

## Metro Report Archives

### July 2003 Articles

#### [MTA Report](#)

#### [Bulletin Board](#)

- [Gold Line Opening Brings Flood of \(Favorable\) E-Mails](#) (July 31, 2003) On Thursday morning, Passenger Relations Manager Tom Horne counted an e-mail backlog of 114 and more were arriving hourly.
- [Fuel Cell Bus Cruises the Streets in a Test of Abilities](#) (July 31, 2003) The most technologically advanced bus to hit the streets of Los Angeles is now on loan to MTA from the Air Quality Management District and ISE Research Corp. in San Diego.
- [GM David Armijo Looks Back at SF Valley Sector's First Year](#) (July 30, 2003) Officially launched in July 2002, the San Fernando Valley and San Gabriel Valley sectors were the first of five to open for business. Under MTA's new service concept, the sectors were designed to improve bus service, reliability and customer satisfaction.
- [CEO Praises Employees for Metro Gold Line Startup](#) (July 29, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble had words of praise, Tuesday morning, for those who got the Metro Gold Line system up and running and for all who volunteered for last weekend's grand opening.
- ['Squeeze' was the Word as Riders Packed Gold Line Trains](#) (July 29, 2003) In fact, "squeeze" was the operative word both Saturday and Sunday as the Metro Gold Line played to SRO crowds anxious to be counted among those who would be first to ride Southern California's newest rail line.
- [Moments from the Gold Line's Golden Weekend](#) (July 29, 2003) MTA.net visits Chinatown, Highland Park and Memorial Park community festivities.
- [VIPs, Pyrotechnics Welcome Opening of Metro Gold Line](#) (July 25, 2003) The future arrived at Union Station in a burst of pyrotechnics, Friday morning, when a gleaming white train burst through a large "Discover Gold" banner to the applause of several hundred officials, MTA staff and guests.
- [MTA Returns to TV Advertising with Gold Line Opening](#) (July 25, 2003) A series of TV ads created by the MTA Communications department will begin appearing on four local TV stations immediately following today's opening of the Metro Gold Line.
- [Officials Will Dedicate Metro Gold Line in Friday Ceremonies](#) (July 24, 2003) An array of local, state and federal officials will assemble at Union Station, Friday morning, to officially dedicate the Metro Gold Line – the latest addition to a growing Southern California rail network.
- [9 Operators Chosen For Metro Gold Line Inaugural Runs](#) (July 24, 2003) A nine-operator crew was chosen, this week, to drive the VIP trains during Friday's Metro Gold Line inauguration ceremony at Union Station – an event that has been months in the making.
- [Metro Gold Line Festivities: Fun, Food and Entertainment](#) (July 23, 2003) MTA will celebrate the opening of the Metro Gold Line with fun-filled family events at seven of the 13 stations this Saturday and Sunday, July 26-27.

#### MTA BUS ROADEO 2003

- [The Winners!](#) Div. 9 Operator Mark Holland; Div. 5 Mechanics Win 2003 Bus Rodeo

- [Bus Operators](#) Sweat Through Tough Rodeo Competition
- [Mechanics](#) Felt the Pressure as the Clock Wound Down
- [Fun in the Sun](#) for Families attending the 2003 Bus Rodeo
- [Bush, Congress Proposing Big Transportation Funding Programs](#) (July 18, 2003) The Bush Administration is proposing the biggest funding program "that's ever been recommended for surface transportation" and Congress is considering providing even more, Emil H. Frankel, a ranking U.S. Department of Transportation official, told an audience, Friday, at MTA Headquarters.
- [New Gold Line TVMs Have More Features; Can Be Upgraded for Smart Cards](#) (July 17, 2003) Metro Rail patrons will find a new type of ticket vending machine at Metro Gold Line Stations when the rail line opens July 26.
- [Pieces of a Puzzle: Scheduling MTA's 16,000 Daily Bus Trips](#) (July 16, 2003) Every day, the 2,000 buses that roll out of MTA's 11 operating divisions make some 16,000 different trips over 185 routes throughout Los Angeles County.
- [Creative Planning: How MTA Met Consent Decree's Mandate with Fewer Buses, Less Cost](#) (July 15, 2003) MTA Bus schedule planners were faced with a perplexing challenge earlier this year: add 400,000 hours of service to meet the federal Consent Decree's dictate to reduce passenger overcrowding without busting the agency's operations budget.
- [MTA Taking Measures to Help Ensure Safety on Metro Gold Line](#) (July 15, 2003) With the opening of the Metro Gold Line less than two weeks away, MTA is calling on residents to make safety a priority around trains that will travel through their communities 23 hours a day starting July 26. [PLUS!](#) An illustrated guide to safety features of four-quadrant crossing gates.
- [MTA Offers Largest Construction Contract Ever to Packed House](#) (July 11, 2003) A total of 255 designers and contractors packed the MTA Boardroom, today, eager to learn more about the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension construction project – at an estimated half-billion dollars, the largest contract ever offered by the agency.
- [MTA Closing NoHo Lot to House Construction Staging Area](#) (July 11, 2003) MTA will close the overflow parking lot adjacent to the North Hollywood MTA station, effective July 26, to accommodate a construction staging area for the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway.
- [MTA'S Juror Pass Program Expanding to 6 More Courts](#) (July 10, 2003) MTA is expanding its successful Juror Pass Program to six additional Los Angeles Superior Courts. Effective July 1, the program will serve a total of 10 district courts.
- [Governance Councils:](#) MTA's service sector governance councils continue to grow as the Gateway Cities council scheduled its first formal meeting and the San Gabriel Valley council added its final two members.
- [New 'MTA Motion' Cable TV Segment Previews Metro Gold Line](#) (July 9, 2003) The program debuts on Santa Monica CityTV Channel 16 beginning Sunday, July 13. The segment also features the new Metro Rapid bus lines on Florence Avenue and Van Nuys Boulevard, the new Juror Pass Program, the service sectors, and MTA's FY 2004 budget.

- [\*\*MTA Provides Transportation for Veterans Wheelchair Games\*\*](#) (July 9, 2003)  
More than 500 wheelchair-bound veterans from the United States, Britain and Puerto Rico were able to participate in the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world, thanks to MTA and two other transit agencies.
- [\*\*Gateway Cities Adds 2 New Shuttle Lines for Better Rail, Bus Connections\*\*](#) (July 9, 2003) MTA has launched two new shuttle bus lines – Lines 611 and 612 – to better serve riders in the Gateway Cities sector.
- [\*\*Stop & Zones Completing Update of 7,000-Plus Bus Stop Signs\*\*](#) (July 8, 2003)  
Stops and Zones personnel have almost completed changes to some 7,000 of the 18,000 MTA Bus stops – a job that included placing more than 14,000 informational decals on the signs.
- [\*\*MTA Plans Reserved Parking at 3 Metro Gold Line Stations\*\*](#) (July 2, 2003) Metro Gold Line monthly patrons will be able to reserve parking spaces at three stations in Pasadena and South Pasadena under a six-month pilot program now being finalized by MTA.
- [\*\*Grand Jury Commends MTA's Workers' Comp Efforts\*\*](#) (July 1, 2003) A Los Angeles County Grand Jury study of Workers' Compensation costs at four government agencies praises MTA for a "comprehensive and effective program that is beginning to show bottom-line results."
- [\*\*Board Sets Free Fares for Metro Gold Line Opening\*\*](#) (July 1, 2003) The MTA Board approved motions at its June meeting providing free fares during Metro Gold Line's opening weekend, authorizing the repainting of MTA buses and trains in new colors, and establishing a new transitional duty program for employees injured on the job.

## Bulletin Board

- Metro Blue [Line employees](#) have established an account with the MTA Credit Union to assist Service Attendant Andre Thomas whose toddler son, Andrew, died in a backyard accident, July 21.
- [What's your story?](#) Share your Metro Gold Line opening weekend experiences here...
- [A Golden Moment for](#) Metro Gold Line Volunteers
- [\\$6 Million Project Upgrades](#) Division Fuel Tank Systems
- [New at the Employee Center:](#) MTA brochures and promotional products are now available via the Intranet for use in MTA outreach programs. Descriptions of the materials and the required request forms can be accessed through the Intranet's Employee Center web site.
- [They're Doin' Great!](#) Division 3 Maintenance and Division 8 Transportation top the "How You Doin'?" charts for May.
- [Division 8's Greenwood](#) Treasures His Hawaiian Heritage (July 16, 2003) Born on the island of Oahu, West Valley Division 8 Operator Verne Greenwood stays true to his Hawaiian roots – hula dancing, surfing and playing bass.
- [MTA employees](#) can take advantage of a special discount at the 7th annual Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival, July 17 to Aug. 2, at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood.
- [Thirty MTA Bus operators](#) from a field of about 160 have survived a grueling preliminary competition to qualify for the 28th annual MTA Bus Rodeo, Saturday, July 19.
- [Division 2's Joe Brown](#) Honored for Dedication to Prison Fellowship Ministry

(July 15, 2003) An assistant transportation manager at Crossroads Division 2, Joe Brown is devoted to serving the needs of others by ministering to hardened yet lonely prison inmates by providing spiritual guidance and fellowship.

- [Leadership Continuity is Goal of Division Manager Changes](#) (July 11, 2003) 3 Division Transportation Managers Rotated; Catoe Names 3 Operations Executives
- [Return from Iraq](#) (July 11, 2003) Back home and out of uniform, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Randy Montes – a Marine Corps reservist – is relieved to have made it home safely from Iraq.
- [Division 9's Rudy Gutierrez Celebrates 35 Years With MTA](#)
- [Mark Your Calendar for Bus Rodeo, July 19](#) **NOTE:** Judges Needed for Rodeo Preliminaries
- [Accounting Retreat](#) Focuses on Team-Building, Uniting
- [MTA Employees Join in Celebration of Juneteenth](#) (July 1, 2003) MTA employees gathered together in June to “let freedom ring” as they celebrated Juneteenth with spiritual songs, stories and serving upon serving of soul food.
- [Discover Gold!](#) In preparation for the Grand Opening of the Metro Gold Line, July 26 and 27, MTA is mailing its new Discover Gold brochures to approximately 40,000 residences and businesses along the rail corridor.

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**Discover Gold!** In preparation for the Grand Opening of the Metro Gold Line, July 26 and 27, MTA is mailing its new Discover Gold brochures to approximately 40,000 residences and businesses along the rail corridor. The eight-page, four-color brochure also is inserted in some 30,000 copies of the Spring/Summer issue of MTA's MQ magazine. Other promotional elements include billboards, newspaper ads, bus king ads and car cards, rail station posters, a take-one brochure.



MQ Editor Gary Wosk, left, and Grisel Sanchez of Marketing, center, along with Jorge Pardo of Metro Art, (not shown) provided copy. Neil Sadler of MTA's Design Studio, right, designed the brochure along with Georgina Saez. Teresa Renn of the Design Studio designed the latest issue of MQ.

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## Board Sets Free Fares for Metro Gold Line Opening

### June Board Actions

- [Free Fare Promotion](#)
- [New Graphic Schemes](#)
- [Transitional Duty Program](#)
- [Hollywood/Vine Development](#)
- [Development Guidelines](#)
- [Transit Funds](#)
- [Uniform Rental](#)

(July 1, 2003) The MTA Board approved motions at its June meeting providing free fares during Metro Gold Line's opening weekend, authorizing the repainting of Metro buses and trains in new colors, and establishing a new transitional duty program for employees injured on the job.

### Approved by the full Board

**Item 43, Free Fare Promotion.** MTA will kick off the Grand Opening of the Metro Gold Line with a two-day free fare promotion Saturday, July 26, and Sunday, July 27. The promotion will be in effect on that line only. All other Metro services will collect the usual fares.

On Monday, July 28, the current fare of \$1.35 or 90-cent tokens will be required on the Metro Gold Line.

MTA will operate service on the Union Station to Sierra Madre Villa line on from 4 a.m. until 2 a.m., seven days a week. Trains will operate on 10-minute headways during weekday peak hours; on 12-minute headways during mid-day and every 20 minutes during late-night hours.

### Approved by the full Board

**Item 42, New Graphic Schemes.** The Board approved staff plans to repaint Metro Buses and Metro Rail cars in colors that would clearly identify each vehicle with the type of service it would provide.

Bright red would continue to signify Metro Rapid service, California poppy orange would denote local bus service and a crisp blue would be used in the future on express buses. All Metro Rail cars would either be painted silver or would retain their stainless steel appearance. The base color for all vehicles will be silver.

A plan to modify the MTA logo was referred to committees. The staff will present a Metro service identification program at future committee meetings.

### Approved by the full Board

**Item 27, Transitional Duty Program.** Under the Transitional Duty and Safety Patrol Program, contract and non-contract employees who are eligible for Workers' Compensation benefits also will be eligible to participate in temporary special limited duty assignments patrolling

select Metro Bus and Metro Rail stations, MTA parking lots and other facilities.

Employees assigned to the Safety Patrol would be responsible for reporting safety problems and suspicious activity at the assigned locations. Risk Management's Workers' Compensation Division and the Security Department will jointly manage the program.

**Approved by the full Board**

**Item 44, Hollywood/Vine Development.** The CEO was given authority to negotiate an agreement for development of a 300-room hotel, 250 apartments, 50 condos and some 40,000 square feet of retail space at the Hollywood/Vine Metro station.

The joint development agreement with Legacy Partners and Gatehouse Capital covers 2.8 acres of MTA-owned land. The project also would encompass 1.47 acres of adjacent privately owned land.

**Approved by the full Board**

**Item 6, Development Guidelines.** The Board adopted conceptual guidelines for development of MTA property at the Vermont/Sunset, Vermont/Santa Monica and Vermont Beverly Metro Red Line stations.

The guidelines envision mixed-use, medium-density development with multi-family housing whose residents could walk to retail and other commercial firms, including low-impact industrial enterprises.

**Approved by the full Board**

**Item 11, Transit Funds.** The Board approved an allocation of approximately \$1 billion to LA County transit operators and cities for FY 2004. The funds are provided from Proposition A and C, the Transportation Development Act and other sources.

**Approved by the full Board**

**Item 35, Uniform Rental.** The Board awarded a five-year, \$2 million contract for rental of mechanics' uniforms and shop towels to Aramark Uniform and Career Apparel Inc.

MTA is required by its collective bargaining agreement with the ATU to provide uniforms and laundry service for ATU members. For many years, MTA has purchased uniforms and shop towels and outsourced the laundry services.

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Event coordinators, from left, seated, Ora Ventry and Sandra Mcghee and, back row from left, Felicia Jackson, Ronald Jackson, Addie Allison, Rose Mumford, Sonja Owens, Rosa Chavez celebrate Juneteenth with fellow employees.

PHOTO BY FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN



## MTA Employees Join in Celebration of Juneteenth

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 1, 2003) MTA employees gathered together in June to "let freedom ring" as they celebrated Juneteenth with spiritual songs, stories and serving upon serving of soul food.

Divisions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 10 hosted Juneteenth festivities during the month. Each division's celebration featured plenty of food, ranging from Crossroads Division 2's barbequed chicken and ribs prepared by master chef Erwin McCrury, to the potluck specialties prepared by employees from Venice Division 6.

"The barbeque was going from early morning until everyone was well satisfied," Division 2 Assistant Transportation Manager Thom Pelk said. "As expected, the array of food was superb."

Besides the variety of food, some division Juneteenth celebrations featured music. Division 2 enjoyed tunes by DJ Abel Zuniga. Soloist Sandra Mcgee entertained Central City Division 1, singing "Precious Lord."

After enjoying food and songs, Division 1 employees read the history of Juneteenth. The holiday commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers landed at Galveston, Texas with news that the war had ended and that all slaves were now free.

Divisions 6, 7 and 10 topped off the Juneteenth events with their celebration last Friday.

"By reading, celebrating, and remembering what this celebration is all about, it helps us remember and be thankful for our freedom," Transportation Manager Sonja Owens said.



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## **Grand Jury Commends MTA's Workers' Comp Efforts**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 1, 2003) A Los Angeles County Grand Jury study of Workers' Compensation costs at four government agencies praises MTA for a "comprehensive and effective program that is beginning to show bottom-line results."

Noting that Workers' Comp costs have nearly doubled in the past five years, the Grand Jury investigated current policies and practices at the County Fire Department, County Sheriff's Department, City Fire Department and MTA.

Measures taken by MTA, the jurors reported, resulted in an eight percent reduction in lost-time workdays per 100 employees, a five percent drop in claims expenses in the first two quarters of FY 2003 and a startling 29 percent reduction in new Workers' Comp claims.

"We urge other public agencies to use MTA's program as a model for future planning to address similar problems associated with workers' compensation," the report said.

The Grand Jury cited state mandated increases in disability payments, rising medical costs, poor program management and fraudulent claims as reasons for higher Workers' Comp costs. Claims also rose dramatically.

### **Claims rose 73 percent**

In 1998, the County Fire Department received \$12.7 million in claims. By 2002, that number had jumped 73 percent to \$22 million. The City Fire Department also experienced a 73 percent hike in claims from \$11.3 million to \$19.5 million.

Claims by employees of the Sheriff's Department rose 92 percent from \$48.6 million in 1998 to \$93.4 million in 2002.

Workers' Comp costs for MTA, meanwhile, reached \$58 million in FY 2002 – an average of 176 claims each month for an annual cost of \$6,500 per employee. That was double the cost of any other California transit agency and the highest of any transit agency in the nation.

The one bright spot in the Grand Jury report was a description of MTA's successful actions to combat Workers' Comp costs at the source by reducing employee lost-time injuries and controlling associated costs.

The jurors commended MTA for creating a culture that emphasizes on-the-job safety and for introducing "Safety's First," an agency-wide, top-to-bottom worker safety program with an aggressive goal of achieving 100 percent safety awareness among employees and reducing the accident and injury rate by 51 percent or greater in five years.

The panel also lauded MTA for more closely monitoring all elements of Workers' Comp administration and for cooperating with its unions in creating a position for an Injured Workers Advocate to assist workers who are eligible for Workers' Comp benefits.

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## **MTA Plans Reserved Parking at 3 Metro Gold Line Stations**

By DAVE SOTERO

(July 2, 2003) Metro Gold Line monthly patrons will be able to reserve parking spaces at three stations in Pasadena and South Pasadena under a six-month pilot program now being finalized by MTA.

Riders who buy monthly passes can pay a fee for one of the 250 reserved spaces at the Sierra Madre Villa station in East Pasadena. The remaining 750 spaces at the station will be free, but available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Approximately 100 reserved spaces will be available for the Lake Avenue station at the Lake Avenue Church near the 210 Freeway. MTA also is working with the City of South Pasadena to provide additional reserved parking spaces at the Metro Gold Line Mission station.

By mid-July, patrons will be able to purchase permits via the Internet from MTA's Internet web site, by phone at 1-800-997-0197 or by mail at Permit Center, P.O. Box 22811, Denver, CO 80224.

Parking also is available around other Metro Gold Line stations, including Union Station, which has about 1,100 paid parking spaces. There are limited parking spaces at Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park station (100), Heritage Square/Arroyo station (145), Fillmore station (160), and the Del Mar Station (600).

### **Guaranteed parking space**

Daily park-and-ride patrons at the Sierra Madre Villa station will be guaranteed a parking space from 5:30 to 10:30 a.m. Reserved parking spots will not be guaranteed after 10:30 a.m. to ensure use of all possible spaces. Reserve-only parking will be available at Lake Avenue Church weekdays from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The transferable window permits will contain a bar code that can be scanned by parking lot operators to ensure permit validity.

Permit fees for the Lake Avenue and Sierra Madre Villa stations will be approximately \$39 per month for the first six months, increasing to \$45 per month thereafter.

The anticipated permit fee at Mission station is \$29 per month for the first six months, increasing to \$36 per month thereafter.

MTA will use the fees to recover operating costs and to pay for additional parking capacity. MTA will pilot the program for six months as part of its Short-Range Transit Plan.

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The Accounting Department looked for ways to improve processes, procedures and employee morale during its June 19 retreat. (Photo by Shawn Lowe)



## **Accounting Retreat Focuses on Team-Building, Uniting**

By SUSAN CARIASA

(July 8, 2003) What do you think the Accounting Department is doing when it's not crunching numbers? Uniting and building its team! And it did just that, June 19, when it held its annual team-building retreat.

At the retreat, various departmental cross-functional teams presented their accomplishments, projects and goals. Each of the teams was responsible for an area of focus aimed at improving the department's processes, procedures, and employee morale.

Customer service was the theme of this year's retreat, as well as the focus of a presentation given by a customer service expert, who was invited to share with the Accounting staff her secrets to "knock your socks off" customer service.

The Office of Development and Training (OD&T) conducted exercises aimed at better understanding diverse behaviors in the workplace and how they affect both client and customer service. The interactive discussions, role-plays and activities highlighted the importance of being aware of differences and devising strategies to improve cooperation and understanding.

An important objective of the retreat was to provide the teams with an opportunity to present their achievements and goals to the entire staff.

### **Long list of accomplishments**

The team presentations revealed a long list of accomplishments, including Team 3's on-line "Learning Portfolio" (available via link on the Accounting Department home page), which will encourage continuing professional and technical training among the Accounting staff.

Team 2 presented its highly successful "Around the World Desserts Galore," which served as a tasty reminder of the benefits of working in a diverse workplace; and Team 6 explained its ongoing efforts to promote teambuilding and spirit with colorful bulletin boards, birthday e-mails, and department lunches.

Team presentations finished up with suggested goals and objectives for the coming year, and outstanding achievements in safety, performance and attendance were recognized and awarded. These included the "Best Idea Award" given to Carmelita Malonzo and Nancy Untalan for suggesting a process improvement in the Accounts Payable Unit.

Overall, the retreat was a success. The staff was invigorated and rewarded for its achievements, and everyone enjoyed a break from the daily grind of bill paying, payroll, and other accounting activities.

Now the accounting department is back to crunching numbers, especially with the audit season having just started.

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Operators perform precision maneuvers in annual Bus Rodeo competition.

## Mark Your Calendar for Bus Rodeo, July 19

- [Judges needed](#) for Rodeo preliminaries

(July 8, 2003) Mark your calendar for Saturday, July 19, and plan to attend the 28th annual MTA Bus Rodeo. Don't forget to bring your family and friends!

Almost 300 bus operators and nine teams of mechanics will test their skills in a series of events scheduled throughout the day, beginning at 8 a.m. and ending at 2 p.m.

Prizes will be awarded to the top scorers, who will go on to represent MTA at the APTA International Bus Rodeo in Salt Lake City in September.

This year's defending champion is Metro Bus Operator Daniel Keosababian of North Los Angeles Division 3 who won the 2002 event. The maintenance team to beat is from South Bay Division 18 – mechanics Luke Logan, Javier Soria and Mina Ros.

Plenty of entertainment is scheduled during the Bus Rodeo. Families can enjoy a continental breakfast, live music, a barbecue lunch and a raffle drawing. Kids will have fun playing for prizes in the carnival-style game booths, or bouncing in a jumper house.

The annual car show, set up in the parking lot adjacent to the Bus Rodeo, will feature classic autos, motorcycles and trucks.

The Bus Rodeo will be held at Santa Anita Park just south of the I-210 Freeway, off Colorado Place at 285 W. Huntington Drive in Arcadia. Use Santa Anita Gate 6. Maps and directions to the park can be found at the park's website, [www.santaanita.com](http://www.santaanita.com).

Volunteers are needed as judges during qualifying events, this week, for the MTA Bus Rodeo. Qualifying rounds are scheduled Wednesday, July 9, through Saturday, July 12. Rodeo Coordinator Frank Cecere needs 35 volunteers each day of the preliminary competition to judge obstacle course events and keep individual operator's scores. "People say, 'I have no experience,'" says Cecere. "You don't need it." To volunteer as a judge, contact Gwen Keene at 922-7148 or by e-mail at [keeneg@mta.net](mailto:keeneg@mta.net).



Winners of the MTA Bus Roadeo will compete in the Southern California Regional Bus Roadeo, Sept. 6, in Chula Vista. Fifteen teams from area transit agencies are expected to compete.

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Alan Duong of MTA Stops and Zones installs a new bus stop sign on a street light pole at Alameda Street and College Street in Chinatown. Duong and co-workers have placed more than 14,000 decals on bus stop signs throughout MTA's service area.



## **Stop & Zones Completing Update of 7,000-Plus Bus Stop Signs**

By LISA HUYNH

(July 8, 2003) Stops and Zones personnel have almost completed changes to some 7,000 of the 18,000 Metro Bus stops – a job that included placing more than 14,000 informational decals on the signs.

By the end of next week, all affected stops will provide customers with new bus line numbers, destinations and service times. The June shakeup and the start of Metro Gold Line service later this month necessitated the sweeping change.

"The guys are working 14 hours a day and seven days a week," says Stops and Zones Supervisor Thomas Kelso. "On many days we had people come in on their normal days off in order to have all 16 Stops and Zones laborers working on installing the new signs or modifying them."

Due to the enormous number of bus stop sign changes, the project had to begin in mid-May when temporary cardboard signs alerting customers to upcoming line changes were placed at the bus stops.

### **Just in time**

The project should be completed next week, just in time for the July 26-27 Metro Gold Line Grand Opening and restructuring of bus service throughout MTA's service area.

"Bus stop signs are a great aid to our riders and bus operators," says Kelso. "It tells them exactly what bus stops at a specific location, where it's going and what days and hours it operates. It reduces confusion on the street."

Facilities Maintenance Manager Pete Serdienis says the project is about 98 percent completed.

"We have about 200-plus stops that are now being changed on those lines that have newly added Saturday service," he says. "We also have to replace the Line 401 signs with Line 686 signs when the Metro Gold Line opens. When we finish that we can rest and take a little time off."

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## **Gateway Cities Adds 2 New Shuttle Lines for Better Rail, Bus Connections**

By DAVE SOTERO

(July 9, 2003) MTA has launched two new shuttle bus lines – Lines 611 and 612 – to better serve riders in the Gateway Cities sector.

The new lines, which have been operated out of Central City Division 1 and Crossroads Depot Division 2 since June 29, run every 30 minutes, seven days week. The two lines connect in Huntington Park, Florence and South Gate where riders may transfer from one bus line to the other.

Line 612 will stop at the Imperial/ Wilmington/Rosa Parks station for transfers to either the Metro Blue Line or the Metro Green Line. Both lines serve the Blue Line at different stations.

"The launch of these two shuttle routes means more frequent service to local riders," said General Manager Rich Rogers. "Typical bus arrival times on this route occurred approximately every 40-60 minutes. By introducing shuttle service, we've now cut that wait time to every 30 minutes during the day, a substantial improvement that will save our transit patrons time and give them more travel options."

Line 611 serves Huntington Park, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Florence, Vernon, Maywood and Walnut Park. Line 612 serves Huntington Park, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Lynwood, Watts and Walnut Park.

Gateway Cities also has restructured Lines 105, 107, 119 and canceled Lines 56 and 112. The new shuttle routes have replaced most of the restructured or cancelled segments of these lines in the Mid-Cities area.

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# New Metro Motion Cable TV Segment Previews Metro Gold Line

Showtimes: [Broadcast Schedule](#)

By ED SCANNELL

(July 9, 2003) The latest installment of MTA's 30-minute cable television program, 'Metro Motion,' will give viewers a sneak peek at the soon-to-be-opened Metro Gold Line.

The program debuts on Santa Monica CityTV Channel 16 beginning Sunday, July 13.

The segment also features an interview with MTA Director John Fasana and stories about the new Metro Rapid bus lines on Florence Avenue and Van Nuys Boulevard, the new Juror Pass Program, the service sectors, and MTA's FY 2004 budget.

| SHOWTIMES: SANTA MONICA CITYTV CHANNEL 16 |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Week 1                                    | Week 2                       |
| Sunday, July 13, 10:30 a.m.               | Sunday, July 20, 5:30 p.m.   |
| Monday, July 14, 7:30 p.m.                | Tuesday, July 22, 4 p.m.     |
| Wednesday, July 16, 6:30 p.m.             | Wednesday, July 23, 10 p.m.  |
| Friday, July 18, 10:30 a.m.               | Thursday, July 24, 8:30 a.m. |
| Saturday, July 19, 3:30 p.m.              | Friday, July 25, 7:30 p.m.   |
|   | Saturday, July 26, 9:30 a.m. |

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## MTA Provides Transportation for Veterans Wheelchair Games

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 9, 2003) More than 500 wheelchair-bound veterans from the United States, Britain and Puerto Rico were able to participate in the largest annual wheelchair sports event in the world, thanks to MTA and two other transit agencies.

Taking place from July 5-9, the 23rd National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Long Beach fostered better health for veterans in wheelchairs and provided an opportunity for veterans to gain sports skills.

"MTA participated in this event as part of a community project in support of disabled veterans," Transportation Planning Manager Michael Sieckert says.

For the events, low-floor buses were provided so the veterans could easily enter and depart. The bus seats also were removed to accommodate more wheelchairs.

Long Beach Transit and Orange County Transportation Authority provided similar buses to transport veterans to the various events throughout Long Beach.

### Accessible transportation

"The MTA buses made transportation of the wheelchair games participants very accessible," National Director of Veterans Wheelchair Games Tom Brown says.

The buses took veterans to competition sites at the Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center, Belmont Shore Pool, California State University Long Beach, Cal Bowl, Long Beach VA Medical Center, Rainbow Harbor and El Dorado Park.

Athletic events included, softball, bowling, basketball, quad rugby, table tennis, weight lifting, power soccer, track and field, archery, motor rally and a 5k road race.

"The wheelchair games provide an opportunity for veterans to compete in athletic events and inspires participants by showing them that they can achieve what they set out to do," Transportation Chair Bonnie Kolor says.

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## **MTA'S Juror Pass Program Expanding to 6 More Courts**

By ED SCANNELL

(July 10, 2003) MTA is expanding its successful Juror Pass Program to six additional Los Angeles Superior Courts. Effective July 1, the program will serve a total of 10 district courts.

The program, which began in March, allows Los Angeles Superior Court jurors to exchange their vehicle mileage reimbursement for an MTA weekly transit pass to travel to and from the courts.

The program now will be available to all jurors who report to district courts in Compton, Torrance, Van Nuys, Long Beach, Norwalk and to the district court near LAX.

The four downtown Los Angeles courts are Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center on Temple Street, the Stanley Mosk Courthouse on Hill Street, the Central Civil West Courthouse on South Commonwealth Street and the Metropolitan Courthouse on Hill Street.

"Since the program began, nearly 300 jurors per month have taken advantage of the convenience of the Juror Pass at the four participating downtown Los Angeles Superior Courts," said CEO Roger Snoble. "We anticipate hundreds more will find the Metro Bus and Rail systems to be convenient travel alternatives to driving solo to the six additional courtrooms."

The Juror Pass is valid throughout MTA's service area on all local, limited-stop and Metro Rapid buses, as well as on the Metro Rail system, which includes the Metro Red, Blue and Green lines.

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**Governance Councils>** MTA's service sector governance councils continue to grow as the Gateway Cities council scheduled its first formal meeting and the San Gabriel Valley council added its final two members. The South Bay Governance Council is scheduled to meet at 9:30 a.m., Friday, July 11, at the Carson Community Center. The San Fernando Valley Governance Council held its monthly meeting, July 1. The Westside/Central sector is in the process of forming a governance council. (7/10/03)



PHOTOS BY DOWNTOWN EXPOSURE / CHRIS LOVDAHL

**Gateway Cities Governance Council>** Shown here following their recent orientation meeting are Gateway Cities Governance Council members, standing from left, Samuel Pena, Larry Nelson, Wally Shider and Bonnie Lowenthal. Seated from left are Cynde Soto, Jo Ann Eros-Delgado and Jacqueline Rynerson. The Governance Council will conduct its first public meeting at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, July 10, at Paramount's Progress Park.



**San Gabriel Valley Governance Council>** San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig, far left, is shown here with governance council members Sharon Martinez, Bruce Heard, Rosie Vasquez, Emil Bayle, Bart Doyle, David Spence, Harry Baldwin, Sid Tyler and Henry Lopez following their July 1 meeting. Heard and Lopez are new members of the council. In addition to council meetings, members have been conducting community open house meetings and participating in sector outreach programs.

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San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Maintenance Manager John McBryan and Lead Mechanic Rudy Gutierrez have become good friends during Gutierrez's 35-year tenure at MTA.



### **Division 9's Rudy Gutierrez Celebrates 35 Years With MTA**

By LISA HUYNH

(July 10, 2003) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Lead Mechanic Rudy Gutierrez recently celebrated 35 years with MTA and is still going strong.

"I love my job and I'll keep doing it as long as I can," says Gutierrez. "That's the secret. If you enjoy your surroundings and the people around you, like I have, it makes it that much easier to come into work."

Division 9 staff and employees surprised Gutierrez, July 3, with cake and ice cream. In a ceremony, he was given a pin and a framed photo of him when he was first hired in 1968.

Gutierrez, 58, is third in seniority among mechanics at MTA.

Division 5's Arthur Winston, who has 69 years with the agency, is the most senior maintenance employee. Division 1 Mechanic Mack Evans has 36 years, one month of service, while Division 9 Mechanic David Bricker will reach his 36th year of service Sept. 1.

"David Bricker is a real good guy," Gutierrez says of his coworker. "He's good-natured and easy to get along with. Working together for 35 years has allowed us to become friends."

There's no stopping this devoted husband and father of three.

Gutierrez enjoys the simpler things in life, like camping, traveling and spending time with family. "I would love to do more of it before I get too old."

Maintenance Manager John McBryan is proud of Gutierrez's accomplishments. "He's a dedicated, honest and trustworthy employee. We are so blessed to have him here at Division 9."

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## MTA Offers Largest Construction Contract Ever to Packed House

(July 11, 2003) A total of 255 designers and contractors packed the MTA Boardroom, today, eager to learn more about the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension construction project – at an estimated half-billion dollars, the largest contract ever offered by the agency.

The scope of work for the six-mile rail line is divided into two parts. The first is for construction of a 1.7-mile tunnel segment with two underground stations and two portals. The other involves construction of aboveground tracks and six stations and completion of the two underground stations.

MTA expects to award the construction contract in November and give the contractor notice to proceed in December, according to Eli Choueiry, deputy project manager. Construction is expected to continue until late 2008 or early 2009, with the revenue operating date forecast for June 2009.

MTA rejected earlier bids for the Eastside Line project, finding that they did not meet the agency's disadvantaged business enterprise goals and were too much over engineers' estimates.

The Eastside Light Rail Line will be an extension of the Metro Gold Line. Beginning at Union Station, it will continue south to Little Tokyo and then turn toward East Los Angeles, transit a tunnel beneath Boyle Heights and continue to its terminus at Pomona/Atlantic.

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Senior Contract Administrator Tim Clark welcomes potential bidders to a pre-bid conference for the Eastside Light Rail Line contract. Below, Contract Administration Manager Ivan Page points out the Eastside Line's eastern terminus for MTA Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman.



## Division 3's Randy Montes is Happy to be Home from Military Duty

By LISA HUYNH

(July 11, 2003) Back home and out of uniform, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Randy Montes – a Marine Corps reservist – is relieved to have made it home safely from Iraq.

The journey wasn't easy, though. The 33-year-old lance corporal says it was frustrating, scary and boring at times.

"I was very homesick, says Montes. "I missed my friends and family. I also missed being an operator. It feels so good to be back."

After learning that Montes would be called to duty in early February, Division 3 operators Teresa Love and Pablo Riveros made "care packages" to show their love and support for their co-worker. [See metro.net report July 11, 2003 > Care Packages](#)

"I didn't receive any of the packages until after the war," says Montes. "But when I found out, it felt really good. I love my friends."

Montes and his platoon first arrived in Kuwait and eventually made their way to various parts of Iraq. Their mission included providing security and raiding military compounds.

One of Montes' least favorite things was the unpredictable weather condition. "We dealt with rain, sand storms and really hot temperatures. The shade would be 120 degrees."

The war has made Montes appreciate life even more. "Material things are not important to me anymore. My brother damaged my truck recently, but it didn't bother me. You can't replace the people you love."

Looking back at his experiences, Montes says he would do it all over again to protect his family and friends.

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Division 3 Operator Randy Montes at a military compound in Iraq. Below, Lance Corporal Montes - a Marine Corps Reservist - with comrades Justin Fleming, Gus Ramos and Jay Partida.



## **MTA Closing NoHo Lot to House Construction Staging Area**

By DAVE SOTERO

(July 11, 2003) MTA will close the overflow parking lot adjacent to the North Hollywood Metro station, effective July 26, to accommodate a construction staging area for the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway.

The 198-space parking lot at the northwest corner of Lankershim and Chandler boulevards is the future terminal station and bus turnaround of the Rapidway, scheduled to open in 2005.

Commuter parking at the lot was always intended to be temporary, and its closure is required for MTA to begin construction of the 14-mile busway connecting North Hollywood and Warner Center.

Patrons will be able to park at a larger, 325-space county-owned lot near the Universal City station, only a three-minute walk away. Metro Bus lines 152, 154, 156, 166 and 426 also serve the station.

MTA and the City of Los Angeles are exploring additional parking for Metro Red Line commuters in North Hollywood. There are about 900 parking spaces in the main parking lot.

When open in 2005, the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway will provide more than 3,000 parking spaces at five stations between North Hollywood and Woodland Hills.

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## Leadership Continuity is Goal of Division Manager Changes

- **3 Division Transportation Managers Rotated**
- **Catoe Names 3 Operations Executives**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 11, 2003) A series of division management changes announced last week is primarily aimed at ensuring continuity of leadership, says San Fernando Valley General Manager David Armijo.

Armijo, who has been given temporary responsibility for the Westside/Central service sector, shifted three division transportation managers and named two acting transportation managers and an acting maintenance manager.

"These changes have been made with a lot of input from other general managers, as well as from the staff," said Armijo. "I want to build continuity and let the team build upon itself. Success will follow."

Meanwhile, Deputy CEO John Catoe has announced an operations staff reorganization that will give new responsibilities to Carolyn Flowers, Alex Clifford and Andrea Burnside.

Armijo said Karl Downs, who was transportation manager at San Fernando Valley's Division 15, has moved to the Westside/Central sector's Division 10 to replace Transportation Manager Tom Jasmin, who will lead Bus Operations Control.

Armijo named Pat Orr as Division 10's acting maintenance manager, to succeed the retiring Rick Hittinger.

### Myers moves to Division 15

West Valley Division 8 Transportation Manager Grant Myers has moved to East Valley Division 15, leaving Maria Reynolds as acting transportation manager at Division 8.

Johnny Lindsey, who has served as assistant transportation manager at West Hollywood Division 7, now heads transportation as assistant manager at Venice Division 6. Bruce Buck will continue as assistant maintenance manager at Division 6.

Until recently, Division 6 operated as a satellite of Division 7, but Armijo said both Lindsey and Buck now report directly to him. MTA is working with a developer who wants to build a new division for the agency in exchange for the valuable Venice division property.

Two division transportation managers had been appointed in June to replace managers who retired. Jim McElroy succeeded Ron Reedy at Division 7, while Mike Greenwood succeeded Mace Bethel at San Gabriel Valley Division 9.

### Executive level appointments

At the executive level, Catoe has appointed Carolyn Flowers executive officer, Operations Administration. She is responsible for operations finance, the LASD contract, operations manpower and service development.

Alex Clifford was named managing director of On-Street Support and will be responsible for Bus Operations Control, the Regional Rebuild Center and New Technology.

Andrea Burnside was named managing director for Safety, Training and Board Reports. She will oversee Operations Central Instruction, the Safety Department and preparation of operations reports to the MTA Board.

"The purpose of these changes is to focus clearly on improving key elements of our operations," Catoe said. "It allows the general to concentrate purely on sector operations."

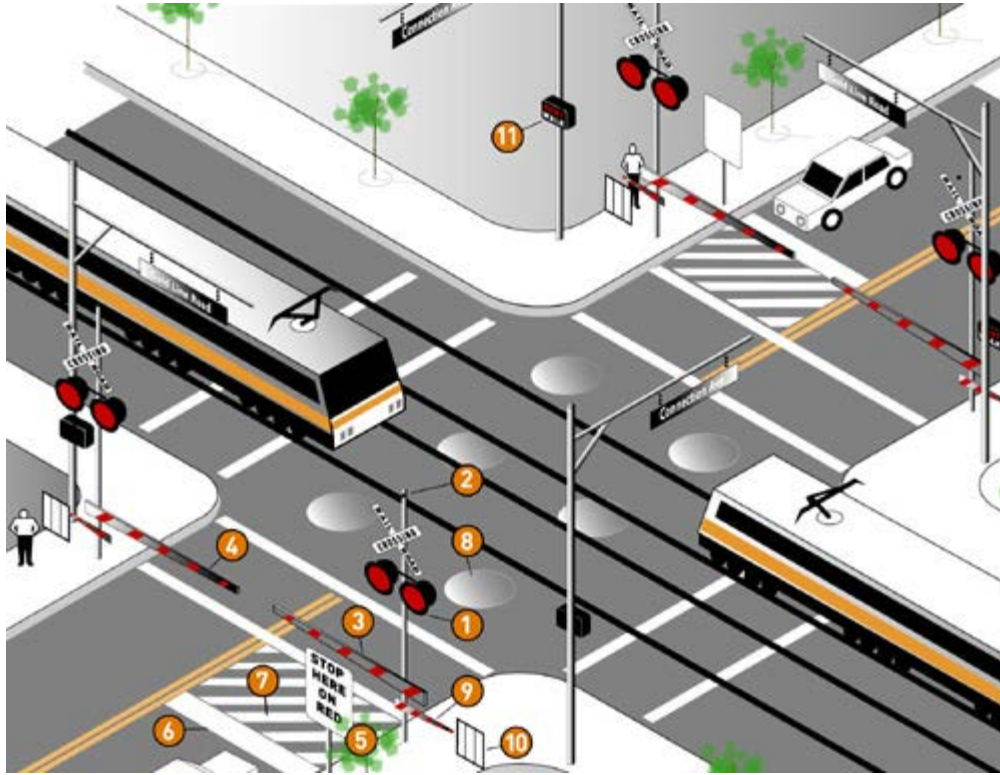
Earlier this year, Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis also rotated a number of transportation managers, shifting Rita Malone from the Metro Red Line to the Metro Blue Line. She was replaced by Eugene Adams, who had been transportation manager of the Metro Green Line.

Duane Martin rotated from transportation manager of the Metro Blue Line to head the Rail Operations Center, replacing Hector Guerrero, who is now transportation manager of the Metro Green Line. Roman Alarcon, an assistant manager at the Metro Red Line, was named transportation manager at the Metro Gold Line.

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#### METRO GOLD LINE CROSSING GATE SAFETY FEATURES

Many at-grade crossings on the Metro Gold Line are equipped with four-quadrant crossing gates. These gates and pedestrian and emergency swing gates completely seal off the intersection from vehicles and pedestrians, helping to ensure unfettered passage of Gold Line trains. The gates employ numerous safety features that, combined with careful attention by motorists and pedestrians, can virtually eliminate safety hazards along the Gold Line's 13.7-mile route.

Here is a summary of crossing gate safety features that activate when motorists and pedestrians encounter trains crossing through street-level intersections: *(Note: Numbers correspond with those on artist's rendering of crossing gate intersection)*

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- 1. Flashers:** When a train is approaching an intersection, red lights on both sides of the intersection begin flashing to warn motorists and pedestrians of the imminent arrival of the train. The train will arrive at the intersection within approximately 24-27 seconds.
- 2. Bell:** Simultaneous with flashing lights, bells will ring, providing an audible warning of the approaching train.
- 3. Entrance Gates:** Crossing gates come down simultaneously in both entrance lanes of the intersection.
- 4. Exit Gates:** Crossing gates come down simultaneously a few seconds after the Entrance Gates in both exit lanes of the intersection, completely sealing off the intersection from approaching traffic.
- 5. Stop Here Sign:** Motorists approaching the intersection should stop behind this sign to ensure their vehicle does not breach the intersection or the train right-of-way.
- 6. Limit Line:** White striping on the pavement indicates the maximum stopping point for motorists approaching the intersection. Motorists passing the limit line will risk collision with crossing gate arms and may encroach onto the train right-of-way.

**7. Keep Clear Zone:** This area is a danger zone. Motorists in this area risk being hit by the crossing gate and/or train. Motorists should always stay behind this zone.

**8. Vehicle Detection Loops:** Motorists that venture within the intersection after the lights begin flashing, bells begin ringing, and gate arms begin lowering will be detected by loops imbedded in both the street surface and the track area. These loops will detect the vehicle's presence and automatically open the exit gates, allowing it to leave the intersection.

**9. Pedestrian Gates:** These gates bar pedestrians from entering into the intersection while the train is passing. Pedestrian gates close at the same time as the crossing gates.

**10. Swing Gates:** Swing gates that open outward and away from the train allow disabled pedestrians and others to leave the intersection in cases of emergency.

**11. Walk/Don't Walk Signals:** Pedestrians standing at the intersection will wait until this signal indicates it is safe to cross.

Where the Gates are:

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| • Avenue 33                               | • Indiana Ave.                   |
| • French Ave.                             | • Orange Grove Ave.              |
| • Avenue 45                               | • El Centro St./Glendone Way "T" |
| • Avenue 50                               | • Mission St./Meridian Ave.      |
| • Avenue 59                               | • Hope St.                       |
| • Avenue 60                               | • Fremont Ave./Grevelia St.      |
| • Avenue 61                               | • California Blvd.               |
| • Arroyo Verde Road/<br>Sycamore Ave. "Y" | • Del Mar Blvd.                  |
| • Pasadena Avenue East/West               | • Del Mar Station                |

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'RAIL SAFETY' TOPS MEDIA CHARTS - In advance of the opening July 26 of the Metro Gold Line, Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, at podium, leads rail safety demonstration at packed news conference held Tuesday at the Metro Gold Line Highland Park Station. Helping to get the word out are reporters from KNBC Channel 4, KNX 1070AM, KABC Eyewitness News, KTLA Channel 5, FOX Channel 11, KPPC, KTTV-KCOP, KCBS-KCAL, Metro Networks, Sing-Tao Newspapers, Sky Link TV, International Daily News, L.A. Web, Inc., The Asian Pacific News, The Chinese Daily News, The Korean Daily, The Los Angeles Times, The Pasadena Star News, The Pasadena Independent, and Pasadena local television channels 55 & 56.



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

## MTA Taking Measures to Help Ensure Safety on Metro Gold Line

By DAVE SOTERO

(July 15, 2003) With the opening of the Metro Gold Line less than two weeks away, MTA is calling on residents to make safety a priority around trains that will travel through their communities 23 hours a day starting July 26.

"MTA considers safety a partnership with the community," said Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis. "It is a personal responsibility, and everyone must do their part to ensure the safe operation of trains in their neighborhoods."

Trains have not operated in communities along the rail line for years, and a new generation of residents must understand and adhere to safety precautions along the 13.7-mile route.

P-2000 trains are scheduled to run approximately every 10 minutes among 13 stations during peak hour commute times, and approximately every 12 to 20 minutes during non-commute hours.

### Suite of safety measures

MTA has employed a suite of rail safety measures that have proven effective for 13 years on the Metro Blue Line.

- Four-quadrant gates have been installed at key intersections to completely seal them off when trains



are crossing.

[Click image for the illustrated guide to safety features of four-quadrant gates.](#)

- Loops embedded in the pavement detect vehicles that may be caught within the intersection as the gates descend. They will automatically lift the nearest gate to allow the vehicle to escape.
- 23 of the 30 at-grade crossings are equipped with pedestrian and swing gates that completely close the crossing to foot traffic.
- Fiber optic signs installed on traffic signal cantilevers will give drivers advance warning of approaching trains.
- Signage and striping at intersections complies with Public Utilities Commission regulations.

MTA will closely monitor other safety measures as well.

- Station parking lots will be well lit, and closed circuit television cameras will be installed for monitoring purposes.
- Stations will be equipped with emergency intercoms that will be directly linked to close circuit television observers. Station structures also will be well lit and will have no hiding spaces.
- To deter graffiti, flat surfaces have been minimized and wrought iron fences used instead of block walls.
- Sheriff's Department security assistants will inspect fares at rail stations, allowing the Sheriff's Department to extend its coverage and visibility.
- Fare inspectors will provide riders with information, directions and other assistance. They also will be able to write citations, call for backup using the same radios as Sheriff's deputies, and resolve issues.

### **A force multiplier**

"MTA will have more station security coverage than it has ever had before with these fare inspectors," said Francis. "They will supplement the eyes and ears of law enforcement, acting as a force multiplier to increase security on the Metro Gold Line, which frees up officers to focus on critical law enforcement duties."

Since September 2002, MTA's Community Relations Rail Safety team has attended scores of community events and given presentations at 71 area schools, reaching nearly 48,700 students with the rail safety message.

Retired rail operators have joined MTA's community outreach effort as safety ambassadors. They're safety-trained and work directly with residents to encourage appropriate safety behavior and answer questions.

The newest tool in MTA's safety education arsenal is the "Metro Experience" mobile safety theater that employs advanced video and 3-D effects to simulate the operation of a P2000 train along the

actual Metro Gold Line route.

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## Division 2's Joe Brown Honored for Dedication to Prison Fellowship Ministry

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 15, 2003) When MTA's Joe Brown looks in the mirror, he sees a humble servant, a worker bee. He glances out the window and sees a world in need.

An assistant transportation manager at Crossroads Division 2, Brown is devoted to serving the needs of others by ministering to hardened yet lonely prison inmates by providing spiritual guidance and fellowship.

Brown's dedication to this calling has earned him the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year award from Prison Fellowship Ministry, a Christian outreach program for prisoners, victims and their families.

"The award was a surprise to me because all I did was give what I can to support the ministry and assist those in need," he says.

A friend at church introduced Brown to Prison Fellowship Ministry. "The ministry tickled my heart."

### Ministering to prisoners

And soon afterward he was ministering to prisoners in Kern, Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

"Flesh can be incarcerated but the spirit cannot," says Brown, who enjoys giving and receiving encouragement and fellowship from the inmates.

The prisoners Brown ministers to several weekends a month are glad they are not forgotten. They know he could be somewhere else, but he chooses to be with them.

On his most recent visit to Tehachapi Prison, two young inmates ran up to Brown and thanked him for the testimony he had shared with them. They said it had convinced them to accept God into their lives.

### Planting the seed

"It's not me that caused their conversion," Brown says. "I plant the seed, and God does the watering, but it's nice to see a flower blooming."

His dedication to serving others extends beyond the prison walls and has aided him in serving as Division 2's assistant transportation manager. "Employees feel confident in sharing personal concerns about their lives with me, and we discuss the Word at times."

PHOTO BY FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN



Division 2 Assistant Transportation Manager Joe Brown was awarded Outstanding Volunteer of the Year for his prison ministry.

Brown was born in Louisiana, and grew up with Christian parents who encouraged him to attend Sunday school and sing in the choir.

At home, Brown's family also is spiritual. His wife, Barbara, is very supportive of his prison ministry. They have two children, Paul and Brandi. Alvin, their middle child, died in March 2001.

"I'm willing to participate in Prison Fellowship Ministry as long as I am able to," Brown says. "That's the key, reaching out to people."

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**Editor's Note:** The Bus Rodeo will be held at Santa Anita Park just south of the I-210 Freeway, off Colorado Place at 285 W. Huntington Drive in Arcadia. Use Santa Anita Gate 6. Maps and directions to the park can be found on the Internet at [www.santaanita.com](http://www.santaanita.com).

### 30 Operators, 10 Maintenance Teams Set for MTA Rodeo

[article>](#)



**Team to Beat** > CEO Roger Snoble presents 2002 trophy to winning South Bay Division mechanics team, from left, Javier Soria, Mina Ros and Luke Logan. Looking on: Competition organizer Steve Mullaly, center background, and, at right, General Manager Dana Coffey and South Bay Senior EMS Sergio Rubalcava. PHOTO: BILL HEARD

### 30 Operators, 10 Maintenance Teams Set for MTA Rodeo

(July 16, 2003) Thirty Metro Bus operators from a field of about 160 have survived a grueling preliminary competition to qualify for the 28th annual MTA Bus Rodeo, Saturday, July 19.

Maintenance teams representing nine operating divisions and the Regional Rebuild Center will compete in a separate event. The Rodeo, scheduled from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m., will be held at the Santa Anita Gate 6 parking lot in Arcadia.

Operators compiling the five highest scores in the prelims were Joe Acosta, Division 3, 617 points; Juan Navarro, Division 3, 607; Edwin Cerros, Division 2, 606; Luduvico Castro, Division 9, 600; and Mark Holland, Division 9, 594 points.

The remaining competitors, in order of scoring, are Jose Sierra, Division 2, 588; James Hazelitt, Division 10, 578; Brian Miles, Division 3, 576; Marcos Mejia-Portillo, Division 1, 569; Samuel Morales, Division 1, 568; Ramiro Mota, Division 1, 556; and Nipon Pasaphunthu, Division 3, 550 points.

Also, Julio Flores, Division 8, 554; Theodore Neill, Division 8, 536; Daniel Keosababian, Division 3, 534; Alex Reyes, Division 7, 523; Joaquin Barron-Hernandez, Division 5, 521; Rodolfo Cortez, Division 7, 519; Maximiliano De Angelis, Division 7, 516; Hugo Repreza, Division 15, 512; and Jorge Melendez, Division 7, 509 points.

Also, Hugo Mercado, Division 1, 502 points; Adolpho Chavez, Division 10, 501; Lawrence Tubbs, Division 2, 491; Ben Flores, Division 2, 490; Steve Vaden, Division 10, 489; Andre Burroughs, Division 7, 488; David Aguilar, Division 1, 487; and Juan Medrano, Division 9, 486 points.

#### Maintenance competitors

Teams scheduled to compete in the maintenance competition are

Division 1, Fred Hines, Gustavo Sanchez and Sergio Barron; Division 3, Tim Wong, Jose Gomez and Chris Hurtado; and Division 8, John Edrich, Naren Desai and Jesus Guerra.

Also, Division 10, Alan Wong, Doug Creveling and David Klinkenborg; Division 18, Javier Soria, Mina Ros and Luke Logan; Division 2, Juan Villalba, Andrew Filimaui and Ed Hernandez.

Also, Division 5, Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde; Division 15, Julio Vargas, Henry Diaz and Angel Bustos; and from the RRC, Tony Herumin, Cal Tran and Robert Pfile.

Winners of the MTA Bus Roadeo will compete in the Southern California Regional Bus Roadeo, Sept. 6, in Chula Vista. Fifteen teams from area transit agencies are expected to compete.

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Car card on board Metro buses and trains promotes film festival .



## Latino Film Festival Offers Discount to MTA Employees

By WARREN MORSE

(July 16, 2003) MTA employees can take advantage of a special discount at the 7th annual Los Angeles Latino International Film Festival, July 17 to Aug. 2, at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood.

By showing their MTA badges at the box office, employees can purchase tickets for \$7 each to any regular screening.

Presented by actor and director Edward James Olmos, the festival will present more than 100 feature films, documentaries and shorts from Latino filmmakers worldwide, as well as workshops and panel discussions featuring participants from the international film community.

Olmos, a staunch supporter of public transit, personally suggested the discount offer for MTA employees. He has been working with MTA's Communications department to promote using the Metro System to reach the festival.

The Egyptian Theater is adjacent to Metro Rail's Hollywood/Highland station. Many Metro Bus lines serve the theater as well. For a detailed festival screening schedule, check [www.latinofilm.org](http://www.latinofilm.org).

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the first of two articles about how innovative planning and the use of computer technology is changing MTA's service planning and scheduling process, improving Metro Bus service and saving budget dollars. Next> [Pieces of a Puzzle: Scheduling MTA's 16,000 Daily Bus Trips.](#)

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## **Creative Planning: How MTA Met Consent Decree's Mandate with Fewer Buses, Less Cost**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 15, 2003) Metro Bus schedule planners were faced with a perplexing challenge earlier this year: add 400,000 hours of service to meet the federal Consent Decree's dictate to reduce passenger overcrowding without busting the agency's operations budget.

The Special Master had mandated a 5.5 percent increase in service – about 1,000 more trips each day. The Bus Riders Union demanded that MTA add at least 185 buses to the fleet.

A preliminary estimate by MTA service planners indicated the job could be done with only 125 buses, but even that number would be more than the agency could afford to buy and to operate.

"We were facing a significant increase in fleet size and resource commitment in order to comply with the Consent Decree," recalls Ed Muncy, director, Service Performance and Analysis.

### **Creative approaches**

Service sector schedule makers jumped into the problem with both feet – and the most creative approaches to system design and implementation in recent memory at MTA.

Routes were changed to provide more trips and better service at those times and in those places where it would help meet Consent Decree requirements. Some bus service was eliminated, particularly where rail service could meet the transportation needs of riders.

Planners scheduled Metro Rapid and limited bus service on several routes. Other routes were modified to provide more frequent service in the busier segments and less service on little-used portions of the lines.

"Making better use of the resources available was a big win for the service sector development managers and their staffs," says Muncy.

He credited Jon Hilmer in the San Gabriel Valley sector, Madeline Van Leuvan in South Bay, Mike Brewer in San Fernando Valley, Scott Page in Westside/Central and Dan Nguyen in the Gateway Cities sector with developing the new scheduling plans.

### **Jamming the buses**

One example of creative scheduling is changes on the Wilshire/Whittier Metro Rapid Line, where patrons were jamming buses through the middle of the route. At the eastern end toward Whittier and the western end toward Santa Monica, buses were traveling light.

To reduce mid-route loads, schedulers developed a flexible "shortline" service that concentrates buses in the more heavily traveled portions rather than running all buses from end to end of

the 26-mile line.

In the end, meeting the federal mandate required only 23 additional buses – not 185 or even 125 – and just a 70,000-hour increase in service.

“The savings are obviously enormous when compared to the cost of buying and operating 125 or more buses a year,” says Muncy.

And there’s more to come. “For this go-around,” he says, “all we did was get the low-hanging fruit. Next time, we want to get higher in the tree and squeeze out a few more efficiencies.”

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the second of two articles about how innovative planning and the use of computer technology is changing MTA's service planning and scheduling process, improving Metro Bus service and saving budget dollars.

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## **Pieces of a Puzzle: Scheduling MTA's 16,000 Daily Bus Trips**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 16, 2003) Every day, the 2,000 buses that roll out of MTA's 11 operating divisions make some 16,000 different trips over 185 routes throughout Los Angeles County.

Figuring out where the buses must go, which divisions they'll come from and who among the 4,500 operators will be assigned to drive them is a monumental task. At MTA, those tasks traditionally were performed mostly on paper by schedulers who kept much of the information in their heads.

"The problem," says Ed Muncy, director, Service Performance and Analysis, "was that we were performing a very labor-intensive manual process that could have been done by a computer."

No longer. For the June shakeup – the period when bus routes are realigned to meet changing customer demands or to make them more efficient – schedule makers employed a computer program called HASTUS and a newly purchased module called MINBUS to help make the tough decisions.

### **Cut 175,765 hours**

The result was startling. Not only were all Metro Bus lines properly planned and staffed, but HASTUS cut 175,765 hours off the 7.5 million hours of vehicle operating time schedulers had planned using the manual system.

It's not that the buses will run their routes faster. The time saving was made by eliminating 123,033 layover hours between runs and 52,732 hours in deadheading time between routes or between a division and the start or end of a route.

The computer program also showed schedulers how to achieve greater efficiency by, in some cases, moving responsibility for a bus line to another division or by transferring buses among divisions.

In the scheme of things, 175,765 hours is only a 2.3 percent reduction, but Muncy thinks it's pretty good for the first time out. He believes HASTUS will provide even bigger savings the more often it's used.

### **Millions of solutions**

"With the computer, you can test millions of different solutions, until you get the solution that meets your criteria," he says. "Manually, you can do only one or two solutions before you run out of time or energy."

Although the computer program was a useful tool for planning the June shakeup, Muncy credits the five service sector schedule

development teams for the achievement.

Heading the teams were Jon Hilmer in the San Gabriel Valley sector, Madeline Van Leuvan in South Bay, Mike Brewer in San Fernando Valley, Scott Page in Westside/Central and Dan Nguyen in the Gateway Cities sector.

"They're the ones who set the computers, evaluated the solutions and did the supplemental work that went along with the process," says Muncy. "They did the work and they got the results."

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## Division 8's Greenwood Treasures His Hawaiian Heritage

By LISA HUYNH

(July 16, 2003) Born on the island of Oahu, West Valley Division 8 Operator Verne Greenwood stays true to his Hawaiian roots – hula dancing, surfing and playing bass.

Greenwood and his wife, Caroline, took home top honors in 1998 when they competed in a hula dance competition. Verne earned first place in the men's solo category and Caroline won second for the women's solo group.

"I love competing, but that was my first and last competition," says Greenwood. "It's hard to compete because no one my age wants to."

Greenwood, 61, initially got into hula dancing because he thought he could do a better job than his wife.

### People come together

He took on the challenge in 1993 and started dancing with a group called Keali'I O Nalani. "It's more of a family unit where at least 200 people come together to dance."

Although Greenwood doesn't compete or dance anymore because of arthritis in his lower back, he surfs the Malibu shores every Sunday morning with his friends. He plans to go back to Hawaii in September to surf.

A bass player, the father of three also plays Hawaiian music. He and his brother and cousin played professionally for 13 years in a band called "The Greenwood Brothers."

"We played in lounges in Alaska, San Diego and Nevada," he says.

Greenwood is enjoying life. "Maybe, one day I'll get back into hula dancing again."

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Verne Greenwood, above, and wife Caroline, below, took home top honors in a hula dance competition.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VERNE GREENWOOD

## New Gold Line TVMs Have More Features; Can Be Upgraded for Smart Cards

By DAVE SOTERO

(July 17, 2003) Metro rail patrons will find a new type of ticket vending machine at Metro Gold Line Stations when the rail line opens July 26.

The 50 TVM machines have several new features that make them easier to use than most ATM machines. Besides English and Spanish, the TVMs also will have instructions in Chinese.

At least two will be located at each Metro Gold Line station, with six in place at the Chinatown station.

The baseline functions of the new TVMs are the same as MTA's other ticket vending machines. The new machines, however, have features that make buying tickets quicker and easier.



New TVM machines have several new features that make them easier to use than most ATM machines.

### Easy as 1-2-3

Ordering rail tickets is as easy as 1-2-3 using the simple on-screen instructions. Customer interface screens are more user-friendly. For the hearing impaired, the new machines come equipped with an audio jack. Patrons who need assistance can view a full-color help screen.

The new TVMs can accept bills up to \$20. Ticket vending machines on the Metro Blue, Green and Red Lines can only accept \$1 and \$5 bills. Multiple tickets can be purchased in a single transaction.

MTA is introducing the upgraded line of TVMs to acquaint the public with equipment that is capable, in the future, of accommodating smart card technology.

Systemwide upgrades, planned for 2004, will equip the TVMs to dispense and read smart cards. The machines will automatically credit and deduct ticket purchases from the card's balance, thus eliminating the need for cash.

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## They're Doin' Great!

[Division 8 Maintenance Picks Up Another Monthly Award](#)

[Division 3 Transportation is Tops in May's 'How You Doin?'' Contest](#)

PHOTO BY LISA HUYNH



Division 8 clinches another "How You Doin!" award.

### **Division 8 Maintenance Picks Up Another Monthly Award**

By LISA HUYNH

(July 18, 2003) West Valley Division 8 took home the "How You Doin'?" award for Outstanding Maintenance Division for the month of May.

Having gone three consecutive months without a single new Worker's Compensation claim, the maintenance team was lowest again for the month of May.

"The employees are all tuned into reducing Worker's Compensation claims," says Maintenance Manager Jim Pachan. "The division has now exceeded 200 days without a lost-time injury due to the employees commitment to work safely."

General Manager David Armijo dropped by the maintenance facility to present the team a trophy.

"Division 8 has had a long history of success," say Armijo. "The employees are dedicated and it shows in the work they do. When you look at our facility, everything is clean and in its place."

The team also got cake and ice cream for their hard work.

PHOTO BY BOB HOLLAND



Division 3 Transportation claims May trophy.

### **Division 3 Transportation is Tops in May's 'How You Doin?'" Contest**

By LISA HUYNH

(July 18, 2003) North Los Angeles Division 3 won the "How You Doin'!" award for Outstanding Transportation Division for the month of May FY 2003.

"The reason I think we're so successful is because these operators care about their customers," says Transportation Manager Dan Frawley. "They treat the customers with courtesy, respect and most importantly, like family."

General Manager Jack Gabig congratulated the Division 3 team for its hard work and presented them a trophy. The division came in first in running hot and second in in-service on-time performance.

"We are like a family here at Division 3," says Frawley. "I have the best operators and I'm very proud of them."

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## Need MTA Brochures and Promo Items?

- **See New Brochure and Promotional Products Pages at Employee Center Intranet site.** [Check it out!](#)

(July 18, 2003) Need a supply of Metro system maps for an event? A gross of logo pencils or a soft, squishy Metro Stress Train for school giveaways?

Metro brochures and promotional products are now available via the Intranet for use in MTA outreach programs. Descriptions of the materials and the required request forms can be accessed through the Intranet's Employee Center web site.

Brochures include the Bus/Rail Rider's Guide, Bus Safety Checklist, Student Safety Guide and seven others. Promotional items include goodie bags, notepads and pop-up buses and trains.

"We're stocking these items for employees who will be staffing MTA booths at community events," says Danielle Boutier, manager, Communications Services. "We're asking 10 days to process a request, but at present, there's no charge to the departments that order the items."

By consolidating the purchase of promotional materials, MTA can get better prices than an individual department could by buying on its own, Boutier says.

Having one procurement source also helps maintain MTA graphics standards and logo integrity, and promotes a positive identification for the agency.

The Employee Center web site link is located on the right-hand navigation bar of the Intranet home page. The link to Brochures & Promotional Products may be found at the bottom of the navigation bar on the Employee Center home page, just under Snacks & Special Offers.

Mousing over the brochure titles reveals an image of the brochure cover designs. The promotional products page includes photos of the various items. Descriptions and photos will be updated as the items change.

Both pages have links to the request forms. A link to the Metro Promotional Products Policy is included on the promotional products page.

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PHOTOS: BILL HEARD



Emil H. Frankel

## Bush, Congress Proposing Big Transportation Funding Programs

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 18, 2003) The Bush Administration is proposing the biggest funding program "that's ever been recommended for surface transportation" and Congress is considering providing even more, Emil H. Frankel, a ranking U.S. Department of Transportation official, told an audience, Friday, at MTA Headquarters.

The Administration is seeking about \$250 billion for highway, transit and safety programs, Frankel said, as part of its transportation funding reauthorization effort. "It's not everything everybody wants, but it (funds) programs at quite substantial levels."

On Capitol Hill, meanwhile, the U.S. Senate has adopted a budget resolution calling for some \$310 billion for transportation. Frankel expects House leaders to introduce a bill in the next week or so proposing \$375 billion in transportation funding over six years.

"Our position is that Congress can and should pass a proved, responsible, constructive multi-year surface transportation authorization bill," he said. "And I think they can."

CEO Roger Snoble welcomes Emil H. Frankel, assistant secretary, U.S. DOT, to a Mobility-21 meeting.



The reauthorization bill would provide significant formula funding for MTA, including \$3.5 million for bus improvements and \$1 million for the Universal Fare System project. No funds were identified for the Eastside Light Rail Line.

CEO Roger Snoble introduced Frankel, assistant U.S. DOT secretary for transportation policy, during a meeting of the Mobility-21 Coalition, a Los Angeles County nonpartisan organization of transportation stakeholders.

"This is very much of interest to us in Mobility-21," Snoble said. "We need to have a prominent role in the reauthorization effort."

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IN MEMORIAM - Metro Blue Line employees have established an account with the MTA Credit Union to assist Service Attendant Andre Thomas whose toddler son, Andrew, died in a backyard accident, July 21. Andrew was buried Thursday, July 31, on what would have been his second birthday. Contributions can be made to the "Benefit of Andrew Thomas" at the MTA branch of the Northrup Grumman Federal Credit Union, located on the Plaza level of MTA Headquarters.

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PHOTO BY BILL HEARD



Volunteers from divisions prepared 200 pounds of carne asada and 40 pounds of hot links to serve hundreds of Rodeo spectators.

## 2003 Bus Rodeo – It was Fun in the Sun

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(July 22, 2003) It was hot and it was humid, but the weather would not deter hundreds from attending the MTA's annual Bus Rodeo, last Saturday, at Santa Anita.

Event attendees – MTA employees, their friends and families – took refuge from the bright sun under large tents while being soothed by the sounds of Motown, oldies and meringue tunes throughout the day.

South Bay Division 18 Bus Operator William Marshall, the Rodeo DJ, pumped out a plethora of musical selections from his own personal CD and record collection.

"I hope this brings an open ear to embrace everyone's music," Marshall said as he watched a small group of people grooving to a festive dance song.

Fifteen volunteer cooks from various departments, led by Alex DiNuzzo and Harold Torres, prepared a tasty barbeque lunch for hundreds of hungry attendees.

PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA



A young music fan hangs out at the DJ tent with disc jockey William Marshall, right, and co-worker Jesse Gibson.



Standing over a hot grill and sprayed with a light mist of water from nearby floor fans, the crew cooked up 200 pounds of carne asada and 40 pounds of hot links. Soda, chips, bread and tub-loads of potato salad and refried beans also were served.

#### Catching up with co-workers

DiNuzzo, a member of the cooking crew for the past nine years, enjoys this part of the event because it gives him the opportunity to catch up with co-workers he has not seen in awhile.

Because of his responsibility at the grill, old friends typically drop by to greet him while picking up their lunches. "If they want food or drinks, they have to come see me."

This year's car and motorcycle show produced a range of classic eye candy for Roadeo-goers. Eighteen contestants in all – 15 car owners and 3 motorcycle owners – showcased their pride and joy.

Carlos Rojas, car and motorcycle show coordinator, proudly displayed his tan 1969 VW Transporter – one of six classic cars he has collected and restored.

Winner of The Best of Show Import category, Rojas, a 27-year MTA veteran, shook his head and chuckled about his new award.

"I wasn't expecting to win anything," he said. "I guess it was sheer luck. The judges elected me because I was the only one who entered this category. I won by default."

#### Thrilled to win

Mike Flores was thrilled to learn that his 2003 Harley Davidson Soft Tail Deuce – a special anniversary edition

PHOTO OF LASD HELICOPTER BY LISA HUYNH

Five-year-old Victoria Dunning takes a seat in the Sheriff's Department helicopter.



Cliff Thorne's children happily claimed their father's prize as their own.

Carlos Rojas' 1969 VW Transporter was voted Best of Show Import.



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#### MTA BUS ROADEO CAR SHOW WINNERS

- Best of Show Bike: North Hollywood Division 7 Operator Mike Flores, Harley Davidson Soft Tail Deuce
- Best of Show Truck: Rich Wyman, 1956 Ford F-100 pickup
- Best of Show Car: Facilities Services Property Maintainer "A" Craig Bruns, 1956 Chevy 210 sedan
- Best of Show Custom: RRC Equipment Maintenance Instructor Richard Mensel, 1957 Chevy Wagon

Best of Show In-Progress: Crossroads

model – had been named the Best of Show Bike winner. Most of the day, he stood over a hot grill preparing carne asada as judges evaluated his shiny black chopper in the car show lot.

"I am completely surprised and very proud – especially since it's the 2003 Bus Rodeo," Flores said, gleefully. "I find it very appropriate that it coincides with the 2003 Harley Davidson."

The car and motorcycle show was not the only event that created overjoyed winners. A lunchtime raffle offered an assortment of prizes.

Cliff Thorne held the winning raffle ticket that made him the happy owner of a Snap-On toolbox and a shiny red go-cart.

"This is going to be for the kids," he said as his excited children jumped into the go-cart. "I'm not going to be able to get them out of it!"

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Division 2 Operator Lawrence Tubbs,  
1967 Chevelle Coupe

- Best of Show Classic: Carson Division 18  
Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Fred  
Vincelet, 1973 Dodge Challenger
  - Best of Show Import: RRC Maintenance  
Instructor Carlos Rojas, 1969 VW  
Transporter
  - Best of Show Low-Rider: Robert  
Gonzales, 1955 Chevy Bel-Air
  - Best of Show Muscle: Carson Division 18  
Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Gary  
Schachel, 1969 El Camino
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## *The Winners!*

- **Div. 9 Operator Mark Holland, Div. 5 Mechanics Win 2003 Bus Roadeo**

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Text and  
photos by  
**BILL HEARD,**  
Editor

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2003 MTA Bus Roadeo Champion Mark Holland of Division 9 signals his third victory.



Mechanics Frank Forde, center left, and Rommel Vargas of Division 5 celebrate their Roadeo victory with Maintenance Manager Alex DiNuzzo, South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey, Deputy CEO John Catoe and others. Not shown is team member Andrew Warren, Jr.

(July 22, 2003) Division 9 Operator Mark Holland posted his third MTA Bus Roadeo championship, Saturday, taking the 2003 competition. Mechanics Andrew Warren, Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde of Arthur Winston Division 5 won the maintenance competition.

The team will represent MTA at the APTA International Bus Roadeo, this September, in Salt Lake City and at the Southern California Regional Bus Roadeo, next month, in Chula Vista.

Holland, 43, a 20-year MTA veteran who also has worked as a Metro Rail operator, scored



an impressive 634 points. He won the MTA competition in 2001 and 1999. It was the first win for the Division 5 mechanics, who formed a new team this year.

Placing a close second in the operator's competition was Juan Navarro of North Los Angeles Division 3 with 614 points and Julio Flores of West Valley Division 8 with 585 points.

The Division 5 team led the maintenance competition with 775 points, but Gateway Division 10's team of Alan Wong, Doug Creveling and David Klinkenborg – the 2001 winners – finished a close second with 730 points. South Bay Division 18's Javier Soria, Mina Ros and Luke Logan – the 2002 winners – took third place with 665 points.

### **Celebrating victories**

Celebrating along with the top operators and teams were San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig and South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey. Gabig's sector claimed two of the top three operators and five of the top 10 scorers, while two of the three top-scoring maintenance teams hail from Coffey's sector.

An estimated 450 employees, family members and friends turned out on a blistering sunny day in Arcadia to watch the competition, participate in family activities, a classic car show and barbecue, and to renew old acquaintances.



Deputy CEO John Catoe, right, congratulates Operator Juan Navarro of Division 3, who placed second with 614 points.



Operator Julio Flores of West Valley Division 8 placed third with 585 points.



Gateway Division 10's team of Doug Creveling, Alan Wong and David Klinkenborg finished a close second with 730 points. Joining the team were Steve Mullaly, maintenance competition coordinator, Division 10 Maintenance Manager Pat Orr, Deputy CEO John Catoe and others.

In a secluded compound away from the crowd, maintenance teams raced against time to complete their portion of the competition.

The North Los Angeles Division 3 team of Tim Wong, Jose Gomez and Chris Hurtado placed fourth with 640 points. The Central City Division 1 team of Fred Hines, Gustavo Sanchez and Sergio Barron took fifth place with 575 points.



South Bay Division 18's Javier Soria, Mina Ros and Luke Logan took third place with 665 points. Congratulating the team were Maintenance Manager Ken Matsuno, South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and Deputy CEO John Catoe.

In sixth place was the Crossroads Depot Division 2 team of Juan Villalba, Andrew Filimaua and Ed Hernandez with 555 points. Venice Division 6's team of John Edrich, Naren Desai and Jesus Guerra placed seventh with 545 points.

The Regional Rebuild Center's team of Tony Herumin, Cal Tran and Robert Pfile finished eighth with 415 points. In ninth place was the West Valley Division 8 team of Jeremy Lockwood, Simon Agaronov and Ryszard Sciclowski with 310 points.

### **Operator finalists**

Final results in the operators' competition showed Daniel Keosababian of Division 3, the 2002 Roadeo winner, in fifth place with 572 points; Joe Acosta, Division 3, 571; Ramiro Mota, Division 1, 563; Theodore Neill, Division 8, 560; and Luduvico Castro, Division 9, 558 points.

Also, Lawrence Tubbs, Division 2, 556 points; Brian Miles, Division 3, 529; Samuel Morales, Division 1, 524; James Hazelitt, Division 10, 518; Hugo Mercado, Division 1, 513; Maximiliano De Angelis, Division 7, 484; and Jorge Melendez, Division 7, 474.

Also, Hugo Repreza, Division 15, 474 points; Steve Vaden, Division 10, 471; Alex Reyes, Division 7, 466; Joaquin Barron-Hernandez, Division 5, 459; Juan Medrano, Division 9, 458; Nipon Pasaphunthu, Division 3, 444; and Adolfo Cortez, Division 10, 431 points.

Also, Ben Flores, Division 2, 431 points; Jose Sierra, Division 2, 415; Edwin Cerros, Division 2, 408; David Aguilar, Division 1, 403; Marco Mejia-Portillo, Division 1, 399; Jose Herrera, Division 9, 396; and Andre Burroughs, Division 7, 358 points.

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## Mechanics Felt the Pressure as the Clock Wound Down

By LISA HUYNH

(July 22, 2003) Under scorching heat and humid air, nine teams of mechanics took "working under pressure" to a whole new level, Saturday, at the 2003 MTA Bus Rodeo.

Arthur Winston Division 5 mechanics Andrew Warren, Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde epitomized what fierce competition is all about, taking home top honors with an impressive 775 points.

"I was very excited when we won," says Division 5 Maintenance Manager Alex Di'Nuzzo. "We've taken second and third place in previous years, but never first. We finally did it this year."

Gateway Division 10's Alan Wong, Doug Creveling and David Klinkenborg, walked away with second place again this year with a score of 730.

South Bay Division 18's Javier Soria, Mina Ros and Luke Logan - last year's first place winner - placed third with 665 points. The team also won an award for a perfect score on the A/C (air-conditioning) module event.

### 'Sometimes you win....'

"Last year everything went well for us and we won," says Javier Soria, Division 3 team captain. "Unfortunately, we didn't get the engine running this time. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose."

North Los Angeles Division 3 placed fourth, but took home an award for scoring the highest points in the ABS brake board portion, getting 250 out of a possible 350.

"We placed fifth in 2002, but were hoping to take first this year," Division 3 team member Jose Gomez said as he anxiously waited for the final tally.

With an addition to the written test, ASB brake board, bus inspection and engine test, the A/C module event was thrown into the mix to stir things up.

"Although we added the A/C portion to this year's rodeo, it will not be calculated into the final team score," said Senior Equipment Maintenance Instructor Steve Mullaly. "We're preparing them for the national competition because A/C will be tabulated into the final score."

Equipment Maintenance Instructor Walt Graham has been involved with the Rodeo



Above, Division 3's Tim Wong, Jose Gomez and Chris Hurtado try to correctly diagnose seven defects on the ABS brake board. Below, Division 18's Javier Soria and Mina Ros have ten minutes to find seven defects and get the engine started.





since 1994. "I think the Rodeo is one of the best things MTA has to offer because of the integrity. MTA can use this as a measuring stick to see how well its people are doing."

Other teams participating in the Rodeo included Divisions 1, 2, 6, 8 and the Regional Rebuild Center.

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With the Santa Anita Racetrack as a Rodeo backdrop, Joaquin Barron-Hernandez of Division 5 swerves through the cones, trying to maneuver quickly and precisely. [See article.](#)



PHOTOS: FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

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## Bus Operators Sweat Through Tough Rodeo Competition

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 22, 2003) Sweat dripped from their brows and buses replaced horses as operators saddled up to compete, last Saturday, not in a bronco bustin' contest, but in the 28th Annual MTA Bus Rodeo.

"We have a lot of outstanding drivers, but this group represents the top notch, Deputy CEO John Catoe said as he watched the competition. "Everybody is good, but then you have those that are great. These are our great operators and mechanics that are demonstrating their skills today."

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Nipon Pasaphunthu of Division 3 races through the competition sporting a new paint job on his Metro Rapid.



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Knowing they represent the best, operators still felt the tension of the competition as the crowd settled in their seats to watch.

"I just try to calm down and not get nervous; I try not to let the

competition get to me,” Operator Joe Acosta said as he waited for his name to be called to compete.

“The competition is good today,” 2002 winner Dan Keosababian said as he looked at the group of operators beside him. “If you mess up early in the course, it can rattle you.”

### Preparing for Salt Lake

The 11-obstacle course helps prepare the winner for the competition in the APTA International Rodeo, which takes place in September at Salt Lake City.

“The obstacles challenge skill level and every type of movement operators would use on the street,” Rodeo Coordinator Frank Cecere said. “All the obstacles are within a 2-3 inch clearance from the bus, so they have to be right on.”

Many were on point, but Mark Holland — previous two-time Rodeo winner — was right on. He finished Saturday’s event as a three-time winner with a score of 634. Holland will represent MTA at Salt Lake City.

After the final contestant completed the course, operators could set aside the competitive spirit, relax and join in the other Rodeo festivities.

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Judges are dwarfed by the maneuvering coaches.



“The Rodeo emphasizes the safety and the skill of our operators,” Catoe said as a bus finished the competition and fans cheered. “The second issue is fun — to get our employees and their families together to celebrate what operators do.”

With their families and coworkers gathered at the table, operators told jokes and remembered good old times over lunch.

“What makes it a successful Rodeo is the camaraderie between operators,” Cecere said as the emcee announced the next competitor. “They get to see old friends — people they started working with years ago that they lost touch with. They all meet again here at the Rodeo.”

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[GO TO>](#) Officials Will Dedicate Metro Gold Line in Friday Ceremonies

## 9 Operators Chosen for Metro Gold Line Inaugural Runs

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(July 24, 2003) A nine-operator crew was chosen, this week, to drive the VIP trains during Friday's Metro Gold Line inauguration ceremony at Union Station – an event that has been months in the making.

Operator Ruben Ramirez will have the honor of piloting the very first train and breaking through a bright gold inaugural banner held by Operators Miquel Rukos, a 31-year MTA veteran and Daryl Roberts, a 19-year veteran.

Metro Rail Operators Joann Derbigne, Mike Hubler, Lorne Currie, Resendo Reyes, Mary Barrios and Albert Dominguez also will be operating trains throughout the day, or will serve as backup operators.



PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON

Operator Ruben Ramirez looks ahead to the dedication of the Gold Line, when he will pilot the inaugural train to Union Station.

Metro Gold Line supervisors selected the inaugural operators based on their expertise and their involvement in the original start-up team, says Division Transportation Manager Roman Alarcon.

Of Ramirez, Alarcon says, "He's a great operator, always willing to go the extra mile and always concerned about safety. It's an honor to drive the first train and that's why I wanted to have an original team member as part of the inaugural crew."

Ramirez, a 22-year MTA veteran, left the Metro Blue Line and joined the start-up team when it first began last July. Now, one year later, he can hardly contain his excitement about being the Metro Gold Line inaugural operator.

### An unforgettable experience

"I can't believe the line is opening already," Ramirez says. "It's been a long haul. It's been an experience I'll never forget."

Reyes was informed of his role in the inauguration last Sunday. He will be stationed in the tail track at Union Station as support in the event that other operators become overloaded with passengers.

"I feel proud to be chosen to participate," he says.

With perhaps 600 VIP riders, staff, media and others expected on Friday, Reyes says he anticipates that his assistance will be needed. Five trains, plus a standby train in the Midway Yard, are scheduled to provide VIP service.

Operators prepared themselves for the inauguration by performing a dry run on Monday, which consisted of regular operations and the

banner-breaking process.

Ramirez says he is honored to have an integral role in Friday's event and the opportunity to work beside others who have toiled endlessly in the development of the line.

"It's been a team effort for everyone involved in this project," Ramirez said. "We're all in this together."

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PHOTO: FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN



Construction workers modify fuel tank at Division 11.

## **\$6 Million Project Upgrades Division Fuel Tank Systems**

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 23, 2003) MTA is upgrading fuel piping and storage tanks at nine operating divisions in a \$6 million project aimed at improving safety and meeting state environmental guidelines.

Begun in June, the work involves excavating old underground fuel tanks and replacing them with new tanks and piping. Now in progress at Metro Blue Line Division 11 and West Hollywood Division 7, the project also will include divisions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9.

"By upgrading these tanks, we prevent the possibilities of any releases into the ground water or soil," Environmental Specialist Tom Kefalas says.

Each division upgrade will take about a month. Kefalas expects the entire project to be completed by March, 2004.

Although the regulations put in place by the Regional Water Quality Control Board are not yet being enforced, MTA's environmental compliance department is ensuring that the divisions are up to standards.

"The current tanks are serviceable, but if the modifications are not met MTA will end up being fined, so we are being proactive about meeting this guideline," Kefalas says. "The fines could be up to \$10,000 per day until the problem is fixed, but it's at the discretion of the inspector looking at the project."

### **Space could be tight**

While the construction takes place, space at the divisions could be tight due to construction equipment and the placement of soil that has been removed from the ground.

"We will work around the space issue by adjusting to bus schedules during high traffic time and stockpiling soil away from the crowded spaces at the division," Kefalas says. "The bottom line is there will be a



space crunch while the work is being done, but it's just a speed bump that will not effect the performance of the division."

Besides schedule and space concerns, there is the issue of safety. During construction, heavy machinery will be in use and there will be holes in the ground.

"We will be more cautious about being safe," Kefalas says. "It boils down to having good communication with the division manager while we are there."

After the project is completed, the new storage tanks will be monitored 24 hours a day by an electronic leak detection system and will be inspected annually to ensure that tanks are safe and without leaks.

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## **Metro Gold Line Festivities**

### **Fun, Food and Entertainment**

By DAVE SOTERO

(July 23, 2003) MTA will celebrate the opening of the Metro Gold Line with fun-filled family events at seven of the 13 stations this Saturday and Sunday, July 26-27.

Opening weekend rides will be free, and entertainment, community booths, refreshments and food are just some of the activities planned at the seven stations. Parking will be very limited.

Saturday's community events will take place from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. On Sunday, July 27, events are scheduled between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Here is a list of stations where events are planned and a preview of daylong festivities:

#### **Union Station**

Food, "Tropical Punch" band, karaoke, LA Dodgers batting cages, civic, business and community booths.

#### **Chinatown Station**

(901 North Spring Street, LA)

Chinese singers and dancers, fashion and puppet shows, martial arts demonstrations, musical performances, acrobats, farmer's market.

#### **Heritage Square/Arroyo Station**

(3545 Pasadena Avenue, Los Angeles)

DJ, trackless train rides for kids, petting zoo, balloon artists, face painters, clowns, rock climbing, local musical groups and mariachis, folklorico dancing.

#### **Highland Park Station**

(151 North Avenue 57, LA)

Latino Grammy award-winning band, "Quetzal", local all-female rock bands, Metro Experience mobile safety theater, clowns, live radio remotes, karaoke contest, local artisans, free health screenings, free admission to Southwest Museum, traffic safety rodeo, Kid's Space.

#### **Mission Street Station**

(905 Meridian Avenue, South Pasadena)

Horse drawn trolleys, vintage auto show, children's pony rides and coloring activities, model railroad display, local restaurant food samples, community booths, portrait photographer, Dixieland and swing bands, square dancers.

#### **Memorial Park Station**

(125 East Holly Street, Pasadena)

"El Chicano" band, jazz combo, 17-piece orchestra, face painters, mimes, clowns, Old Pasadena merchant booths.

#### **Sierra Madre Villa Station**

(Sierra Madre Villa Avenue, Pasadena)

Local restaurant food and drink samples, banjo players, guitarists, fiddlers, artists and entertainment, Sierra Madre and Pasadena cultural interest booths.

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**GOLD RUSH** - Opening weekend volunteers line up for their Discover Gold T-shirts and caps.



PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

## **A Golden Moment for Metro Gold Line Volunteers**

(July 23, 2003) It was a golden moment for the 350-plus MTA employees who have volunteered to staff the Metro Gold Line's opening festivities this weekend.

Packed into the Board room, Wednesday morning, enthusiasm was running high among volunteers as Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis and a bevy of high school cheerleaders – pom-poms flashing – led the group in the wave.

G!! O!! L!! D!! – they shouted. Each section of the room trying to out-yell the other.

"I can feel the excitement in the air," CEO Roger Snoble told the volunteers. "The whole community feels it. We have an opportunity to open a new service and to do it really well. This is hugely important to the MTA."

Located around the room were placards bearing the names of the seven rail stations where activities are scheduled Saturday and Sunday.

"The Metro Gold Line is a piece of a puzzle – a piece of a system that's being developed to move people throughout this county," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "It's taken a lot of work by many people. You all have a great deal to be proud of."

Opening weekend volunteers will be recognizable by their yellow T-shirts and khaki caps. The theme: Discover Gold!

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**GO TEAM** - Cheered on by CEO Roger Snoble, Deputy CEO John Catoe and Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, Benjamin Franklin High School cheerleaders make the point: Gold is the word for the weekend.



Records Clerk Barbara Trigg has staffed all but one Metro Rail opening in the last 13 years.



"I can feel the excitement," CEO Roger Snoble told the volunteers.

## Officials Will Dedicate Metro Gold Line in Friday Ceremonies

(July 24, 2003) An array of local, state and federal officials will assemble at Union Station, Friday morning, to officially dedicate the Metro Gold Line – the latest addition to a growing Southern California rail network.



PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON

Gold Line train awaits dedication ceremony at historic Union Station.

[READ> "9 Operators Chosen For Metro Gold Line Inaugural Runs"](#)

MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky, CEO Roger Snoble and other MTA officials and staff will host an expected 500 VIP guests and a large contingent of regional and national media for opening ceremonies in the historic station's ticket room.

When the formal event ends, the VIPs will gather on the Track Two platform to welcome the inaugural Metro Gold Line train, driven by Metro Rail Operator Ruben Ramirez. The train is expected to break

through a large "Discover Gold" banner sometime after about 11:15 a.m.

(Employees should be able to watch the break-through from the upper floors of MTA Headquarters overlooking Union Station.)

### VIP train ride

Following the break-through, the VIPs will board the inaugural train and several backup trains for the short trip to Memorial Park station in Pasadena, where they will be greeted by city officials.

The 13.7-mile light-rail line, which opens to the public this weekend, has 13 stations located along a line that links downtown Los Angeles and Sierra Madre Villa in East Pasadena via Chinatown, Highland Park, South Pasadena and Pasadena.

Free rides will be offered on the Metro Gold Line, Saturday and Sunday, and there will be free family fun at a number of stations along the alignment. Community events are scheduled at Union Station, Chinatown, Heritage Square/Arroyo, Highland Park, Mission Street, Memorial Park and Sierra Madre Villa.

Some 350 employee volunteers from throughout MTA will help staff the community events to provide crowd control, directions and information. Sheriff's deputies and security assistants, volunteers and Explorers from the Transit Services Bureau also will be on hand to provide security.

The opening of the Metro Gold Line will expand Metro Rail to 73.1 miles. The line will be the fourth rail service – after the Metro Blue, Red and Green Lines – to be operated by MTA.

### 26,000 to 32,000 boardings

In the first year of operation, the Metro Gold Line is expected to

carry an average 26,000 to 32,000 boarding passengers each weekday. Cost of the system, including rail cars and various improvements to the line, is estimated at \$859 million.

The Metro Gold Line will operate every 10 minutes on weekdays during peak morning and afternoon rush hours. Trains will operate every 12 minutes during mid-day and every 20 minutes during late-night hours.

On weekends, early morning and late-night trains will operate every 20 minutes. Mid-day service will operate every 12 minutes until approximately 7 p.m. Hours of operation will be from 4 a.m. to 2 a.m. seven days a week.

The Metro Gold Line was constructed by the Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Construction Authority. Testing of the system was turned over to the MTA in mid-April. MTA has over the last three months conducted extensive pre-revenue train and systems testing.

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## 'Today isn't Friday. It's WOW day!'

—Doug Duplisea, Kiewit/Washington, Metro Gold Line contractor

> Metro Gold Line contractor Doug Duplisea hands over the keys to the Metro Gold Line to MTA CEO Roger Snoble at Friday's dedication ceremony.



PHOTO BY RICHARD CORNUBERT

### VIPs, Pyrotechnics Welcome Opening of Metro Gold Line

(July 25, 1993) The future arrived at Union Station in a burst of pyrotechnics, Friday morning, when a gleaming white train burst through a large "Discover Gold" banner to the applause of several hundred officials, MTA staff and guests.



PHOTO BY LAURA WOODWARD

The opening of the Metro Gold Line marks the first time in almost 50 years that downtown Los Angeles and communities along the way to Pasadena have been connected by light-rail service. Coming up in the near future: construction of a rail line extension into East Los Angeles.

The VIPs were still clapping as Operator Ruben Ramirez eased the inaugural train to a stop alongside the Track Two platform. They peered through the windows, trying to see who already was aboard.

PHOTO BY LAURA WOODWARD

Ramirez opened the doors and out stepped the very symbols of American achievement: six Olympic gold medal winners.

Greeting the waiting crowd were swimmers John Naber, a



four-time medallist at the 1976 Olympics, and Bruce Furniss, winner of two medals at the '76 Olympics. They were joined by track and field medallists Bob Seagren, Inger Miller, Jeanette Bolden and Danny Everett.



Olympian Gold Medallist Bob Seagren greets the Gold Line's first passengers.

With welcoming ceremonies concluded, the VIPs and guests began boarding the inaugural train for a ride to Memorial Park station in Pasadena where they were greeted by city officials. Backup trains carried the overflow crowd.

PHOTO BY LAURA WOODWARD



Flanked by City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, left, and County Supervisor Gloria Molina, right, Mayor Jim Hahn cuts the official ribbon. Below, MTA Board Members John Fasana and Frank Roberts, with Rail TOS Ricardo Perez, signal victory as they board the inaugural train.



CEO Roger Snoble, accompanied by his wife, Kit, found it "absolutely indescribable" to be aboard the inaugural train. "This is the next step toward the future. The next step in expanding the system to be able to handle greater numbers of people, to be able to offer faster and safer service."

General Manager Gerald Francis, celebrating his first opening since taking the reins of Metro Rail a year and a

half ago, said, "Everybody in this agency has worked so hard to make this happen. I'm proud to be a part of it and I appreciate my Metro Rail team – they've done a lot of work."

Melvin Clark, director, Rail Transportation, was excited about the inaugural events, but said he

is looking forward to the opening of regular service on Monday.

"I want to take care of our bread and butter and that's our everyday passengers," he said. "We really have to shine. I think Monday is going to be more exciting for me."

Remarks by VIPs during the opening ceremonies at Union Station included these comments:

County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, as master of ceremonies, welcomed guests by noting that, "Today marks a day that we can really feel that...(we are)...developing a transportation system that serves the region. We will never solve the traffic problem, but what we can do is offer people who sit in traffic all day long an alternative."

Mayor James Hahn, who recalled riding the last Red Car 40 years ago with his father, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, and his sister, Janet, now an LA City Council member, got into the spirit of the moment.

PHOTO BY RICHARD CORNUBERT



Remarks on stage accompanied awards and congratulatory commendations. Here Los Angeles City Councilman Ed Reyes presents the official "Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Gold Line" resolution signed by Mayor James Hahn and the entire City Council.

"For Los Angeles, for Pasadena, for the San Gabriel Valley, for all of Southern California, I just want to say: All Aboard!"

"This is a great day," the mayor continued, "because we have a rail network that will connect people to their jobs, their schools, and give them an opportunity to visit landmarks and attractions all over the city."

County Supervisor Gloria Molino paid tribute to the people in the neighborhoods where construction took place. "Today, we can celebrate this wonderful Gold Line that will go through our neighborhoods and will facilitate transportation for everyone in our community...."

PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

County Supervisor Mike Antonovich drew a historical reference. "Just as the Gold Rush opened the door to California's future, this Gold Line opens to the door to a future cost-effective regional transit system for Los Angeles County."

LA City Councilman Ed Reyes, chairman of the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority and a member of the Metro Gold Line Transition Committee, described the diverse people who live in communities along the rail line.



All Aboard: County Supervisor and MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky, center, shows his set of Gold Line keys to, from left, Los Angeles City Councilwoman Janice Hahn, Mayor Jim Hahn, City Councilman Ed Reyes and County Supervisor Mike Antonovich on the inaugural ride to Pasadena.

"These communities represent the world," he said. "You have people who speak...many dialects and languages and they'll be getting together once or twice a day to share an experience, a ride on the Gold Line. I believe that is the future of the city."

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## Moments from a Golden Weekend

- [Puppets Captivate Chinatown Audiences During Opening Weekend](#)  
--By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA
- [Highland Park Station Receives Blessings in Song, Dance and Prayer](#)  
--By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN
- [Rocking the Afternoon Away at Memorial Park](#)  
--By LISA HUYNH

<See metro.net report> [‘Squeeze’ was the Word as Riders Packed Gold Line Trains](#)

### **Puppets Captivate Chinatown Audiences During Opening Weekend**

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(July 29, 2003) While many of the performers at the Chinatown Station captivated audiences with song and dance, twin brothers Sean and Patrick Johnson used puppets to convey a message of honesty to children in their show “Chen Ping and his Magic Ax.”



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

Scenes from a puppet show: The LA Puppet Professionals take the stage in Chinatown.

The brothers began their journey into puppetry about 13 years ago in their hometown of San Leandro. Only junior high school students at the time, the Johnsons gravitated toward the unique art form following the death of a childhood hero.

“We’re big fans of the Muppets,” Patrick said. “When Jim Henson passed away, it had a huge impact on us and so we started building sock puppets right then and there.”

Now, at 26, the two own their own business – The LA Puppet Professionals – and perform shows at public libraries, carnivals, elementary schools, the LA Zoo and other venues. The brothers were eager to participate in opening weekend because they had anticipated the operation of the line for some time.

“We’ve been hearing about the Gold Line forever,” said Sean. “We do a lot of shows in Pasadena and we would always see the test trains going by. It was really exciting to hear that we were going to be at this event. It’s neat to be part of LA history.”

## Highland Park Station Receives Blessings in Song, Dance and Prayer

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 29, 2003)  
Adorned with feathery headdresses that swayed with the movements of the traditional dance, members of Danza Tenochtitlan joined with a local minister to bless the opening of the Metro Gold Line's Highland Park station.

PHOTO BY FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN



"Danza Tenochtitlan" dancers perform a traditional song and dance to bless the opening of the Gold Line at Highland Park Station.

"We thank you, Lord, for the Gold Line and all the people that worked on it," said Bishop William Cruver of the Pillar of Fire Church.

Following the bishop's prayer, the Los Angeles Indigenous Peoples Alliance dancers began their blessing with drumbeats and incense.

As the drums beat grew louder, the group began to dance on the hot cement with their bare feet, slowly, then faster, keeping pace with the drum beat. Singers joined in, and the blessing continued as more dancers joined the celebration.

"The dance has been preserved for many generations, and it joins the people," LAIPA song and dance leader Sergio Ruiz said. "Today the dance is a blessing for the Metro Gold Line."

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## Rocking the Afternoon Away at Memorial Park

By LISA HUYNH

(July 29, 2003) Rex's Band rocked the afternoon away at the Memorial Park station, Saturday, with cool tunes from the '40s and '50s, as well as modern rock 'n roll.

PHOTO BY LISA HUYNH



Rex's Band played on at Memorial Park Station.

Their perfect harmony and undeniable chemistry got the audience of Metro Gold Line dancing and clapping to the beat.

"We're just looking to have a good time today," said band leader Rex Merriweather.

This 13-piece band, with its saxophones, trumpets, trombone, drums, bass and vocals, has been making beautiful music together for only a few months.

"It's really hard to describe the feeling when I play music," says Rex Merriweather. "There's nothing else like it. When you're creating and arranging music and making it your own, it's such a thrill."

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PHOTO BY BILL HEARD



All aboard at Union Station.

## 'Squeeze'

### was the Word as Riders Packed Gold Line Trains

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 29, 2003) Snapshots of the Metro Gold Line opening weekend:

- People waiting in line at the Highland Park station for the Metro Experience 3-D safety show.
- Four Chinese men in straw hats conversing in their native tongue on the southbound trip to Chinatown.
- The Sparkletts guy dispensing 500 gallons of water 3½ ounces at a time to thirsty patrons at Sierra Madre Villa.
- A guy in an "Ostrich Airlines" T-shirt at Mission station asking whether he can take his bike on the train.
- Happy kids riding the ponies at Heritage Square/Arroyo station.
- People trying to squeeze onto a packed train at Memorial Park station as a mother tries to push a baby carriage out the door.

In fact, "squeeze" was the operative word both Saturday and Sunday as the Metro Gold Line played to SRO crowds anxious to be counted among those who would be first to ride Southern California's newest rail line.

<See metro.net report>

[Moments from a Golden Weekend](#)

### Metro Gold Line's Wild Ride

"I'm just truly, truly excited about the Gold



Line opening," said patron Joan Caron, as she boarded a train. "I was so excited I could hardly sleep last night. This is history and I wanted to be a part of it."

Rail Operations estimates 79,000 riders on Saturday and 80,000 on Sunday – a total of 159,000 – also wanted to be a part of history.

On the platform at Union Station, Monday morning, Transportation Manager Roman Alarcon acknowledged a few glitches in Saturday's operation, but by Sunday the operation was very smooth. "We had everybody on the same team."

Metro Rail Custodian Juanita LeRoux, assigned to four mid-route stations, was amazed at the number of people who came out for the weekend's free rides. "A lot of people," was all she could say.

Among the passengers was an eight-member delegation of officials from the Phoenix Public Transit Department who came to LA to experience a rail line opening. Phoenix is planning a 20-mile line connecting the downtown area with Tempe.

### **A carnival atmosphere**



Long lines greet Gold Line train at Mission Station.



4-quad crossing gates guard Mission Station intersection.



Shady lane at Mission Station.



Heading north toward Sierra Madre Villa almost 14 miles away, the trains passed station after station where a carnival atmosphere prevailed. Food booths featuring kettle corn, hot dogs, shave ice and pizza were intermixed with booths for local museums and civic associations. Music and entertainment also kept crowds amused.



Artist Michael Stutz' bronze "walking man" joins the line for the train at Mission Station. Below, Chinatown Youth Association performs lion dance to scare away evil spirits at Chinatown Station.

Mid-morning Saturday, Transit Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein and his wife, Ilene, a deputy sheriff, were observing the situation at Mission station. "Everything's going very smoothly and everybody's happy. It's a great time and opportunity to showcase the new system," he said.



On Monday, Sheriff's Lt. Mike Parker reported that, despite the enormous turnout, deputies had made only two arrests during the Metro Gold Line festivities – a drunk and a man who made the mistake of spitting on an undercover officer.

At the Highland Park station where people lined up for the Metro Experience safety show, Communications Officer Joanne Longsdon was encouraged that people were asking for Metro Bus schedules and wanted information about MTA's other rail lines.

### **'Not just a Gold Line event'**

"When you think about it," she said, "it's not just a Gold Line event. It's for our whole system, because you can't take one without the other."

Olivia Martinez, who lives on Avenue 57, said she plans to use the system as soon as she can find a job. A resident until recently of Mexico City, she enjoys using mass transit and plans to use LA's Metro system.

Mark Anthony Williams, a young sight-impaired man, said he'll use

the Metro Gold Line to travel from his new independent-living home to the college he's planning to attend.

At Heritage Square station, children took rides on a mini-train and bounced in two big jumpers. Families joined the surrounding community to enjoy the sounds of mariachi bands and the music of the Franklin High School Band.

"There are over 30 booths sponsored by community organizations, so it's an opportunity for the community to know what kind of resources are available," said Yvette Robles, senior communications officer.

In Chinatown, people crowded narrow College Street to feast on a variety of Asian cuisine and experience the essence of Chinese culture. Vendors presented a range of colorful products – from intricate beaded jewelry to four-foot high tahlia flowers.

### **Gyrating to the drumbeats**

Spectators marveled at the lion dance – a traditional Chinese custom performed to ward off bad spirits and bring good luck and prosperity. Dancers wearing a long, white lion costume moved about the street, gyrating to rhythmic drumbeats.

"We want people to know that the Gold Line has opened and the station is just a few feet away from the heart of Chinatown," said Holly Barnhill of the Chinatown Business Council.

Crowded with more people than the 5 o'clock rush hour, Union Station became a hotbed of excitement and activities. MTA volunteers in gold T-shirts serenaded riders with the oldies song, "Do the Locomotion," on the karaoke machine.

Thousands of people eager to take their first ride on the Metro Gold Line formed a line that stretched from Track 1 to the P-1 parking structure beneath the Plaza.

Nearby, members of MTA's Communications Department spent all day handing out plastic goodie bags and information to a never-ending line of riders.

Deputy Executive Officer Warren Morse estimated 5,200 bags had been distributed by 4 p.m., Saturday, with another full day of free rides to go.

"Everyone's in a very good mood," he said. "Many people are coming by and saying, 'Thank you, welcome to the neighborhood!'"

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Interns Lisa Huynh, Adrienne Figueroa and Franklin Holman contributed to this article.

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CEO Roger Snoble calls all-staff meeting to review successful opening of Metro Gold Line.

### CEO Praises Employees for Metro Gold Line Startup

(July 29, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble had words of praise, Tuesday morning, for those who got the Metro Gold Line system up and running and for all who volunteered for last weekend's grand opening.

At an all-staff meeting, Snoble said the completion of construction, the successful pre-revenue operation and the weekend's smooth inaugural operation has him thinking that, "maybe there's a little 'Gold Magic' to this line."

Overall, he said, "The system performed very well," a tribute to employees who worked to get the system running and to those who volunteered for the opening weekend.

**All volunteers:** "This was truly a unique experience. The work you have done is very commendable. You should all be very proud of what's occurred over the last weekend. It's something you'll be able to tell your children and grandchildren about."

**The Sheriff's Department:** "The Sheriff's Department anticipated everything. You couldn't go anywhere in the system without seeing their presence. They were around the crowds, on their Segways, they had horses and dogs and undercover officers. I was very impressed with the whole operation."

**MTA Security:** "They were out there being helpful and friendly, looking good. People knew they were in good hands. That makes a big difference when you're dealing with a large number of people."

**Metro Rail Operations:** "They really trained. They did things right everywhere along the line. They were prepared for every eventuality. They just did a super job. This was the smoothest startup operation I've ever seen."

**The Communications Department:** "We had good press (more than

\$1 million in favorable publicity) and that's not just because we're lucky. A lot of hard work went into it. We also had a huge marketing promotion that was done very efficiently. You couldn't go anywhere around town without seeing 'Discover Gold.'"

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## GM David Armijo Looks Back at SF Valley Sector's First Year

By LISA HUYNH

(July 30, 2003) San Fernando Valley General Manager David Armijo looks back on a year of success and is proud to be part of a growing sector.

Officially launched in July 2002, the San Fernando Valley and San Gabriel Valley sectors were the first of five to open for business. Under MTA's new service concept, the sectors were designed to improve bus service, reliability and customer satisfaction.

To kick off another busy year, San Fernando Valley scheduled an open house celebration, this afternoon, at sector headquarters in Chatsworth. West Valley Division 8 and East Valley Division 15 held parties earlier this month.

"The employees play a critical role in the success of the sector," says Armijo. "They are the ambassadors, especially the operators, mechanics and service attendants. I think we're one of the best sectors out there."



San Fernando Valley  
General Manager David  
Armijo.



Division 8, above, and Division 15, below, celebrate the San Fernando Valley service sector's first year of operation.



Looking back on his first year of operation, Armijo believes that rolling out the sector ahead of schedule enabled him to set up goals and objectives early on.

"Making sure that we had a good product on the road was a primary goal because that's what our customers see," he says. "Our buses are cleaner and they just look better."



Armijo wants to build on the success of the first year by making improvements that will positively affect passenger service. In an interview with metro.net, he looked back at the sector's first year.

**Q. What comes to mind when you think about this past year?**

**A.** Part of what we did was to establish a foundation. We've done a lot to reduce Worker's Compensation costs; we've improved our on-time performance; and we've improved our maintenance programs. Absences have also been down. I see that the employees are more engaged and excited. I think we're one of the best sectors out there. Both operating divisions 8 and 15 are doing a good job. It's a great place to be.

**Q. What are the high points?**

**A.** The fact that we rolled out two weeks ahead of schedule gave us a head start. Our new headquarters was a former golf facility driving range. The facility maintenance team did a good job of modeling the building and getting us in two weeks ahead of time. Our sector has always shown initiative. A lot of creativity came out of this sector like abating the graffiti and coming up with different ideas to reduce cost.

**Q. What was most difficult challenge?**

**A.** Being the new kid on the block (coming from the Orange County Transportation Authority), I had to try to pull together people with different styles and build a working team. We had to build trust fairly quickly to make it work. I feel fortunate that I had a good team of highly performing individuals who continue to show ingenuity and initiative.

**Q. What roles do the staff and employees play?**

**A.** The employees play a critical role in the success of the sector. They are the ambassadors, especially the operators, mechanics and service attendants. Making sure that we had a good product on the road was a primary goal because that's what our customers see. I think continuity has been key here. We have ultimately the same players since we started a year ago. We've had little or no turn over, although we've had some recent changes of management.

**Q. What role does your Governance Council play?**

**A.** The Governance Council is an interesting development because it gives us the opportunity to get some feedback. Many of the people on our Governance Council are our riders, so that gives us an opportunity to see how we're doing. It's a check and balance on our performance. They focus on the service itself.

**Q. What do you hope to accomplish in your next year of operation?**

**A.** It'll be easier to build on the success of the first year because we have the team in place. We can start focusing on the things we haven't gotten to in our strategic plan. We're still working on bus cleaning. We've come up with a number of initiatives as far as mitigating graffiti and scratches on bus windows. We're also working on improving on-time performance and preventing bus breakdowns. Just focusing on things that will positively affect service so we can have fewer complaints and problems. And I think that will result in more ridership and more revenue.

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A volunteer walks the line at the Chinatown Station. What's his story?



PHOTOS BY JUAN OCAMPO

## Metro Gold Line Volunteers: Share Your Opening Weekend Experiences

(July 30, 2003) Calling all Metro Gold Line volunteers! Do you have a heartwarming, inspirational or funny story about something that happened during the Metro Gold Line opening weekend? *metro.net* would like to publish your story on the MTA Intranet. Write up your experience in 125 words or less and e-mail it to *metro.net* editor Bill Heard at [heardw@mta.net](mailto:heardw@mta.net). Before submitting the story, highlight it and use the "word count" function under "Tools" on your PC toolbar to determine your story's word count. Please submit your Metro Gold Line story by noon, Thursday, Aug. 7. The editor reserves the right to edit all stories and may choose not to use some story submissions.



Marketing group staffs the Union Station information booth, where volunteers handed out an estimated 5,200 Metro Gold Line bags on Saturday and some 4,400 bags on Sunday. There's a story there somewhere.

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## Fuel Cell Bus Cruises the Streets in a Test of Abilities

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(July 31, 2003) The most technologically advanced bus to hit the streets of Los Angeles is now on loan to MTA from the Air Quality Management District and ISE Research Corp. in San Diego.



MTA is evaluating the hydrogen-powered fuel cell bus, which has been cruising the streets of Los Angeles since July 7, and will continue in testing through Aug. 7. The possible future of transit, the fuel cell bus is truly "Zero-emission," and features extremely quiet operation.

"We are testing this bus in aggressive, stop-and-go service on some of our toughest routes to put this bus through its paces," says Michael Bottone, MTA's Director of Vehicle Technology.

During the test, the fuel cell bus follows a Metro Bus in revenue service over such routes as Line 40 from South Bay Galleria to Union Station, Line 2 on Sunset Boulevard, and Line 4 on Santa Monica Boulevard.

The testing also considers weight, durability and fuel range. The bus will have covered more than 1,400 miles of service when the testing is complete.

"We've been following 'in-service' MTA buses to get a handle on how this bus will perform," says Bottone. "When the bus we're following pulls in, the fuel cell bus operator pulls in. When the in-service bus pulls out, we pull out. This way we are putting the bus through the same paces of stop-and-go operation."

### Outstanding performance

The fuel cell has demonstrated outstanding performance thus far in the testing period.

"So far we have not had any down time due to the fuel cell," Bottone says. "Every time we turn it on, the fuel cell is ready to go."

Despite the fact that the fuel cell has performed well, there are obstacles to overcome before it will be used – namely price.

"The cost of fuel cells right now is horrendous," Bottone says.

"If you wrap it all together, the bus, the integrator and the fuel cell, it would cost \$3.2 million per vehicle, as opposed to a standard bus at about \$320,000."

**How it Works** - Hydrogen is taken under pressure from a on-board storage tank, and delivered into the fuel cell. The hydrogen flows through a membrane into a chamber where air, also passing through a membrane, creates an ionic or electrical exchange. Positive and negative charges are collected and sent to inverters and controllers for distribution, ultimately providing enough electricity to power wheel motors and other on-board systems (air conditioning, power steering). The only by-product of this exchange is water, which is expelled out through the exhaust system.

Other obstacles include minimal fuel storage and a limited number of hydrogen fueling stations. Until these obstacles are overcome, the fuel cell bus will remain on the backburner.

"Is it going to happen in the next five or six years, probably not," Bottone says. "But in 10-15 years, it will most likely be the way transit systems are moving people from point A to point B."

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## **We Get Letters**

Passengers like  
Metro Gold Line.

PHOTOS BY JUAN OCAMPO

### **Gold Line Opening Brings Flood of (Favorable) E-Mails**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(July 31, 2003) Since the opening of the Metro Gold Line on Monday, Bertha Bruner's computer has been overflowing each morning with e-mails.

A customer service officer in Passenger Relations, Bruner's job is to answer e-mails and, with another employee, answer letters about Metro Bus and Rail service. Suddenly, the normal 15 to 22 e-mails per day have just about doubled to 38 or 40.

An architect who works in downtown LA e-mailed, "All I have to say is thank-you, thank-you, thank-you! The Metro Gold Line...is a joy. No more sitting in the car on the Pasadena Freeway staring at the cars surrounding me."

On Thursday morning, Passenger Relations Manager Tom Horne counted an e-mail backlog of 114 and more were arriving hourly. Most public inquiries are answered within three days.

"This defies anything we've ever run into down here," Horne marvels.

Most e-mail senders are seeking Metro system information, asking for a Metro Rail map, asking about operating hours or parking near the Metro Gold Line.

"Complaints are in the minority," says Bruner. "The majority of e-mails are very favorable."

"Can you please give me some general parking information on the Fillmore and Del Mar Parking?" a woman e-mailed. "How much is it for parking, must it be reserved, or (is it) first-come, first-served?"

And a web technologist wrote: "We took the Gold Line on Sunday and it is totally fantastic. I take the Blue Line every day to go to work in Long Beach, but I wish I had a job in Pasadena just to see the scenery the Gold Line goes through every day. Now we don't have to worry about parking in

Pasadena anymore. Thanks a million!!! You guys are great."

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