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## 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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