neoplan buses. The fuel tanks, manufactured by a company named EDO, have a tendency to develop leaks. Unfortunately, EDO went out of business shortly after the new buses were delivered to MTA.

Because each Neoplan bus has 12 fuel tanks, mechanics could keep the bus in service by simply closing the damaged fuel tank and allowing the bus to run on 11 tanks.

However, as more tanks began to fail, more and more buses had to be put on a twice-a-day fueling schedule or were marked "hold," meaning they could not be used at all. For regular daily service, the division was forced to use older diesel buses.

### Mechanics solving the problem

In late 2001, the mechanics at the division took on the job of replacing all the defective tanks in the Neoplan buses. Mechanic Leader Julio Vargas noted that this was no easy task considering that replacing all the tanks on a single bus takes almost a week with the labor available.

"It was hard at the beginning," says Vargas, "because we still had all our regular work to do."

More tanks continued to fail, causing more buses to become problems. Despite these setbacks, within a month all six "held" buses were back in service. Vargas and his crew didn't stop there.

"Once we were done with those we started concentrating on the 'tripper' buses," he says.

Now, nearly six months later, Division 15 mechanics have replaced over 350 defective tanks with newer, more reliable fuel cylinders. At this pace, management expects that every single EDO fuel tank on Division 15's fleet of 96 Neoplan buses will be replaced by March 2003.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Labor Day Weekend of Service for Metro South Bay

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 4, 2002) Metro South Bay team members took time off from their Labor Day weekend to participate at three community events.

Vicky Woods and her son, Carlos, along with Michael Morris, Myrine White, Margaret Morallo and train safety presenter Bill Mergard hauled out school supplies and bus and train safety information to distribute at neighborhood events on Saturday, Aug. 31.

"We welcome the MTA to our neighborhood," said Pastor Liz Gregory at the New Greater Circle Mission Church community fair. There, the Metro South Bay staff passed out bus line schedules and train safety tips on how to stay safe near tracks and trains.

At the First Annual Unite Watts Celebration in Ted Watkins Park, the MTA team joined other public agencies in supplying families with school materials.

"Quite a few students from the Watts area will be here to collect supplies," said Los Angeles Community Development volunteer Fabre Atkins, who helped coordinate the event. MTA distributed folders, rulers, markers and pens to the families.

Metro South Bay also stopped at the African Marketplace and Cultural Fair and to give out bus and rail maps, crayons and coloring books at the Exposition Park event.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

PHOTOS BY RICH MORALLO



A smile a foot wide at the First Annual Unite Watts Celebration in Ted Watkins Park, and, below, collecting stickers at the New Greater Circle Mission Church community fair.



PHOTOS BY LISA HUYNH



Howard Novak, left, observes as Ken Kraft uses the new tool to release an air line from its quick-release valve.

## No More Broken Air Lines West Valley 8 Mechanics Design Innovative Tool

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 5, 2002) Metro Bus mechanics know how difficult and frustrating it can be to replace a brake application valve without damaging an air line or two.

West Valley Division 8 mechanics Howard Novak and Ken Kraft came up with an innovative way to solve this problem.

After weeks of brainstorming, the mechanics designed a tool that makes disconnecting air lines from the compressed air tank fittings on Metro buses quicker and easier.

"This tool cuts the time in half, giving us more time to work on other repairs," says Novak.

Compressed air tanks are used to operate the rear brakes, front brakes, doors, driver's seat and windshield wipers. The air lines are disconnected in order to replace parts such as brake relay valves, brake application valves and air dryers.

### Air lines could be damaged

Previously, mechanics would either cut the air lines or use knives or pliers to remove the air lines from the fittings. This was a problem because the air lines could be damaged, requiring more materials and extra time to replace.

Kraft made the tool three months ago by welding two steel plates, which are designed to fit different size quick-release valves, to a channel-lock plier.

This tool allows the mechanics to clamp down on a valve – making a quick and easy release of the air

Before / After



Move your mouse over image to see mechanics demonstrate how to release an air line from its valve.



The tool allows the mechanics to clamp down on a valve – making a quick and easy release of the air line.

line. Kraft is working on another one for Novak.

"We make a lot of our own tools here at Division 8 to make our job easier," says Lead Mechanic Ike Allison. "We're known for making a lot of our own tools because we believe in updating our equipment."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## **Metro San Fernando Valley Plans More Community Meetings**

By ERIC RAPP

(Sept. 5, 2002) Metro San Fernando Valley held its first Community Transit Meeting, Aug. 28. Encouraged by its success, the sector staff is planning even more community meetings for the future.

The meeting, held in a relatively informal style, included planners, schedule makers, and schedule checkers from the sector office, as well as Project Manager Roger Martin, the main community contact for the San Fernando Valley North/South Transit Corridor Study.

The meeting's format included plenty of time for attendees to speak to the planners and schedulers about specific problems with specific lines or stops, or to chat with Martin about the proposed north/south corridor.

"I think having our schedule makers and planners there made all the difference," says Communications Manager Marta Maestas. "Several customers told me they really appreciated being able to talk to the people who know the lines and can make changes."

### **Challenges for the future**

Presiding over the meeting was sector General Manager David Armijo. After a short presentation about the challenges and opportunities facing Metro San Fernando Valley in the future, He took public comments and stayed until the end of the meeting talking with customers who had suggestions or complaints.

"For Metro San Fernando Valley to become more responsive to our community, customer input is vital," Armijo says.

He also helped arrange shuttles for customers who were stranded when a street closure disrupted bus service at the meeting's location.

In addition to a transit meeting specifically for seniors in September, three large Community Transit Forums will be held in October in several different parts of the San Fernando Valley.

And, says Maestas, community meetings will be held on a regular basis in the future.

"It's a great way to interact with our customers," she says.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Employee Team Converts Rail Radio System to ATMS Use

By ROB CHAPPELL

(Sept. 5, 2002) The Metro Rail radio system crossed a major threshold, Sept. 1, when an employee team completed a two-month project that switched off a problem-plagued system and shifted service to other radio channels.

The Johnson 900 MHz radio system, used for communications on the Metro Green Line, has been problematic since beginning of revenue service in 1995. Shutting down the system released vital radio frequencies for use by the ATMS "smart bus" project.

At the end of June, Wayside Systems proposed that MTA could use other existing radio channels similar to those used by the Metro Red Line and the maintenance radio frequencies that operate in the 160 MHz band. This would then release five "channels" of 900 MHz to the ATMS project.

With the project "green-lighted" by Deputy CEO John Catoe and Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, the Rail Communications group went to work.

### It was teamwork

Marty Maggard, manager, Rail Communications and Signals led the team, which included Assistant Manager Dan Linstrom and Senior Engineer Anderson Bennett of Metro Construction and Engineering.

The Rail Communications staff went through a flurry of activity. Building equipment from spare parts, researching low-priced, reliable and efficient equipment that would meet the needs of a 24/7 service requirement.

These employees developed the needs and found the equipment by using any and all means necessary. Phone calls, catalogs and the Internet played a great role.

The project took shape with assistance from the ITS Systems group led by Systems Maintenance Manager Joe Giba and Systems Project Manager Larry Fordon. Engineer Bob Nevaraz of ITS Engineering provided microwave service, antenna moves and equipment tie-in at the mountain top broadcast sites.

The team tested and fine-tuned the system



Suited up and ready for the big job are, from left, Communications Technician Gary Hamilton, Scott Day of ITS and Communications Inspector Anthony Tiritilli.



Communications Inspectors Kay Koopman-Glass and Rich Lake get ready to overhaul a bank of electronic equipment.



for two weeks while waiting for equipment to arrive. With the aid of Buyer Beverly Beaver and Contract Administration Manager Victor Ramirez of Purchasing the equipment arrived "just in time."

Some of the radio conversion work had to be done at the top of a mountain top tower. Atop the tower is Scott Day and on his way up is Gary Hamilton.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## 84 Employees Honored for Renovating Sector Staff Offices

(Sept. 10, 2002) Eighty-four employees who worked as a team on projects to renovate buildings for two service sector offices were honored, last week, at an event at Division 4. Eight were named Employees of the Quarter.

Deputy CEO John Catoe and DEO Denise Longley gave special recognition to the employees, who were drawn from Facilities Maintenance, ITS, Facilities Engineering, Procurement and Real Estate. Each received a certificate of appreciation.

Named Employees of the Quarter for leading the renovation project under Longley's direction were Electrician Leader Donald Goodwin, Property Maintainer Leader Joseph Gomez, Painter Leader Joe Loomis and Manager Gaspar Oropeza all of Facilities Maintenance; Engineer Alfred Stewart and Network Engineer Thomas Traylor of ITS; and Architectural Associate Tobi Taboada of Facilities Engineering.

To provide offices for sector staff, the team renovated a former golf pro shop in Chatsworth for the Metro San Fernando Valley staff and the former Operations Central Instruction (OCI) offices in El Monte to accommodate the Metro San Gabriel Valley staff.

Modifications included design and layout of office space, demolition of existing walls and ceilings, construction of offices, installation of new plumbing, HVAC, electrical and communications equipment and systems, painting and acquisition and installation of office furniture and panels.

In order to relocate OCI from El Monte, the team modified space at the Regional Rebuild Center for staff offices and classrooms. Other work included remodeling offices at Metro Red Line Division 20 for the Rail Operations staff.

The team is just beginning projects to provide offices at MTA Headquarters for the Metro Westside/Central staff and for the Metro Gateway Cities staff at Division 4.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

PHOTOS BY LUIS INZUNZA



Deputy CEO John Catoe addresses employees who worked as a team to renovate sector offices.



Deputy CEO John Catoe and DEO Denise Longley, far right, congratulate a group of Employees of the Quarter.



## A Busy Weekend Promoting Safety for South Bay Volunteers

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 10, 2002) Metro South Bay volunteers set up information tables in south Los Angeles, Inglewood and San Pedro, last weekend, to distribute bus and train safety messages to about 6,000 residents.

On Saturday, Sept. 7, the Metro volunteers were at the Point Fermin Arts and Cultural Fair in San Pedro and also at a family block party. The next day they supported the Fiestas Patrias celebration at the Hollywood Park Racetrack in Inglewood.

"Participating at community events is important - we get a chance to meet people who ride our buses," says Division 18 Transportation Operations Supervisor Frank Aguilar.

Operator Darlene Heyden says customers sometimes don't know where to go to ask questions about bus operations. "We're here to give them answers, listen to their feedback and improve our services."

At the block party, TOS Michael Morris from Arthur Winston Division 5 showed up for his second consecutive weekend of talking to the community. "Community interaction is important and I can do it."

### Focused on recruiting

Fellow division member Royal Foreman, an equipment maintenance supervisor, worked with Morris and focused on recruiting candidates as MTA employees.

Working alongside bus operations staff at Hollywood Park, train safety volunteers Bill Moore from MTA Construction and Yvette Moore with the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority, stayed busy passing out safety coloring books, crayons and Metro bags during the Fiestas Patrias, which celebrate various independence days of Latin American nations.

"I actually got here early, about two hours before the organizers started to set up the tables," said Bill Moore. "I

PHOTOS BY RICH MORALLO



Metro South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and Communications Officer Vicky Woods with Ritter Elementary students showing off sections of a newspaper.



Family with Metro promotional materials during Fiestas Patrias at Hollywood Park.




Michael Morris (far left) and Royal Foreman (far right) talk to community members at the 120th Street Block Party.

woke up at 4:30 a.m. and already started thinking about coming here to talk to the families about Metro, safety and public transit."



Other Metro South Bay staff and train safety volunteers who worked last weekend were Ken Matsuno, Bill Mergard, Dana Coffey, Cindy Karpman, Vicky Woods and her son Carlos, Carlos Reyes, Cheryl Brown, Jackie Anderson and Vanessa Smith.

 Darlene Heyden answers questions at the Point Fermin Arts and Cultural Fair.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## Getting to Know the Westside/Central Sector at Gateway Division

By ALISHA GOMEZ

(Sept. 10, 2002) It took almost 900 eggs to satisfy the 300 employees who gathered for breakfast at Gateway Division 10, last Friday, to mark the opening of the Metro Westside/Central service sector.

And, in order to include everyone at the division, the celebration continued right on into a good ol' barbecue lunch.

"This event helps to reinforce that the sector is here to be of service to the divisions, to listen and to see how we can help them," said sector General Manager Tracy Daly.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. everyone pitched in, from the sector office staff to the transportation and the maintenance personnel to make the event a success.

Mechanic Jaime Sanchez said his crew of chefs had been cooking since 8 a.m. and were finally getting a bit of fresh air while waiting for the second shift to come in and take over. "I think it's been a success. Everybody looks happy and full."

"It's a good way to get to know the sector," Operator Danita Miller said.

PHOTOS BY ALISHA GOMEZ



Metro Westside/Central Service Sector's Community Relations Manager Barbara Burns, Senior Safety Specialist David Miklic and Communications Officer Valerie Harrison serve up some fixin's.



Metro Westside/Central Service Sector General Manager Tracy Daly lines up a solid shot.



Gateway Division 10 Maintenance Manager Rick Hittinger played a little sax at the event. Hittinger plays regularly with the Long Beach City College Saxophone quartet.

### Getting to know the employees

Daly spent the day sitting and chatting, getting to know the employees. She even played pool with a few. In her honor, a cake with her photo on it was brought in for the event.

"Miss Tracy is a people-oriented person," said Assistant Transportation Manager Luis Alcantar.

"She's great about sitting with operators or mechanics and talking to them about the day-to-day running of the division."

Even the Long Beach City College Saxophone quartet attended the event midday, a group led by Division 10 Maintenance Manager Rick Hittinger.

"We got both transportation and maintenance together at this event," Hittinger said. "In the past, the two have been kind of separate because they're so far apart physically. But this event has worked out really well to include both."

Division 10 was the first to host a sector celebration. Venice Division 6 will hold its celebration, Sept. 13, and West Hollywood Division 7 has scheduled an event, Sept. 20.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

September 11, 2002

## Honoring Our Heroes

MTA will observe a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m.

### [Employees Rally for Blood Drive](#)

### [Metro Buses Turn 'Lights on for Freedom'](#)

#### **MTA will observe a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m.**

U.S. President George W. Bush has issued a proclamation recognizing Sept. 11 as "Patriot Day." The President officially proclaims that the flag be flown at half-staff and to observe a moment of silence beginning at 8:46 a.m. ET, or at another appropriate commemorative time, to honor the innocent victims who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The MTA will observe a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m., PST.



A Red Cross technician prepares Mary Scharpf of Accounting, far right, while Karen Hodin, top, and Carol Inge, both of Countywide Planning give blood.

#### **Employees Rally for Blood Drive**

(Sept. 10, 2002) MTA Headquarters employees crowded the American Red Cross "Honoring Our Heroes" blood drive, Tuesday, to donate a pint to honor the victims of the September 11 terrorist attack.

Blood collection sites were set up at MTA Headquarters, San Gabriel Valley Division 9 and at South Bay Division 18. Drives will be conducted, Sept. 12, at Central City Division 1, North Los Angeles Division 3 and at Arthur Winston Division 5.

The theme for the September 11 victims memorial blood drive is, "Give for those who've already given."

#### **Metro Buses Turn 'Lights on for Freedom'**

All Metro buses will operate with their lights on all day, Wednesday, Sept. 11, in memory of the victims of last year's terrorist attacks.

"Lights on for Freedom" also will serve as a symbol of unity as it marks the one-year anniversary of the tragic events. Nearly 2,000 Metro buses operate during peak hours in MTA's 1,433-square mile service area.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Chess Champ Plans to Checkmate MTA's Worker's Comp Costs

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 12, 2002) Like the champion chess player he once was, MTA's new executive officer for Risk Management and Safety Services – Michael Koss – will have to think several moves ahead in his new job.

He's expected to build an organization tasked with improving workplace safety, providing better, faster care to injured employees and, at the same time, reducing Worker's Compensation costs.

It's a game that Koss, the 1971 New York State chess champion, has played before, and successfully.

For 12 years, he was head of risk management and safety at Pan American World Airways. In 1991, he was named Director of Worker's Compensation and No-Fault at the Metropolitan Transit Authority of New York, the corporate umbrella for six transportation subsidiaries with a total of 64,000 employees.

Under his leadership, on-duty injury claims among the 44,000 employees of the largest subsidiary, the New York City Transit Authority, dropped from an average of 7,500 annually in 1991 to a current annual average of 3,700.

In 1991, 75 percent of employee claims involved lost-time injuries. Today, only 49 percent are lost-time injuries. At the same time, Worker's Comp costs at NYC Transit dropped from about \$75 million annually to between \$35 million and \$36 million a year.

### Disability and medical costs rose

"That level has been flat over the past three years," says Koss, "even though New York State's disability rate went up and medical costs rose."

It's those kinds of results that Chief Financial Officer Richard Brumbaugh hopes Koss can duplicate at MTA, where employees have expressed dissatisfaction with injury claims processing and where Worker's Comp costs for the agency's 9,000 employees have reached \$60 million a year.

"We're looking for Michael to implement at MTA the best practices he put in place in New York City," says Brumbaugh. "One of the most significant is case management. He'll be a key force in making sure injured employees get timely and proper medical care and, as a result, may return to work sooner."

## PROFILE



**Michael A. Koss**

**Title:** Executive Officer, Risk Management and Safety Services

**Responsibilities:** Worker's Compensation, Risk Management, Office of Safety Services, Owner Controlled Insurance Program, on-duty injury claims processing, Special Investigations Unit

**Reports to:** Chief Financial Officer Richard Brumbaugh

**Experience:** From 1991 until August 2002, Koss was Director, Workers' Compensation and No-Fault at MTA New York City Transit. From 1979 to 1991, he was Director, Risk Management, Safety Services and Loss Control Programs for Pan American World Airways. His organizational work includes service as a member of the executive committee and chairman of two National Safety Council committees. He is past president of the New York Claims Association, a 450-member organization of insurance carriers, third-party administrators and self-insured companies.

**Education:** Koss is a 1965 graduate of Hartwick College. He earned a master's degree in health program management in 1969 from Long Island University. He also received four National Science Foundation Fellowships for post-graduate studies. He has taught

To Koss, this means creating a “level playing field” on which employees who file legitimate claims can expect fair treatment from the agency. They should receive quality medical care promptly from treatment centers and doctors who bill their services honestly and accurately. And, finally, their claims should be processed and paid quickly.

At the same time, Koss says MTA cannot tolerate abuses of the Worker’s Compensation system – by employees, by attorneys, by providers such as hospitals or physicians, or by the agency, itself. “In New York, we found that providers more often abused the system, than did employees.”

To avoid abuses, every claim will be closely reviewed at several levels, including by nurse case managers who will look at injured workers’ claims from a medical perspective. They will work with MTA claims examiners to ensure that employees receive proper care and that medical treatment bills are accurate.

### Prosecution of crimes

When abuse is suspected, MTA’s special investigative unit – which can employ outside field investigators – will look into the case. Such cases could involve the District Attorney’s office and criminal prosecution.

But, most claims, Koss believes, will never require such measures. “If you’re injured, if it’s real, you’ll get everything you need to get well and go back to work. It’s not our role to block an employee’s entitlement to treatment and compensation.”

As important as proper management of injury claims may be, making the workplace safer and preventing injuries in the first place are equally important, Koss says. He believes it will take a “culture change” for safety to become a way of life at MTA – something that’s still in the making almost a year after the start of the “Safety’s First” program.

But, Koss also is optimistic that the program, originated by Dupont, ultimately will be as successful at MTA as it has been at New York’s MTA. “I worked with Dupont for five years in New York and I have a strong sense of what can be done and how it should be done in order to reach our goals.”

Among the first steps will be to set a timetable for updating safety action plans and to hold managers in the service sectors and elsewhere within the agency accountable for their implementation.

And, although Koss is now in charge of keeping MTA’s safety programs on target, he hasn’t neglected his own safety training. He recently attended the four-hour seminar and plans to attend the two-day executive session the very next time it’s offered.

“I want to compare what we saw in New York,” he says, “to what is being done here.”

[Back to MTA Report](#)

health, safety and related courses as an adjunct professor at several colleges in New York.

**Family:** Koss, 59, has been married 33 years to his wife, Serena, who has taught English and reading on Long Island, N.Y. They have two children, Randall, 24, an actuarial sciences graduate of Cornell University and now an actuary at Aetna Insurance Co. in Hartford, Conn., and a married daughter, Allison, 22, who earned a master’s degree in social work from Syracuse University and who now supervises a mental health clinic in Augusta, Ga.

**Interests:** The 1971 New York State chess champion, Koss once was ranked 20th in the nation and has played against chess master, Bobby Fischer, and others. He also is a tennis enthusiast.

## Vacation Turns Tragic When MTA Family's Home Burns

(Sept. 13, 2002) A vacation for two MTA employees was interrupted by tragedy, Sept. 3, when their home burned to the ground during a fierce brush fire that swept through Bouquet Canyon.

The fire, which also destroyed four other homes in the Leona Valley area, left Dave and Sandy Woods and their sons, Dave Jr. and Derek, homeless. The family currently is living in a hotel.

Dave Woods is a transit operations supervisor in the Bus Operations Control Center. Sandy Woods is a customer information agent in Metro Information.

To help the Woods family during their time of need, their co-workers have set up a trust fund -- Account No. 121289 -- at the MTA Credit Union. Employees who want to help the family can deposit money into the account.

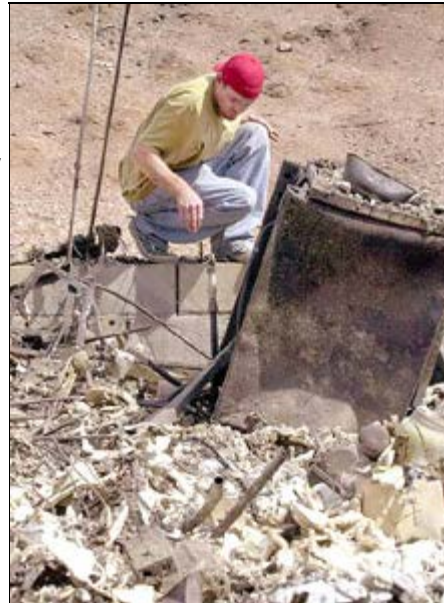
"The money will be used for food, clothing and the bare essentials to get them back on their feet," says Communications Officer Dave Ullrich of Metro Information who, along with Administrative Aide Carrie Morris set up the account. "They won't have to eat Red Cross food all the time."

The Woods' home and the others that burned, Sept. 3, had survived a smaller fire only eight days earlier. Fueled by dry brush and high temperatures, the blaze that destroyed the homes outraced firefighters who were fighting the flames in the narrow, wooded canyon between Santa Clarita and Palmdale.

Residents reported seeing a suspicious car in the area just before the fires started. The cause of the fires is under investigation.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

**Employees Establish Trust Fund** To help the Woods family during their time of need, their co-workers have set up a trust fund - Account No. 121289 - at the MTA Credit Union. Employees who want to help the family can deposit money into the account.



News service photo shows son D.J. Woods sorting through the ashes of the Woods home that was destroyed in the Bouquet Canyon fire Sept. 3.

## Metro South Bay Stresses Reading and Safety to Elementary Kids

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 13, 2002) The kids at John Ritter Elementary School in Los Angeles recently got two valuable tips from Metro South Bay – read more books and be safe around buses and trains.

General Manager Dana Coffey, along with Los Angeles Unified School District officials, spoke before an assembly of some 200 students, Sept. 6, about the value of reading and the importance of books.

Coffey shared with the audience of first through fifth graders and parents, her favorite Dr. Seuss books as part of the school's "One Million Words Campaign." The program challenges students this school year to read 25 books, the rough equivalent of a million words.

"You should also read the newspaper," said Coffey, who urged the students to take an interest in the news publications the children see in their homes and schools.

As part of her presentation Coffey and Communications Officer Vicky Woods recruited eight students to display for the audience posters containing the names of various newspaper sections.

Emphasizing the need to be safe, the Metro South Bay general manager passed out Metro bus and train safety checklists to the students.

"Don't stand too close to the curb and don't run alongside the bus," she said, warning the students to be careful while waiting for the Metro bus.

Second grader Maira Carrillo, whose favorite book is the "Gingerbread Man" said, "I can read four books a week and finish a million words." Classmate Astride Enriquez vowed to give up some television to reach her goal of a million words.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

PHOTO BY RICH MORALLO



Metro South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and Communications Officer Vicky Woods recruited eight students to display the names of various newspaper sections.

If the lease is approved by the MTA Board, this building at 680 Knox Street in LA will house the Metro South Bay service sector staff.



## **Metro South Bay Offices, Metro Rapid, Bike Access on Committee Agendas**

### [Committee Meeting Schedule](#)

(Sept. 17, 2002) MTA Board committees will consider some 40 issues, this week, including an office lease for the Metro South Bay sector, approval of a five-year plan to expand Metro Rapid service and expands bicycle access on Metro Rail.

The Finance and Budget Committee will be asked to approve a five-year lease of a 9,835 square foot building at 680 Knox Street in Los Angeles as offices for the Metro South Bay sector.

The building, set near the interchange of I-405 and I-110, is centrally located in the area served by Metro South Bay. It is less than two miles by road from South Bay Division 18 in Carson. The lease, totaling \$807,631 for five years, would begin in December 2002.

The property includes 6,665 square feet of enclosed and open office space, sufficient to house 25 to 30 employees. It includes 3,170 square feet of storage space. There's free parking for 40 vehicles.

### **Metro Rapid 5-year plan**

The Planning and Programming Committee will consider adopting a five-year plan for expanding Metro Rapid service to 24 new transit corridors by 2008. Regional funds totaling \$92.3 million would be set aside to build stations, provide bus signal priority and other communications equipment.

Plans call for adding two new Metro Rapid lines in December on South Broadway and Vermont Avenue.

Among the 24 corridors to receive Metro Rapid service are Van Nuys, Crenshaw, Santa Monica, Western, San Fernando-Lankershim, Long Beach Avenue, Manchester and Beverly.

When completed in 2008, the Metro Rapid expansion plan would provide a net increase of 15,646 annual revenue service hours.

### **Bicycle Permits**

The Operations Committee will consider adopting a new "Bike on Rail" policy that expands bicycle access on the Metro Rail system.

The revised policy would eliminate bicycle permits and shorten the time

periods when bikes are not permitted aboard Metro Rail trains. It also would permit bicycles during "reverse commutes" when trains are moving in a direction opposite the majority flow of commuter traffic.

Riders won't be allowed to bring bikes aboard trains bound for downtown LA between 6:30 and 8:30 a.m. or aboard trains headed to the suburbs between 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. Metro Green Line trains en route to Marine station in the mornings or Norwalk in the evenings will be off limits to bikes during those peak periods.

Currently, some 8,500 bikers hold MTA Cycle Express permits. The agency receives between 1,500 and 2,000 applications a year.

**Committee meetings are scheduled at the following times:**

- **Planning and Programming**, 1 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 18
- **Construction Committee**, CANCELLED
- **Finance and Budget**, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 19
- **Executive Management and Audit**, 10:30 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 19
- **Pasadena Gold Line Transition**, 11:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 19
- **Operations Committee**, 1 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 19
- **September Board Meeting**, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 26  
[Back to MTA Report](#)

## MTA, 'Operation Clean Sweep' Team with LA Galaxy Star to 'Kick Graffiti'

By JOSÉ UBALDO

(Sept. 17, 2002) MTA and Operation Clean Sweep, a program sponsored by the Los Angeles Department of Public Works, are teaming up with LA Galaxy soccer team star Cobi Jones to help deliver the message, "Kick Graffiti."

The purpose of the campaign, announced at a news conference this morning in El Sereno, is to raise community awareness about the blight caused by graffiti on buses and rail cars and in the city's neighborhoods.

"I am thrilled to be able to contribute my image to this campaign and my time to a cause that means a great deal to me and the Galaxy", said Jones. "I encourage creativity but hope that kids find another outlet to express themselves."

The campaign promotes the city's anti-graffiti hotline (800) 611-CITY and focuses on a major advertising campaign that includes 10 transit agencies in LA County: Metro Bus and Metro Rail, Torrance Transit, Culver City Bus, Norwalk Transit, Montebello Bus Lines, Foothill Transit, Santa Monica Big Blue Bus, Santa Clarita Transit, LADOT, Long Beach Transit. Other partners include the Los Angeles Police Department and Los Angeles Sheriff Department.

### Anti-graffiti hotline

In addition to the ads on buses and trains, an anti-graffiti hotline will provide information on graffiti removal, community cleanup, community grants, alley closures and an education program.

"Graffiti is much more than just an eyesore for the MTA. It costs us about \$5 million a year to replace windows and seats and repair other damages on Metro buses and trains," Deputy CEO John Catoe said during the media event.

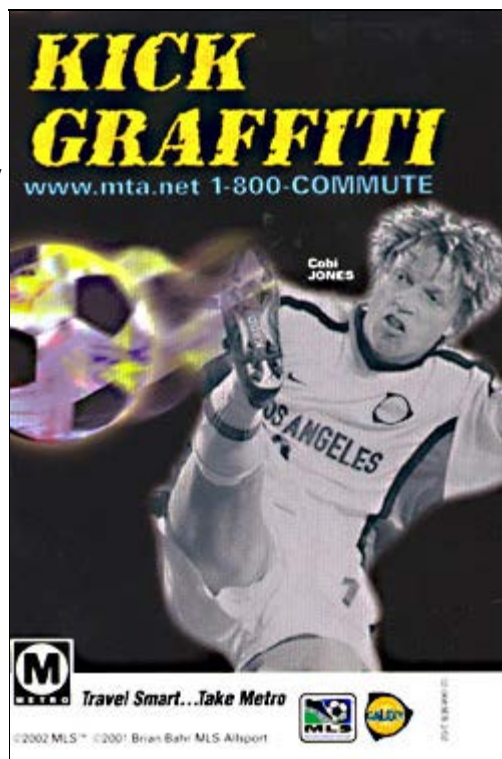
"I want to send a message loud and clear to the vandals who get their kicks destroying our equipment," said Catoe. "You're hurting your family, friends and neighbors who depend on public transportation. You will get caught and you will pay."

Last year the LAPD and LASD arrested nearly 700 people for vandalism on Metro buses and trains. So far this year, arrests have totaled nearly 600.

### 12 months' probation

Depending on the severity of each case, penalties for a first offense range from 12 months' summary probation to detention in a youth facility or up to 1,000 hours community service.

GRAPHIC DESIGN: ELIZABETH BAIN



Multiple offenders face a fine of \$450, five days in jail or community service (double the time given to a first offender, to be completed with a Caltrans crew).

Probation can result in multiple restrictions including curfew, mandatory school attendance and possible loss or delay of issuance of one's drivers license.

In 2001, MTA spent more than \$5 million for graffiti and vandalism abatement efforts including repair of etched bus and train car windows, torn seats and other interior and exterior damage to Metro buses and trains, as well as to Metro facilities.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Bus Operator Survey to Pinpoint On-Time Performance Problems

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 18, 2002) Why do some Metro Buses run late or ahead of schedule? Can bus operators improve their on-time performance? What should MTA management do? How do you define "on-time performance?"

These are the basic questions MTA hopes to answer through a confidential survey to be distributed at operating divisions later this month. All 4,400 bus operators will be asked to complete the three-part, 29-question survey. Management will use the survey statistics to guide improvements in on-time performance.

Nine employees drawn from Metro Operations and other departments took on the survey project as part of their Transportation Leadership Academy (TLA) training. They'll analyze the results this fall and issue a set of recommendations late this year. Survey results will be released to employees.



The TLA group will send copies of the survey to the operating divisions for distribution to all 4,400 bus operators. From left, seated, are Patricia Chen, Demetrius Jones and Rick Jager. Standing from left are George Trudeau, Edith Goff-Youngblood, Claudia Mino, Craig Smith and Collins Kalu. Below, Deputy CEO John Catoe, shown here with the sector general managers, supports the on-time initiative. From left are Metro San Gabriel Valley GM Jack Gabig, Metro Westside/Central GM Tracy Daly, Metro Gateway Cities GM Rich Rogers, Metro San Fernando Valley GM David Armijo, Catoe, and Metro South Bay GM Dana Coffey.



"The data will show us statistically what the problem is," says Collins Kalu of Corporate Safety. "The recommendations will be directed at that."

Perhaps the most important information the group hopes to learn from the survey is why some MTA buses run ahead of schedule. Operators call it running "hot" or "sharp."

### 25 percent of operators run 'hot'

"We know that about 25 percent of operators at any given time are running ahead of schedule," says George Trudeau of West Valley Division 8. "This creates major scheduling problems system-wide. We want to know what management can do to help."

Metro San Fernando Valley General Manager David Armijo, who has been charged with developing programs to improve on-time, on-street performance, sponsored the group's project.

"This survey will help us in developing meaningful programs to address our on-time performance," says Armijo. "I encourage all operators to fill out the survey honestly and to wear their 'On-Time' lapel pins proudly."

Before drafting the formal survey, the TLA group conducted face-to-face interviews last spring with some 100 operators.

"This survey is a refinement of the face-to-face interviews," says Rick Jager of Media Relations. "We want to find out how operators perceive on-time performance, whether they know what MTA's on-time policy is and whether there are any incentives that would encourage them to perform better."

### **Blessings of the UTU**

The group's work has the blessing of UTU General Chairman James Williams, who was kept informed throughout the process and reviewed an advance copy of the survey.

A representative at each operating division will be responsible for distributing surveys to every bus operator, according to Edith Goff-Youngblood of Customer and Vendor Services.

Operators will be asked to complete the surveys and drop them into locked "ballot boxes" located for a week at the divisions. Operators who complete the survey will receive a specially designed commemorative lapel pin.

"We may learn some things, not only about running late or running sharp, but also about the way we schedule our bus lines or about the layover zones we choose," says Trudeau. "A lot of things could come out of this survey that aren't directly asked, but from which you could infer that we have a problem."

---

EDITOR'S NOTE: Members of the TLA survey group not available during the interview for this story are Patricia Chen of Countywide Planning, Demetrius Jones of Operations Central Instructions, Daniel Ramirez of the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector Office, Craig Smith of South Bay Division 18 and Claudia Mino of Organizational Development and Training (OD&T). The group's instructor is Manuella Abrahamian of OD&T.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## He's No. 2 in Seniority at MTA



PHOTO BY VICTORIA WOODS

### Metro Bus Operator Jack Bailey

By VICTORIA WOODS

(Sept. 18 2002) He is known as the "second man in charge" at South Bay Division 18.

He's Metro Bus Operator Jack Bailey, a 43-year MTA veteran who is second in seniority as a bus operator only to his Division 18 colleague, Operator Donald Dube.

Dube's original hire date is Nov. 11, 1958. Bailey's is July 6, 1959. Coming up third in seniority is Operator Sterling Hampton of Arthur Winston Division 5, who was hired June 9, 1960, and now has 42 years' service.

A mentor/line instructor, Bailey is well known and admired by his co-workers. He has worked in numerous divisions, was an acting TOS for three years in the late 1980s and was nominated for Operator of the Year in 1990. And he enjoys his job.

Not only is Bailey known as the second man in charge, he also is known as the motorcycle man.

He rides to work and on the weekends often rides to Santa Monica or to Big Bear in the San Bernardino Mountains. He also has ridden to Yosemite, where he spent a week, and to Oregon, where he stayed for eight days.

Jack Bailey doesn't ride alone; he rides with his retired friend, Pate Ernest. They began riding about 10 years ago and Bailey says, "Pate and I have been up every winding road you can imagine."

Does Bailey plan to retire soon? "I enjoy

being at work," he says. "I also enjoy the riders who board my bus. Although I could retire, I prefer to work."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## The Nose Knows



**Meet LAPD's Bomb-Sniffing Dog Tosca**

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 19, 2002) She's cute, smart and well-trained – the newest addition to LAPD's Transit Group Team.

Tosca is a seven-year-old Belgium Malinois, trained to sniff for bombs and explosives.

She has been training with LAPD Officer Don Bender for six years. They have been working with the Transit Group for about a week now, conducting random checks at Metro Red Station and on the trains.

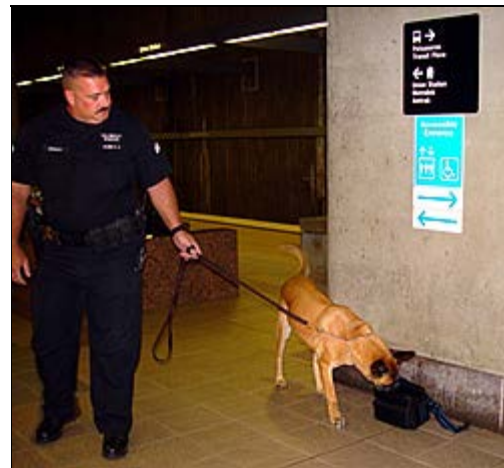
Bender says Tosca is always excited about working. It's hard for her to stay in one place. So when a train came to a stop one recent morning, Tosca led the way onto the train.

As they made their way up and down the aisle, Tosca stopped and sniffed a woman's purse. Although she was surprised, the woman had a smile for the dog. Satisfied the purse held no explosives, Tosca moved on to sniff other people.

"We do this to increase security so we can make the passengers feel safe," says Bender.

This duo has also worked local airports, checking for bombs in the cargo and luggage areas, as well as on planes.

"We haven't found anything suspicious here at the MTA and I hope we never find anything," says Bender.



LAPD Officer Don Bender accompanies Tosca during a training exercise as she sniffs for explosives at a Metro Red Line station. Below, Bender and Tosca conduct a random check on a subway train.



[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Triple Play: Division Celebrations Mark Service Sector Openings

By ALISHA GOMEZ

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** (Sept. 19, 2003) With the Sept. 1 opening of three new service sectors, general managers have been sponsoring teambuilding events for operating division and sector staff personnel. Metro.net reporter Alisha Gomez made the rounds, Sept. 13, of several employee events.



Communication Manager Barbara Burns helps in the serving line at Venice Division.



South Bay Division managers take a moment to pose with General Manager Dana Coffey.



General Manager Rich Rogers mingles with employees at the sector celebration at Crossroads Depot Division.

### Metro Westside/ Central Comes to Venice Division

Venice Division welcomed the Westside/Central Service Sector into its small and close family at a celebration barbecue last Friday.

"We're trying to get maintenance more directly involved with transportation," Division 6 Maintenance Manager Bruce Buck said.

"Fortunately at Division 6, it's worked because we work so closely together. It's a smaller division and we want to bring that vision to everyone else that we move as one team."

"The sector staff is very friendly," said Operator Angelique Franklin. "They have introduced themselves and talked with us."

"It's great way to get know the sector," said Transportation Manager Michael Funnye. "We have a hand-in-hand working relationship and we are always going to try to keep it that way."

Mechanic and ATU shop steward Manuel Guerra was pleased with the experience.

"We're having a great time," he said. "It's like a family here and we are going to include the sector in that. They support a lot of divisions and

### Metro South Bay Event at South Bay Division

For South Bay Division , the sector event was all about team spirit.

"We're pulling together better," said General Manager Dana Coffey. "We've already built the team concept here. It's just maintaining and continuing to grow what's already existing. I hope to expand that to the entire South Bay sector."

"I think everybody here is pretty comfortable with the sector. They like the way it's going," said Operator and UTU shop steward Jimi Greene. "The division is functioning now at an all-time high. The morale is good and that's important because the morale had been down for so long."

"We cannot do everything ourselves. Transportation can't get it down alone; maintenance can't get it done alone," said Assistant Transportation Manager Craig Smith. "We have to work as a team."

And the sector has already begun to show support for the divisions.

### Metro Gateway Cities Celebrates at Crossroads Depot Division

At Crossroads Depot Division , which marked the opening of Metro Gateway Cities, both sector staff and division employees – especially DAC Volunteers – are looking forward to working together.

"The whole idea of the sector is to be community-based," said sector Communications Manager Dave Hershenson. "We are so grateful for the opportunity to have the DAC volunteers, who have the passion and knowledge to help us with community outreach."

"The DAC volunteers have a lot of ideas and experience in working with the community," said Communications Officer Cathy Manzo. "We'll learn from them and with Rich Roger's support, provide them with all the resources they'll need."

"It's great that they have had a morning, noon and evening event," said DAC volunteer Art Aguilar. "For me, it shows that the sector does care about the other shifts and wants to give them the equal treatment."

"Our sector general manager is over here on a regular basis and now his staff is getting to know the division," said Division 2 Transportation Manager

they support us. Our rapport with the sector will just keep growing."

Westside/Central Service Sector Tracy Daly also was at the event, talking with employees about the goals and focus of the sectors.

"The sector is here to serve the public, to be supportive of each other," Daly said. "There are a lot of good ideas that we need to follow up on, and they need a place to go, and that's what we're here for. And it all goes to enhancing our service and our work place."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

"The sector general managers give us the freedom to do what we need to do," said Maintenance Manager Ken Matsuno.

"I think what Dana has done is made this a seamless change," Smith said. "It hasn't adversely affected anyone."

Diane Frasier. "We look at Division 2 as one team and the sector will be incorporated into that."

"This event is not so much to introduce ourselves, but to recognize our employees, to show our appreciation to them and give them the opportunity to see who we are," said General Manager Rich Rogers.

"As we move forward, we want to make sure Division 1, Division 2 and the sector staff are all part of the same team," said Rogers.



[Huey-Ling Leung](#)

## **Just Helping a Customer Can Be Reward Enough**

(Sept. 20, 2002) Sometimes it can be worth it just to make the effort for a customer in need, as Huey-Ling Leung of MTA Payroll recently learned.

When her office phone rang early one recent morning, she was surprised to hear a man's voice speaking in her native tongue, Chinese. The man, Mr. Wong, had forgotten his bag aboard a Metro Bus the previous evening.

In the bag were his passport, his airline ticket back to Hong Kong the next day, his belongings and about \$500 in cash. He spoke very little English and made an urgent appeal to Leung for help.

Leung sprang into action. She called MTA Security. She called the operating division responsible for the bus. She called the Lost and Found offices of MTA and First Transit.

"I left my phone number with all the places where the bag could possibly be found," Leung says. No one called her back to report finding Mr. Wong's bag and when she tried to reach him, he had gone.

Then, last Friday, Leung was eating lunch at her desk when the phone rang. A familiar voice spoke to her in Chinese. It was Mr. Wong.

"Where are you?" she asked. "Hong Kong," he replied.

Although it was 3 a.m. on the other side of the wide Pacific, Mr. Wong had called to say, "Thank you."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



## MTA Transit Golf Club League Play

by GEORGE PEREZ

### Transit Golf Club: An Update on Recent Tournaments

- [Yucaipa Valley Golf Club](#)
- [Old General Golf Course](#)
- [El Rivino Golf Course](#)
- [Los Serranos South Golf Course](#)
- [Knollwood Country Club](#)
- [Camarillo Springs Country Club](#)

By GEORGE PEREZ

(Sept. 20, 2002) The Transit Golf Club is still very active and has grown to 80 members. The absence of letters to this page had made some think that the club was no more. On the other hand it has been a very active golf year.

The March 2002 Los Serranos Tournament was the last tournament I reported on, since then we have played at:

**Yucaipa Valley Golf Club.** On that day we were greeted by very cold and rainy weather, so cold that many of our members wanted to quit. The sun finally came out and warmed up everyone. It seems that every year we have a day that has severe inclement weather.

**Old General Golf Course.** In May, we played the Old General golf course in Riverside, just off the 215. This is a favorite of almost all the members. At last year's tournament, we were visited by the "Bermuda Triangle." This year, the club was blessed with good weather, sunny and warm. The member participation came to 60 players and guests. This course will be on our next year's calendar; so look for it.

**El Rivino Golf Course.** In June, we played El Rivino Country Club in Riverside. This is probably the most player-friendly course we play but many players get fooled. The first hole is a 639 yard par 6 with a lake on the left side and out of bounds on the right. The tendency here is to take a mighty rip at the ball, and that is what the developer had in mind. The ball usually goes in the water or way right and maybe O.B. That is not the way you want to start a round of golf. There are three holes in which you have to hit across a very large lake. This lake started the traditional "Tin Cup" Award. If you saw the movie, then you know what I mean. One of our members took a nasty "14" on this hole.

**Los Serranos South Golf Course.** In July, the TGC stormed into the Los Serranos South course. This course is used to qualify for the LA Open, the Pepsi Tour, the Pub Links President Pro tournament and several other prestigious events. When our club plays there, the staff has always made it a point to provide the best service possible for our members.

Los Serranos Tournament Director Judy Ivensen has made it a personal responsibility to assure that we get the best for our money and we really appreciate her efforts. Los Serranos always boasted about the eucalyptus trees that lined many of the fairways. Sadly, bugs attacked them and many died. The management decided to have most of the old trees cut down. The course has a totally different look now, not that it made it easier, but now you have to deal with a few more sand traps to make up for the lost trees.

**Knollwood Country Club.** August took us to Knollwood Country Club. The membership really loved the golf course and asked me to re-book for next year. With temperature in the low 100s, a few of our members suffered from the heat and could not finish the round.

**Camarillo Springs Country Club.** In October, we will play Camarillo Springs Country Club as a regular tournament and our Tournament of Champions playoff. The first three point leaders in each flite will play off with one another to determine who will be 1st, 2nd and 3rd for 2002. The executive officers also voted to have the Club Champion selected after this tournament. The Club Champion will be selected by using the lowest gross average of seven tournaments. The officers believe the Club Champion should be our best player.

I look forward to announcing the names of the 2002 TGC Winners and Club Champion in our next update.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## Bus Operators' Mirror Suggestion Reflected on NABI Buses

- Division 1 operators asked for a better way to monitor passenger boarding from the driver's seat.  
See [metro.net report June 20](#).

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 20, 2002) Safety comes first at Central City Division 1, especially when it comes to boarding passengers onto Metro Buses.

To help ensure safe passenger boarding, Division 1 maintenance personnel recently completed a special mirror installation project suggested by their bus operator colleagues.

In meetings earlier this year with Gateway Cities General Manager Rich Rogers, some operators had suggested that, for improved passenger safety, interior spot mirrors should be added to MTA's new NABI buses.

The operators said they used the mirrors to monitor passengers entering the front door of a bus. Analysts had previously concluded that, since the NABI's are low-floor coaches and have no steps, the mirrors weren't needed.

But, based on operator feedback, Rogers authorized a project to install the mirrors, and recently maintenance personnel completed installing spot mirrors on all 174 Division 1 NABI buses.

Other operating divisions also are expected in the near future to begin installing the mirrors on NABI buses and all new low-floor bus procurements will include the mirrors as standard equipment.

"This thoughtful suggestion from our bus operators, and the quick installation work by our mechanics, will enhance passenger safety during boarding," says Rogers. "It's these kinds of customer-oriented ideas from our front-line personnel that will help us continually improve service."

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Placed above and to the right of the driver's seat, spot mirrors are positioned so an operator can look up and see passengers boarding. A mechanic can install a mirror in about 15 minutes.



## **Division 18 Mechanics Place 7th at International Bus Roadeo**

(Sept. 24, 2002) The results from the 2002 International Bus Roadeo in Las Vegas are in and the news is good for MTA's maintenance team.

The maintenance champs from South Bay Division 18 – Luke Logan, Javier Soria and Mina Ros – placed in the Top Ten, seventh out of a field of 52 competitors from around the U.S. and Canada.



MTA's representatives at the 2002 International Bus Roadeo, shown here after taking first place at the Metro Bus Roadeo in June, are, from left, South Bay Division mechanics Luke Logan, Javier Soria and Mina Ros, and, at center right, Los Angeles Division Metro Bus Operator Daniel Keosababian.

Meanwhile, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Daniel Keosababian placed 46th among the 85 transit drivers in the event. The International Bus Roadeo is sponsored annually by the American Public Transit Association.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

## West Hollywood Division 7 Keeps Energy Alive with Sector Staff

BY ALISHA GOMEZ

(Sept. 24, 2002) An energetic crowd of employees from West Hollywood Division 7 welcomed Metro Westside/Central General Manager Tracy Daly and her staff, last Friday, with a celebration hosted by the division.

"This event is a really good way to get to know the sector," said Operator Ana Ventura. "Division 7 is fun and friendly, and Tracy Daly will definitely fit into the atmosphere here."

"We have a unique level of energy at Division 7," Daly said. "It really shows how everyone works together between maintenance and transportation, and now we have some mutual goals to focus on. We want to keep our employees safe and continue accident reductions. So that's really going to pull us together and we're looking forward to celebrating those accomplishments this year."

Division 7 Transportation Manager Ron Reedy is proud to be a part of this division.

"Of the 20 lines that are ranked the hardest working and having the highest number of passengers, Division 7 makes up seven," Reedy said. "It's a very hard-working division with a lot of dedicated operators."

Everyone works together to make the division run smoothly.

### Resolve problems quickly

"Ron Reedy and I work very closely together," said Division 7 Maintenance Manager Ron Whitney. "When problems or issues arise, we talk to each other about them and resolve them quickly. We feel strongly that we're working together to make this division operate."

In addition to celebrating the sector, Division 7 employees also created a dedication to Sept. 11th by posting a board of facts from that day and using red, white and blue to decorate the recreation area.

"Of course we're here to celebrate the sector," Operator Arlene Mills said. "But we also wanted to remember all those who died that day and think about the reality that this could have happened in Los Angeles, to us. So we kept our decorations in red, white and blue as a dedication for all the people of Sept. 11th."

"I think what you will find is that where our country has a reason to pull together, we in our smaller communities – and the division is a smaller community – are also pulling together," Daly said.

PHOTOS BY ALISHA GOMEZ



General Manager Tracy Daly, service attendants Steve Barber and Oscar Blane and Transportation Manager Ron Reedy smile in front of the big welcome sign for the Westside/Central Service Sector staff.



Mechanic Allen Anderson keeps the party going on the grill.



Service Attendants Nakisha Washington and Gail Blane take a moment to smile for the camera after feeding a hungry crowd.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Transportation Manager Ron Reedy and Maintenance Manager Ron Whitney gladly welcome General Manager Tracy Daly to West Hollywood Division 7.



Operators, Alex Cerventes (blue shirt), Ana Ventura, Herbert Guillen (red shirt) and Rodolfo Cortez (black shirt) take time to relax and have some fun.

## Seniors and Kids were MTA's Audience at Weekend Events

By RICH MORALLO

Metro South Bay spent last weekend in Torrance distributing transit information to two special audiences – senior citizens and children.

The volunteers participated in a Saturday health fair at the Salvation Army headquarters and in the 10th Annual Fall Boutique sponsored by the Torrance Parks and Recreation Department.

"At the health fair, we handled a variety of transit questions such as where seniors can buy the regional EZpass," said volunteer Margaret Morallo, "while at the fall boutique we were handing out safety bus and train coloring books and crayons to youngsters."

At the Salvation Army health fair, senior citizens received medical check-ups and researched available health and wellness services. The Metro South Bay table contained information on bus and train safety checklists and Metro Art post cards.

"Those cards are very attractive," said G. Lee Kellogg, who handles senior care issues in the community. "I didn't realize MTA had artwork at each train station,"

At the Fall Boutique, families and children roamed a Cultural Arts Center jam-packed with handcrafted goods, one-of-a-kind gifts, holiday presents and snacks.

At the MTA table, they picked up Metro bags and a variety of safety promotional items, including a mini-highlighter imprinted with "Metro South Bay - Safety's 1<sup>st</sup>."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

PHOTOS BY RICH MORALLO



Many Torrance residents at the fall boutique liked the "fall colored" Metro bags.



Neighborhood families encountered Metro promotional items at the Salvation Army health fair.



Youngsters picked up bags for the safety coloring books and crayons they picked up at the Metro South Bay table.



Mayor James Hahn is proposing a motion to designate the Metro Blue Line's Pico station to the memory of Los Angeles Lakers broadcaster Francis "Chick" Hearn, who died Aug. 2.

## **Governance Councils, Memorial to Chick Hearn on Board Agenda**

(Sept. 25, 2002) Motions establishing service sector governance councils and a motion to designate a Metro Rail station in honor of a legendary local sports announcer are on the MTA Board's agenda for consideration Thursday.

Mayor James Hahn is proposing a motion to designate the Metro Blue Line's Pico station to the memory of Los Angeles Lakers broadcaster Francis "Chick" Hearn, who died Aug. 2. Over four decades beginning in 1965, Hearn broadcast 3,338 consecutive Lakers games – a record that ended last year when he underwent heart surgery.

"Chick Hearn was more than an announcer," Hahn's motion says. "He was a pioneer, an innovator, a promoter, a friend, a father and a husband. He will be sorely missed."

The Board also is expected to consider two motions, items 42 and 43, to create service sector governance councils and approve council by-laws.

The proposed governance council policy would help define the relationship between the Board and the councils for bus operations service planning and scheduling.

The governance councils are intended to improve bus service, increase agency accessibility and responsiveness to the public and maintain an employee-supportive work environment.

They are expected to localize control, provide a single point of contact for route-level service issues, streamline decision-making and support MTA policies, plans and safety initiatives.

The MTA Board would appoint members to the governance councils based on nominations submitted by a coalition of local government entities. Members should represent "a broad spectrum of interests and geographic areas of the sector."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## Orange County Grand Jury Visits MTA



Members of the Orange County Grand Jury visited MTA, Sept. 20, for briefings on Metro Rail and the agency's rail safety education efforts.

In the accompanying photo, Grand Jury members listen to MTA Schedules Manager Bruce Shelburne of Rail Operations, who provided an overview of the Metro Rail system.

The Grand Jury toured MTA facilities, visiting the Metro Red and Blue Lines and the Metro Gold Line alignment. They also received a Metro South Bay Community Relations briefing on MTA safety education outreach activities in Los Angeles neighborhoods.

The group, escorted by Orange County Transportation Authority CEO Art Leahy, also received project updates from Director of Rail Operations Jesse Diaz, Rail Transit Operations Supervisor Ricardo Perez, Planning Manager Callier Beard and Senior Communications Officer John Mazarella.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Keeps on going and going and going...



Metro Rapid Bus at Universal City Metro Rail Station. PHOTO BY LUIS INZUNZA

## **Board Approves Speed-Up of Metro Rapid Expansion Plan**

By ED SCANNELL

(Sept. 26, 2002) The MTA Board of Directors today unanimously approved acceleration of the planned expansion of the Metro Rapid Bus Program.

The 24-line expansion, slated to begin in December with new lines on Vermont Avenue and South Broadway, would be completed by 2008.

"The two Metro Rapid bus lines that have been in operation on the Wilshire/Whittier and Ventura Boulevard corridors for the last two years have been unqualified success stories," said Board Chairman Hal Bernson. "We are stepping up the expansion of Metro Rapid to bring the benefits of this innovative program to more L.A. County residents as soon as possible."

Today's Board action also included earmarking future regional funds to complete the expansion. CEO Roger Snoble was directed to negotiate agreements with the local jurisdictions in each Metro Rapid corridor to expedite the expansion plan.

### **Funding of \$110.5 million**

Total one-time capital costs for implementing the entire program are estimated at \$110.5 million. The funds will be used to construct 24 corridors with 356 miles of bus signal priority in 34 cities and 11 Los Angeles County unincorporated communities. The plan will include 779 stations, all with "next trip" displays.

In addition to Vermont Avenue and South Broadway, the corridors selected for the five-year Metro Rapid expansion plan are Florence, Van Nuys, Soto, Crenshaw-Rossmore, Pico, Santa Monica, Hawthorne, Long Beach Ave., Hollywood-Fairfax-Pasadena, Western, Beverly, Vernon-La Cienega, Atlantic, Central, San Fernando-Lankershim, West Olympic, Garvey-Chavez, Manchester, San Fernando (south), Sepulveda (south), Torrance-Long Beach and Lincoln.

The Metro Rapid expansion plan would provide a net increase of 15,646 annual revenue hours over the pre-existing service levels in those corridors.

The Metro Rapid Program was initiated in June 2000 with two demonstration lines on the 26-mile Wilshire/Whittier and 16-mile Ventura Boulevard corridors. Since that time, total bus ridership on the two corridors has increased by nearly 40 percent, with one third of the increase coming from passengers new to public transit.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



### **Board Approves 'Chick Hearn' Station on Metro Blue Line**

(Sept. 26, 2002) The legend of Los Angeles Lakers sportscaster Chick Hearn will live on at the Metro Blue Line Pico station.

The MTA Board has designated the station, which Lakers fans use to get to and from the Staples Center, to the memory of the long-time broadcaster, who died Aug. 2.

In his motion, Mayor James Hahn noted that, "By virtue of his announcing abilities, Chick Hearn was able to transport fans to courtside seats of the Los Angeles Lakers' games by radio over 40 years."

In honor of Hearn's achievements and of his contributions to the game of basketball, the MTA Board instructed MTA staff to immediately designate the Pico station of the Metro Blue Line as the "Chick Hearn" station.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

## **MTA Expands Bike Access on Metro Rail, Effective Oct. 29**

By RICK JAGER

(Sept. 26, 2002) The MTA Board of Directors has approved a plan to expand bicycle access on Metro Rail trains to aid patrons who are bike commuters. The policy takes effect, Oct. 29.

"Linking bicycle transportation to transit is beneficial to the region and adds flexibility to longer trips taken," said Board Chairman Hal Bernson. "MTA remains committed to providing transportation choices that replace automobile trips and create a more bike-friendly system."

Under the revised MTA Bike on Rail Policy adopted by the Board, patrons using bicycles will no longer need a permit to board Metro Rail trains.

In addition, the hours of bike restrictions on Metro Rail trains will be reduced by one hour in the morning peak periods and two hours in the afternoon peak periods.

The new hours during which patrons may not take bikes on Metro Rail trains are 6:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Current hours are 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

### **Bikes OK during reverse commute**

Also under the new policy, MTA will allow bikes on Metro Blue and Green Line trains during the reverse peak-hour commute when trains are moving in a direction opposite the majority flow of commuter traffic. The policy also will apply to the Metro Gold Line when it opens in mid-2003.

"This is a big step in the right direction for MTA that will help make Los Angeles County an even better place to bicycle," said Ron Milam, executive director of the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition.

Bicycles will be allowed on the Metro Red Line at all times between Wilshire/Vermont and North Hollywood, or between Wilshire/Vermont and Wilshire Western. But, they will not be permitted on the subway between Wilshire/Vermont and Union Station during peak hours of operation.

"A significant step has been made by MTA in fulfilling one of the agency's Long Range Plan goals to increase bicycle ridership by improving the connections between bikes and transit," said MTA Bikeway Project Manager Lynn Goldsmith. "This is something we want to encourage more and more in our future planning."

MTA in the past has required patrons boarding Metro Rail trains to have a permit. Some 8,500 bikers hold MTA Cycle Express permits. The agency receives between 1,500 and 2,000 applications for bike permits a year.

[Back to MTA Report](#)