

## 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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