

Walking the Line - Safety message goes gold along the Marmion Way corridor of the Metro Gold Line opening this summer. PHOTO BY ALICIA GOMEZ



Fast-Paced, Productive and Precedent-Setting, 2002 Will Make MTA History

By BILL HEARD, Editor

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(Jan. 14, 2003) It's fair to say that the year 2002 – fast-paced, productive and precedent-setting as it was – will be recorded as one of the most significant in MTA history.

The agency set a new direction with the inauguration of five service sectors charged with bringing bus service closer to the people of the communities MTA serves. Launched in July, the new sectors quickly began making improvements in customer service.

MTA also kicked off an aggressive "Safety's First" program that touches every employee from the frontline operators and mechanics to the executive office staff. Statistics already are showing a drop in on-the-job injuries and a reduction in the number of Workers' Compensation claims.

MTA played a key role in uniting local transit services to create a countywide monthly pass – EZ Transit Pass – and partnered with the LA Area Chamber of Commerce to host the county's first-ever transportation summit. *Mobility 21* participants called for Los Angeles County to get its fair share of state and federal funding.

The year also was made just a little sweeter when two Metro Rail operators – Tu Phan and Robert Rodriguez – won the 2002 International Rail Roadeo in Baltimore. It was MTA's first victory in the prestigious competition.

Here's a look back at the top MTA stories of 2002:

January

- Deputy CEO John Catoe formally inaugurated MTA's Safety's First campaign with an event at North Los Angeles Division 3. Also

participating were UTU General Chairman James Williams, Local 1607 President Chairman Rick Ortega and Vice Chairman Joe White.

- MTA made public the final environmental report on a planned six-mile extension of the Metro Gold Line through East Los Angeles.
- The California Public Utilities Commission halted construction at 21 Metro Gold Line rail crossings along a five-mile stretch of track and ordered a safety and environmental review.
- MTA announced it would continue to implement the federal Consent Decree, but planned an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Gerald Francis, a former rail executive with Dallas Area Rapid Transit, was selected as general manager for Metro Rail.
- Caltrans and MTA announced the start of a \$4.5 million congestion study. The Ventura Freeway Corridor Improvement Study will cover about 40 miles from Moorpark Freeway in Thousand Oaks to the Harbor Freeway in downtown Los Angeles.



^ Deputy CEO John Catoe inaugurates Safety's First campaign at North Los Angeles Division 3 event.

February

- The MTA Board voted to certify the final environmental report of the Metro Gold Line through East Los Angeles.
- MTA hires the first three service sector general managers: OCTA executive David Armijo for the San Fernando Valley; Montebello Bus Lines executive Jack Gabig for the San Gabriel Valley and Transportation Concepts executive Rich Rogers for the Gateway Cities service sector.
- Construction crews completed installation of four CNG fueling stations at Crossroads Depot Division 2 – an important milestone for MTA in its conversion to alternative fuel vehicles.
- MTA issued the final environmental report for a planned 14-mile Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) “busway” between Warner Center and the Metro Red Line North Hollywood station.

March

- A Superior Court judge ordered Tutor-Saliba-Perini (TSP), its various entities, and bonding companies to pay \$21.7 million in attorney fees MTA incurred in a lawsuit related to TSP's role in building the Metro Red Line. The decision brought the judgment against TSP to \$63 million.
- The U.S. Supreme Court declined to consider MTA's appeal of the Consent Decree. The agency had sought a clarification of how bus load factor compliance should be measured and



MTA officials launch the next generation of clean-fuel buses from San Gabriel Valley Division 9 event.

the federal court's role in solving transportation problems.

- The first of 176 new clean-fuel buses were fueled and dispatched from MTA's El Monte bus division. MTA's 1,900 CNG buses is the largest such transit fleet in the nation.
- MTA kicked off the operating division Local Safety Committees (LSC) as an important element of the Safety's First campaign.

April

- The MTA Board took a major step toward providing seamless countywide transit service by approving a regional pass program. MTA and 12 municipal operators cooperated in the EZ Transit Pass program.
- MTA completed a construction project to modify the structure of the Metro Green Line tracks at the Harbor Freeway station. The job was finished a week earlier than the planned 23 days.
- MTA joined in celebrating the opening of the Alameda Corridor project. The agency provided \$358.7 million for preliminary engineering and construction for the project.

May

- The MTA Board voted to support establishment of service sector governance councils of up to nine members.
- Carson Division 18 Transportation Manager Dana Coffey is named general manager of the South Bay service sector. Tracy Daly, a Metrolink executive, is selected as general manager for the Westside/Central sector.
- MTA hires its first "injured workers advocate to be a neutral third party in the investigation and resolution of Workers' Compensation claims.
- The California Public Utilities Commission voted to allow construction to resume on the Metro Gold Line to Pasadena after addressing concerns about the safety of 21 rail crossings.
- The MTA Board adopted a \$2.6 billion balanced budget that includes \$126 million less in spending during FY 2003, yet delivers more bus and rail service.



^MTA officials break through a celebration banner aboard a Metro Rapid Bus to signal the official opening of the \$34.6 million overpass. Construction that began in 1999 includes the Universal City Station Bus Plaza, additional parking lots and the widening of Lankershim Boulevard.

June

- MTA's Eastside Light Rail Project reached another milestone when the Federal Transit Administration signed a Record of Decision certifying that the project had satisfied all federal environmental guidelines.
- The 101 Freeway overpass adjacent to the Universal City Metro Rail station opened after two and a half years of construction – with no lost-time injuries – an accomplishment any engineer could be proud of.
- North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Daniel Keosababian won the 2002 MTA Bus Rodeo driving competition. South Bay Division 18 mechanics Luke Logan, Javier Soria and Mina Ros won the maintenance competition.
- Metro Rail operators Tu Phan and Robert Rodriguez win the 2002 International Rail Rodeo in Baltimore. They competed against rail operators from around the U.S. and Canada.

July

- MTA rolled out its first two service sectors to serve the San Gabriel Valley and the San Fernando Valley. The sectors are designed to improve bus service, reliability, customer satisfaction and to enhance travel opportunities for MTA patrons.
- Los Angeles City Councilman Hal Bernson was elected MTA Board chairman.
- Deputy CEO John Catoe announced that MTA no longer will hire individuals with certain criminal records, no matter how long ago the convictions occurred.
- MTA's Metro Motion cable TV show was aired for the first time on two local channels. The 30-minute show is intended to fill the information gaps and encourage viewers to try public transit.
- MTA's progress report to the special master overseeing compliance with the federal Consent Decree said the agency continued to make progress, but needs higher capacity buses, exclusive busways and more Metro Rapid bus lines to improve service.

Average weekday boardings on the Metro Blue Line soared to 73,115.

- A survey of 35,000 Metro Bus riders found that seven out of 10 customers (69 percent) agree that Metro Bus service is improving on a number of fronts. The survey was the largest customer satisfaction survey ever conducted by MTA.



MTA Board Chairman Hal Bernson, CEO Roger Snoble and Deputy CEO John Catoe join officials from all participating transit agencies at the Gateway news conference, which symbolized the significant step the region is taking toward seamless transit service and a Universal Fare System.

August

- MTA and 12 municipal operators joined forces to launch "EZ Transit Pass," the county's first regional transit pass program. The first passes were sold for use in September.
- The first rail car was placed on the Metro Gold Line tracks in South Pasadena, marking a significant milestone for the Metro Rail system.
- MTA launched a major effort to reduce Workers' Compensation fraud with a series of talks by Deputy District Attorney Tom Higgins at MTA Headquarters and the operating divisions.



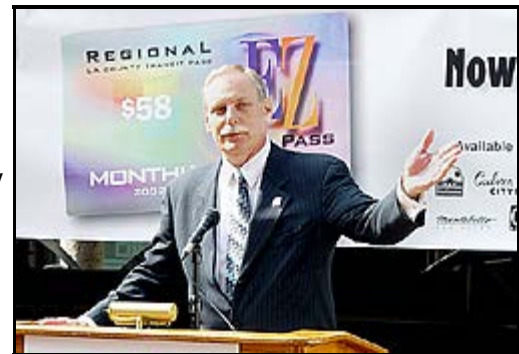
Metro Rapid Bus at Universal City Station.

September

- The MTA Board approved acceleration of the Metro Rapid Bus Program. The 24-line expansion is to be completed by 2008.
- The MTA Board adopted a policy and bylaws for the governance councils. The policy gave the councils authority for bus operations service planning and scheduling.
- The MTA Board designated the Metro Blue Line's Pico station near the Staples Center to the memory of long-time Lakers announcer Chick Hearn.

October

- CEO Roger Snoble completed his first year at MTA. He spearheaded efforts to bring MTA service closer to the customer through the service sector concept, to improve bus service and expand service offerings, among many other initiatives.
- Hollywood celebrated MTA's announcement that an extra hour would be added to Metro Red and Blue Line nighttime service.
- The MTA Board approved the purchase of a "multi-media mobile theater" MTA will use to enhance rail safety education. The mobile unit will be deployed at community events, schools and other venues.



CEO Roger Snoble



Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky addresses *Mobility 21* conference. Some 400 elected officials along with business, labor, transit and community leaders attended the day-long transportation summit meeting in downtown LA.

November

- MTA asked Special Master Donald Bliss to "remedy the load factor component" of the federal Consent Decree and to provide guidance to MTA and the Bus Riders Union on how to interpret the decree's load factor

requirements.

- MTA began testing trains on the Metro Gold Line, marking the occasion with a media event and ride from the Mission Street station to the Fillmore station.
- MTA joined with the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce to host Mobility 21, the county's first-ever transportation summit. Participants called for more state and federal funding for transportation improvements to combat the growing congestion that threatens the region's quality of life and economic vitality.
- The MTA Board approved the selection of seven individuals to serve on the Metro South Bay service sector governance council.

December

- MTA and other public agencies marked the opening of a 2,000-foot-long overpass near the Imperial/Rosa Parks Metro Blue Line station. The \$20 million bridge lifts Imperial Highway traffic over Wilmington Avenue and the Metro Blue Line and Union Pacific tracks.
- LA Mayor James Hahn helped inaugurate two new Metro Rapid bus lines: the 11.9-mile Vermont Line 754 and the 10.5-mile South Broadway Line 745.
- MTA opened bids for construction of the Metro Rapid Transitway, the east-west busway that will connect the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station and Warner Center in the San Fernando Valley.



Mayor James Hahn inaugurates the new Metro Rapid service on Vermont Avenue at a Wednesday morning news conference.

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