

Metro Report Archives

August 2003 Articles

[MTA Report](#)

[Bulletin Board](#)

- [MTA Urges Angelenos to Help 'Clean Up L.A.'](#) **Labor Day Weekend** (Aug. 29, 2003) In anticipation of the large outdoor crowds expected at Los Angeles-area parks and beaches over the long Labor Day weekend, MTA is urging Angelenos to do their part to "Clean Up L.A."
- **PLUS! [Metro Clean Program](#) Does its Part** (Aug. 29, 2003) In Fiscal Year 2003 alone, Metro Clean work crews cleaned up 48,061 bus stops, 32,237 buses, pressure-washed 541 bus terminals and removed 43,117 bags of trash from the streets of Los Angeles.
- [Board Holds Action on Proposed Sales Tax, Approves Naming Policy](#) (Aug. 29, 2003) The MTA Board took a wait and see position, Thursday, on state sales tax legislation, but approved a motion setting a policy for naming MTA properties.
- [Board Approves Six-year Short Range Transportation Plan](#) (August 28, 2003) The MTA Board of Directors today approved a six-year Short Range Transportation Plan that focuses on the phasing-in of transportation improvements in Los Angeles County through 2009 that will help put together the pieces of the region's mobility puzzle.
- [No Badge, No Gun](#) but **LASD Analyst Helps Prevent Crimes** (Aug 28, 2003) She may not wear a uniform, carry a badge or a gun, or make daily rounds in a squad car, but Nancy Smith plays a fundamental role in the prevention of crime on Metro bus and rail lines.
- [MTA to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Bus Service Changes](#) (Aug. 21, 2003) MTA will hold a series of public hearings in September to discuss more than 20 proposed changes designed to improve the efficiency of Metro Bus service throughout Los Angeles County
- [You Can Run, But You Can't Hide, 'Mayberry' Man Learns](#) (Aug. 20, 2003) It's a long way from Mount Airy, N.C., to Los Angeles. And the big city might seem like a good place to hide to a feller on the run from the law in a town that prides itself on being Mayberry RFD.
- [SGV Sector to Hold Community Meetings August 27 and 28](#) (Aug. 19, 2003) The San Gabriel Valley Service Sector will hold two community meetings, next week, to allow members of the public to comment on proposed bus service changes.
- [MTA, Flexcar Unite Transit, Private Autos in New Car-Sharing Service](#) (Aug. 15, 2003) MTA and Flexcar, the nation's largest and oldest provider of car-sharing programs, today officially launched an innovative on-demand service during a media event at MTA Headquarters.
- [Transportation Plan, Sales Tax, Naming Policy on Committee Agendas](#) (Aug. 15, 2003) MTA's 2003 Short Range Transportation Plan, proposed sales tax legislation and a consolidated policy for naming MTA properties are among items on Board committee agendas this month.
- [MTA Trading Cards Bear Safety, Manners Messages for Kids](#) (Aug. 14, 2003) Kids love trading cards – Pokemon, baseball cards, you name it – and now MTA is offering kids a new set of trading cards with messages about bus and rail safety and

consideration for others.

- [The Yong Bell](#), a gift from Sister City Guangzhou, China, stands vigil at the entrance to the Metro Gold Line's Chinatown Station. (Aug. 13, 2003)
- [Frank Roberts Leads 'Tour de Lancaster' Classic](#) to Open New Two-lane Bikeway Funded by MTA (Aug. 13, 2003)
- [Snoble Seeks Eastside Rail Funding During D.C. Visit](#) (Aug. 6, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble met with U.S. Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta and other federal officials in Washington, D.C., last week, to urge them to expedite full federal funding for the Eastside Light Rail Project.
- [Construction Project Improves Access to Freeway Call Boxes](#) (August 6, 2003) Construction crews have passed the halfway mark in a three-year project sponsored by MTA, SAFE and Caltrans to reconstruct some 3,500 of 4,400 Los Angeles County roadside callbox locations for easier access by mobility-impaired drivers.
- [Sector Governance Councils Schedule Monthly Meetings](#) (Aug. 5, 2003) MTA's four Service Sector Governance Councils have scheduled monthly public meetings for August. The South Bay Sector also will hold two community meetings this month.
- ['Fleetwatch' Fueling System Holds Promise for Bus Maintenance](#) (Aug. 1, 2003) It's just a little round thing attached to the right rear wheel of a Metro Bus, but it contains information that will help MTA improve bus maintenance.
- [Standard & Poor's Upgrades MTA Bond Rating to "A"](#) (Aug. 1, 2003) The bond-rating agency Standard & Poor's has upgraded its rating on MTA general revenue bonds one notch to "A." The upgrade will impact bonds issued by MTA to refinance existing general revenue bonds.

Bulletin Board

- [Hoax E-Mails Invade MTA Computer Network](#) (Aug. 29, 2003) In the aftermath of last week's real and hoax computer virus attacks, the damage that electronic viruses can cause is beginning to sink in.
- [They're doin' great! Division 9's Maintenance Team Earns Top Honors for FY 2003](#)
- [They're doin' great! Division 3 Takes Home Most Improved Transportation Division](#)
- [South Bay Sector Outlines Plans at Community Meetings](#) (Aug. 21, 2003) Metro South Bay conducted two community meetings, Aug. 9 and 19, at Arthur Winston Division 5 to outline planned bus service improvements in the South Bay.
- [TCAP Interns Say Goodbye to MTA](#) (August , 2003) Transportation Career Academy Program (TCAP) interns gathered for a farewell reception, Aug. 22, to celebrate the completion of their six-week internship at MTA.
- [GM Jack Gabig's Vision](#) Becomes Reality During SG Valley Sector's First Year
- [West Valley Division 8](#) is continuing tradition that began three years ago – celebrating Indian Independence Day.
- [YO-YO WHIZ](#) Employee's Son Places 2nd in Yomega World Event
- [More! Tales from the 'Gold Rush'](#)

- [Rudy Silva's Big Idea](#) **> Lifting Heavy Alternators is No Longer a Pain in the Back**
- [MTA Night at Dodgers Stadium](#) **is Gonna be a 'Hit'** (August 20, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble will take the mound to throw the opening pitch during MTA Night at Dodgers Stadium, Wednesday, Sept. 3.
- [OBITUARY](#) Funeral Services Set for Kathryn Winzer, Division 2 Stenographer
- [Series I Savings Bond Enrollment](#) **Sessions Announced** (Aug. 19, 2003) MTA Pension and Benefits has announced a schedule of Series I Bond enrollment sessions for August and September.
- [Division 4's Thu Nguyen](#) **Expresses Creativity Through His Work** (Aug. 19, 2003) In a small room at Non-revenue Division 4, Thu Nguyen stands over a counter, delicately polishing and assembling intricate parts of antique fare boxes.
- [Metro Bus Operator Darrell Carter](#) **Stands Up for Comedy** (August 15, 2003) There's something funny going on at Venice Division 6.
- [Operator's Idea](#) **Improves Safety for Metro Bus Passengers** (August 14, 2003) After witnessing an elderly man trip and hit his head on a sharp corner of the driver's seat platform, Crossroads Depot Division 2 Operator Luis Rodriguez took the first step to make Metro Buses safer for patrons.
- [Series I Savings Bond](#) **Drive Begins Monday at MTA**
- [Big Changes Coming](#) **in Bus Operator, Mechanic Training** (Aug. 13, 2003) Big changes are coming in bus operator and mechanic training – and Mark Anderson, MTA's new Director of Operations Training, will be leading the way.
- [Blue Line Yard's New Catwalk](#) **Makes Maintenance Safer** (Aug 8, 2003) Since its 1989 opening, Metro Blue Line maintenance specialists faced a daily challenge of cleaning and repairing train car rooftops. Now, with the completion of a new catwalk, that struggle is over.
- [TCAP Students](#) **Trade Their Skills for 'Real World' Experience** (Aug. 8, 2003) Students from the Transportation Career Academy Program (TCAP) recently joined MTA as interns for six weeks of "real world" industry learning and experience.
- [MTA Adds New 'Series I' \\$50 Bonds to Savings Bond Offerings](#) (Aug. 7, 2003) MTA employees may sign up, beginning Aug. 18, for a new U.S. Savings Bond program that is free of local and state taxes and defers federal taxes until the bond is cashed.
- [Tales from the 'Gold Rush'](#) - Here's the first of what we hope will be a "pokeful" of stories recalling our "Gold Rush" experience.
- [Ways \(and Means\)](#) **with Words** MTA Toastmasters get started in the new fiscal year with new officers and a reinvigorated quest for trophy gold.

[Back to Archives](#)



Tales from the Gold Rush

READ: [Here's my story>](#)

Almost every employee who volunteered during the Metro Gold Line's grand opening has a heartwarming, inspirational or funny story to tell. With "Tales from the Gold Rush," *metro.net* hopes to mine as many of these nuggets as possible. Here's the first of what we hope will be a pokeful of stories recalling our Gold Rush experience. [Click here](#) for information about how to submit your own entry for "Tales from the Gold Rush."

Here's my story:

- [Dan Miller](#), Sr. Administrative Analyst, Quality Assurance
- [Patricia Clark](#), Word Processor Operator, ITS
- [Lucille Coleman](#), Manager, EEO Programs
- [Carol Holben](#), Administrator, HR Medical Standards & Compliance
- [Gerald Martin](#), Senior Inspector, Office of the Inspector General
- [Cynthia Chin-Pak](#), Sr. Programmer Analyst, ITS
- [Michael Walton](#), TOS, Arthur Winston Division 5
- [Chip Hazen](#), ADA Compliance Administrator
- [Ruel Tan](#), Claims Assistant, Workers' Compensation
- [Fe Alcid-Little](#), Secretary, Procurement Department
- [Andy Cortes](#), Intern, Procurement Department
- [Carlos Villaverde](#), Mail & Duplicating Clerk
- [Karen Gorman](#), Chief Ethics Officer
- [Lt. Jacob Lopez](#), MTA Transit Security
- [Monica Davis](#), Intern, Westside Area Planning Team
- [Eric Wiggins](#), Intern, Programming and Policy Analysis
- [Ana Ramirez](#), Metro Bus Operator, Division 1
- [Emanuel Higgins](#), Intern, Central Area Team

Dan Miller, Sr. Administrative Analyst, Quality Assurance:

Metro Gold Line volunteer Sam Sampat of Systems Engineering, recently received a note of appreciation from a patron who attended the grand opening. The e-mail thanked Sampat who had given up his own lunch to help the diabetic patron, who was in distress. "Standing out in my memorable experiences will be the help you gave me while I was in a declining blood sugar situation at the Highland Park station on Saturday," the patron wrote. "For that, I wish to repeat my thanks to you." Sampat says, "I was happy to see him feel better after he ate. I have family member with diabetic conditions and know the challenges faced. I hope this will bring a positive and humane face to the MTA organization." (8/22/03)

Patricia Clark, Word Processor Operator, ITS:

I worked at Union Station Saturday and Sunday as the "Karaoke

Mistress of Ceremonies" with the Events Group. It was exciting to get people up on stage to sing along with me, by themselves or as a group. They even sighed when I had to close down for the day. Guess what? Some of the karaoke singers came back on Sunday. There were some great Oldies-But-Goodies singers and people were asking them for more. The musical group Tropical Punch and a talent scout were interested in a lady who sang "I Believe I Can Fly." (She did sing like a "star.") Almost everyone danced in the middle of Union Station – the senior citizens were getting down. I heard fantastic compliments from people about the MTA for a change.

Lucille Coleman, Manager, EEO Programs:

One of my highlights during the Metro Gold Line opening was to personally lead a blind customer to another employee for boarding to Los Angeles from the Pasadena Memorial Park station. He was obviously treated well and taken care of by the MTA employee volunteers because he came back on Sunday with more of his friends. I said, "Hello, Mr. Calhoun, how is everything?" He replied, "Great! Having a good time!" Just a note to say that we do care about individuals with disabilities, too. There was a spirit of joy and self-reward that I can not describe. That was a great assignment.

Carol Holben, Administrator, HR Medical Standards & Compliance:

As a new MTA employee, I was excited about participating in the Metro Gold Line opening and making LA transportation history. I accessorized my gold T-shirt with an original Pacific Electric Red Car operator badge. On Saturday at Filmore Station, I chatted with rail buffs, who reminisced about their last train ride to Pasadena, and with parents of toddlers, who were taking their very first train ride ever. But my highlight came at the end of Sunday at Del Mar station. Everyone was tired after two long days. When the Smokey Robinson concert ended at 6:30 p.m., crowds poured into the station. But Rail Operations was ready, and an *empty* train rolled into the station to load up passengers! Everyone was thrilled and very impressed.

Gerald Martin, Senior Inspector, Office of the Inspector General:

At Heritage Square Station, I was especially impressed with a teammate, Keith Compton, who truly placed safety first throughout the opening weekend. On Sunday afternoon, while we were at the crossing gate, a large crowd was about to cross, intending to go to the Pasadena side of the tracks. As a northbound train approached, the crossing gate started down. Sensing that the gate would hit the pedestrian, Keith quickly crossed the right-of-way and, seconds before the pedestrian railroad gate came down, guided an elderly woman under the barrier, thereby avoiding a possible injury. Believe me, but for Keith's quick thinking, we might have had our first incident. Keith should get a "Safety At-a-Boy" medal.

Cynthia Chin-Pak, Sr. Programmer Analyst, ITS:

I worked at the Sierra Madre Villa station at the MTA information table both Saturday and Sunday. There was a family – a mother and four children ranging in age from 4 to 10 years old – in the line. The youngest one stood in front of me holding an MTA bag open. I asked him, "Are you going to read all these brochures?" He nodded. I dropped a colored coupon book in his bag and he was happy. He was only 4, but he wanted to be a part of the crowd.

Michael Walton, TOS, Arthur Winston Division 5:

I worked at the Allen Station on Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday afternoon, I was on the platform standing next to a senior citizen when I felt her grab my waist. At first I didn't know what to think, but after looking at the lady, I realized that she was not feeling well. I notified a Sheriff's deputy and he came over to assist. The deputy called for paramedics and Pasadena Paramedics responded quickly and treated the lady. She did not require hospitalization, but went home with her family: her daughter, grandson and two great granddaughters! I really appreciated the fast response and the assistance from the deputy and I was quite happy to see that the lady was going to be okay.

Chip Hazen, ADA Compliance Administrator:

It was a long, wearing day but special thanks should be given to all MTA volunteers and the Deputy Sheriffs who put in as much as 16 hour days and never showed a negative emotion. I was overwhelmed at the way everyone worked to provide that extra service to persons with disabilities simply because the riders needed a little extra assistance. Riders with disabilities were asked to stay on board the train so they would not have to wait in the long return line. MTA volunteers shuttled riders with disabilities to the front of the return line. Overall, we should be proud of the way that we, collectively as the MTA staff, handled each crisis and problem. Everyone deserves a giant thank you.

Ruel Tan, Claims Assistant, Workers' Compensation:

Assigned to the Chinatown station, I tried greeting the Chinese passengers with "Jo Sun!" which is "Good Morning! " in Chinese-Cantonese. They were quite surprised since I looked too Filipino to be speaking to them in Chinese. It became more obvious with my accent.

I recall hailing one Chinese passenger, "Jo-Sun! Jo-Sun!" Misunderstanding my greeting, he replied "My son? Yeah, My son! He is my son!" He pointed to the boy by his side. We were both laughing when he later understood what I really meant.

Fe Alcid-Little, Secretary, Procurement Department:

My daughter got so excited when I told her she would be a volunteer on Saturday. She hurriedly put on the MTA shirt and hat that were issued to us. We proceeded to Union Station, got on the Metro Gold Line to the Del Mar station. Once again, I was reunited with the Station Manager I had at the NoHo opening. We were even more excited when we learned Smokey Robinson would be performing nearby. We weren't able to see him perform, but we could hear and dance to the music. That put a smile on our faces and washed away all the tiredness we had felt the last two days. Now, I can't wait for the opening of the next rail line.

Andy Cortes, Intern, Procurement Department:

Saturday and Sunday were unforgettable days. I had lots of fun in the Highland Park Station, a neighborhood that I've known for almost 11 years. I got to see friends and teachers from Franklin High School. My partner, Mike Flores from Division 7, and I made a perfect team, keeping the customers safe and informed. They were super happy!! On Sunday, I got to see "Quetzal" perform, an outstanding band. I even had the chance to take pictures with them. I had lots of fun. Oh, I want to thank Dan Miller for all his help.

Carlos Villaverde, Mail & Duplicating Clerk:

I volunteered to work at the Sierra Madre station. I was excited, but six weeks ago I had knee surgery and didn't know if I would be able to finish the day. An Asian lady told me her 85-year-old husband was diabetic and could not wait in line for two hours to get back to Union Station. I asked her to go back to him while I found help. I got my box lunch and a Coke, and when she saw me coming her face lit up. She put her hands together and bowed and wanted to pay me, but her smile was more than money could buy. After that moment, I forgot about my knee and continued helping people with a smile.

Lt. Jacob Lopez, MTA Transit Security:

The anticipation for the opening was unbelievable. MTA Transit Security Officers assigned to protect our stations during the early morning hours before the opening, were confronted by hundreds of patrons at the stations with questions about the system. While on a routine patrol at Southwest Museum – it must have been around 2 am – I noticed several people just staring at the station. I pulled over to ask if they needed any assistance, they only had questions about the opening and wanted to convey how excited they were about the opening and the operation of the Metro Gold Line. You could just see the excitement and anticipation in their eyes. It was truly a great feeling being part of this historical event.

Monica Davis, Intern, Westside Area Planning Team:

On Saturday, I shared a Metro Gold Line train with two unusual passengers. Betty and Buster are certified Search and Rescue dogs who help the Sheriff's Department locate missing persons. By being familiar with the buses and trains, Betty and Buster are better able to hop from station to station to pick up a trail after the individual they are tracking has gotten on a Metro vehicle.

Buster was a bit sulky that afternoon because his tail had been stepped on, while Betty was weary but still fascinated by all the different smells from all the people on the train. Their owners, Mr. and Mrs. Wells, are volunteers who have gone through thousands of hours of training with their dogs to get certified.

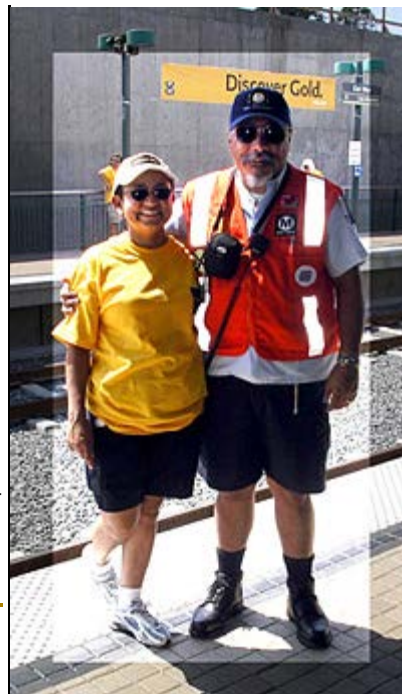
Eric Wiggins, Intern, Programming and Policy Analysis

I was working at Union Station over the weekend, and on Sunday, the very talented musical group, Tropical Punch, was playing outside the entrance to the Metro Red Line. Despite the long lines and crowded atmosphere, people were really getting into the music. After a while, a group of close to 20 people were all standing up and dancing, having a wonderful time at the opening of the Metro Gold Line. Seeing this, all I could think about was, "Wow, these people are having a dance party in the middle of Union Station. This is definitely a once-in-a-lifetime experience."

Ana Ramirez, Metro Bus Operator, Division 1:

I had a great experience at Del Mar station both Saturday and Sunday. There were several other bus operators from Division 1 working at Del Mar. I enjoyed assisting the patrons and providing information to them. It was

fun and we were doing an important job for MTA. I will never forget that weekend. I attached a photo of my husband, Ruben Ramirez and me, when he took a break and stopped by Del Mar station to see me. Ruben was the Metro Gold Line operator who broke the banner at Union Station during Friday's event for dignitaries and the media.



Ana Ramirez: 'Here's a photo of my husband, Ruben Ramirez (banner-breaking inaugural train operator) and me, when he took a break and stopped by Del Mar station to see me.'

Emanuel Higgins, Intern, Central Area Team:

It all started at 6:00 a.m. on a gloomy Saturday morning. I jumped out of my bed with expectancy, trying to dress myself as soon as possible to catch the earliest bus to Union Station.

It was 7:00 a.m. when I left home and boarded the bus at the Harbor/105 freeway transit station. An hour later, I found myself standing on the platform of the newly constructed rail line at Union Station, traveling to Pasadena.

Excitement began to bubble inside me as I made my first step (well, my second step since safety training) onto the "Golden train." As the electronic voice of the train said "Welcome Aboard," I sat down joyously and enjoyed my ride on the great golden line from beginning to end.

Karen Gorman, Chief Ethics Officer:

While working at Union Station on Saturday, I was handed a purse that had been found on the ground. I had the paramedic at the first-aid station keep the purse while I looked for the owner.

Within a few minutes a lady came to me crying and hysterical. I had to calm her down just to ask her what was wrong. She said she lost her purse and described it. I told her we had her purse and pointed to the paramedic who was holding it in the air.

She kissed my cheek, hugged me, and said "God bless you." It was great see a happy ending. I thank my co-worker (he didn't tell me his name) for turning it in to me.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Ways (and Means) with Words

MTA Toastmasters get started in the new fiscal year with new officers and a reinvigorated quest for trophy gold. Try this!> [Speech tip](#).



New Officers: Foreground, from left, Diana Estrada, Sangeeta Patel, president, and Kathleen Johnson. Back row, Patricia Clark, Sam Samphat, Muriel Blake and Henry Tuazon. Not pictured: Wanda Davis. Below, new president Sangeeta Patel, at podium, presides over weekly meetings where members develop confidence in public speaking skills. Membership has grown to 28 active members.



David Schlesinger, a Green Line Maintenance supervisor, bagged 9 'Best Speech' trophies in District 52 competition last year, going up against the best of the best from some 80 clubs in the Greater Los Angeles Region.



CHECK IT OUT: MTA Toastmasters Chapter meets every Tuesday in the Board Overflow Room at noon. Look for the bright gold banner, bright Blue Ribbons and, yes, all those shining trophies.

Speech tip> Eye contact is very important. When the speaker looks directly at the audience, the audience believes the speaker cares about them. They think the speaker is sincere, credible, friendly and honest. These feelings have a great impact on the speaker's message and the willingness of the audience to accept it. As you speak, don't just gaze around the room, make random contact. If the audience is large, pick out one or two people in each section (left, right, back and center). Avoid looking repeatedly at the same person. You can improve your eye contact by addressing everyone in an elevator and wave to those you recognize across a room. And, most of all, wait for a response and study the facial expressions. These same expressions can be found in an audience, which is a quick way to validate your audience' attention. --from *LACMTA Toastmaster's Club 7451 Newsletter*

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

'Fleetwatch' Fueling System Holds Promise for Bus Maintenance

By **BILL HEARD**, Editor

(Aug. 1, 2003) It's just a little round thing attached to the right rear wheel of a Metro Bus, but it contains information that will help MTA improve bus maintenance.



Mechanic "A" Danny King of Central City Division 1 demonstrates how the fuel island reader device receives vehicle number and mileage information from a Metro Bus electronic wheel hub.

The little round thing is an electronic "hub" that keeps a precise record of the vehicle's number and mileage. It's a key component of "Fleetwatch," a computer-based fueling system that tracks the amount of fuel – CNG or diesel – pumped into a bus, the amount and types of fluids used, and the last time the bus was serviced.

"Getting accurate information is important, because it helps determine the preventive maintenance schedule for a bus," says Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett.

Fleetwatch is an element of M3 – Maintenance and Material Management System – a \$20 million program intended to automate, streamline and simplify the management and maintenance of MTA's 2,400-bus fleet.

Now being installed at MTA operating divisions, Fleetwatch went live at Arthur Winston Division 5 and at Central City Division 1 in July.

Next in line to receive the new system are divisions 2, 18, 7, 10, 6, 3, 9, 8, 15 and 4. With an installation cycle that takes two to three weeks, the project should be completed in November.

Automate and streamline

To install the Fleetwatch system, a crew mounts an electronic signal receiver and control box at the yard's fuel island. The control box is connected to MTA's vehicle maintenance computer network.

The crew also must install a new wheel hub on every bus at the division, replacing all the old digital wheel hubs. Each new hub must be programmed with the correct wheel ratio and beginning mileage in order to properly register the miles the bus has traveled. The hub stays with the bus for the life of the vehicle.

How does it work? When a bus pulls up for fueling, the service attendant activates the Fleetwatch system with a proximity card he or she carries. The attendant then holds a "reader" device near the wheel hub to receive the electronic signal with the vehicle number and mileage information.

The control box records the information and activates the fuel island's diesel or CNG pumps, as required, along with the proper oil and coolant dispensers. All the service attendant has to do is connect the hoses.

"There will be fewer steps in the fueling process," says Bennett. "The Fleetwatch system does the rest."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Standard & Poor's Upgrades MTA Bond Rating to "A"

By ED SCANNELL

(Aug. 1, 2003) The bond-rating agency Standard & Poor's has upgraded its rating on MTA general revenue bonds one notch to "A." The upgrade will impact bonds issued by MTA to refinance existing general revenue bonds.

"The rating upgrade reflects well on MTA's performance in delivering transit services and should result in lower interest costs on future MTA general revenue bonds," said CEO Roger Snoble. "This is a particularly significant development at a time when many private companies and governmental agencies have seen their bond ratings plummet."

In taking this action, Standard & Poor's cited MTA's "continuing growth in...operating fare box collections" as a positive factor supporting the rating upgrade.

In recent months MTA has taken advantage of lower interest rates and higher bond ratings and refinanced over \$600 million of bonds generating nearly \$90 million in cash savings to taxpayers.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Sector Governance Councils Schedule Monthly Meetings

(Aug. 5, 2003) MTA's four Service Sector Governance Councils have scheduled monthly public meetings for August. The South Bay Sector also will hold two community meetings this month.

The San Gabriel Valley council's meeting is set for 5 p.m., today, at the Adult Recreation Center in San Gabriel. Agenda topics include Consent Decree and system-wide route restructuring, bus and rail safety.

The San Fernando Valley's Governance Council meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 6, at the Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center in Van Nuys. Agenda topics include service changes and the sector budget.

The South Bay Governance Council's meeting is set for 9:30 a.m., Friday, Aug. 8, in the Carson Community Center. Topics include proposed contract line changes, patron travel patterns and the Home Depot Training Center.

The South Bay sector also has scheduled two community meetings to discuss the latest developments in sector bus service improvements. The meetings will be held at Arthur Winston Division 5 at 10 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 9, and 6 p.m., Tuesday, Aug. 19.

The Gateway Cities Governance Council meeting is set for 2 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 14, at Progress Park in Paramount. Agenda items include contract line service changes and MTA's strategic plan.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Construction Project Improves Access to Freeway Call Boxes

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(August 6, 2003) Construction crews have passed the halfway mark in a three-year project sponsored by MTA, SAFE and Caltrans to reconstruct some 3,500 of 4,400 Los Angeles County roadside callbox locations for easier access by mobility-impaired drivers.

The \$7.5 million callbox project is an element of SAFE's response to a lawsuit aimed at giving the handicapped better access to roadside callboxes.

The outcome of the suit required SAFE to make improvements to ensure greater accessibility to the call box system for individuals who may be hearing-, speech- or mobility-impaired. While speech and hearing improvements have been finished, the mobility modifications are still in the process of completion.

When the project is complete "anybody that is hearing-, speech- or mobility impaired will have full access to the call box sites," says Byron Lee, director of Congestion Relief Operations.

In order to make the call box sites accessible, the construction crews come in usually during the day and saw-cut the curbs that prevent wheelchairs from reaching a callbox.

Thirty-six Designs

"The current call box pads also are not large enough to accommodate wheelchairs, so we have to make the pads bigger," Construction Manager Tom Lee says.

There are 36 different designs for the callbox pads. SAFE, Caltrans and MTA must agree on the design before it is built.

Once the design is determined, construction begins. The work is

PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA



Construction workers build a wheelchair-accessible callbox ramp on the Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu. Below, a new callbox ramp with wheelchair access.



dangerous, but throughout the project, workers have remained accident free.

"The biggest danger to the workers is traffic, but they also face space limitations while working on the freeway shoulder," Engineer Roderick Pates says. "You don't know a car is coming until it's on top of you. There is so little time and space to react, so you have to always remain cautious."

Formally called the Kenneth Hahn Call Box System Mobility Impaired Accessibility Improvement Project, the project is on schedule and is set to be completed in March of 2005.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

CEO Roger Snoble, right, visited with U.S. Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta, center right, in his Washington, D.C., offices last week. They were joined by, from left, former Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater, Little Tokyo Station designer Ted Tanaka and FTA Administrator Jenna Dorn.



Snoble Seeks Eastside Rail Funding During D.C. Visit

(Aug. 6, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble met with U.S. Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta and other federal officials in Washington, D.C., last week, to urge them to expedite full federal funding for the Eastside Light Rail Project.

Snoble reported to the MTA Board that the meeting, which included Federal Transit Administration Administrator Jenna Dorn, was constructive.

Securing a federal commitment to a Full Funding Grant Agreement would provide about half the cost for construction of the rail line into East LA. The Bush Administration's FY 2004 federal budget includes \$55 million for the project.

Snoble also met with Sen. Diane Feinstein, who indicated full support for the Eastside project and a commitment to requesting \$70 million from Congress in FY 2004 for the project.

The CEO included in his Washington trip visits with staff members for Sen. Barbara Boxer and other members of Congress who serve on transportation and appropriations subcommittees. He asked each for support of funding for the Eastside line.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is one of eight prominent Americans whose portraits are featured on the Series I bonds.



MTA Adds New 'Series I' \$50 Bonds to Savings Bond Offerings

- **'Series I' bonds earn 4.66% interest**

(Aug. 7, 2003) MTA employees may sign up, beginning Aug. 18, for a new U.S. Savings Bond program that is free of local and state taxes and defers federal taxes until the bond is cashed.

The new "Series I" bonds, purchased through payroll deductions for a face value of \$50 to \$10,000 each, will pay an annual interest rate of 4.66 percent through October 2003.

Interest is added monthly, compounded semi-annually, and paid when the bond is cashed. Bonds must be held for at least a year before they can be cashed in.

In addition to being exempt from local and state taxes, federal taxes do not have to be paid on the bonds until they are cashed. For older employees, that could mean paying a lower tax rate on the bonds.

Series I bonds differ from the more familiar Series EE bonds, which only reach their full value after 20 years. Series EE bonds also are available from MTA through payroll deduction.

Higher interest rate

The 4.66 percent interest rate currently paid on Series I bonds – higher than the one to two percent offered by most savings accounts and certificates of deposit (CDs) – may fluctuate based on the bond market and Consumer Price Index inflation rate.

"U.S. Savings bonds are an excellent way to contribute to your savings goals and one of the safest in the world," says Terry Matsumoto, executive officer, Finance and Treasurer.

Employees also can get a full federal tax exemption if the bonds are used to pay for higher education. Series I bonds can be purchased for as little as a \$1 deduction per pay period.

Who's Who on the I-Bonds

Name these heroes and then **click on image** to check your answers and learn all about these famous Americans. If you don't have Internet access, look for the answers at the end of this article.



Series I bond enrollment drives will be held at MTA Headquarters beginning Aug. 18. Signups also will be conducted at all operating divisions and pay locations, and during all work shifts, over the next several months.

Employees who sign up for Series I bond deductions in August will see the first deductions from their Sept. 19 paychecks.

For more information about U.S. Savings Bonds, go to www.publicdebt.treas.gov/sav/sbiinvst.htm or www.savingsbonds.gov on the World Wide Web.

Answers to Who's Who on the I-Bonds: Featured on the Series I bonds are opera singer Marian Anderson, physicist Albert Einstein, humanitarian Dr. Hector Garcia, Native American leader Nez Perce Chief Joseph, author and advocate Helen Keller, civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., statesman Gen. George C. Marshall and WWII hero Sen. Spark M. Matsunaga. To learn more about all eight, go to this address on the Internet: www.publicdebt.treas.gov/sav/sbiwho.htm

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Metro Blue Line maintenance specialists have been able to maintain train car rooftops more efficiently since the completion of the catwalk.



Blue Line Yard's New Catwalk Makes Maintenance Safer

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Aug 8, 2003) Since its 1989 opening, Metro Blue Line maintenance specialists faced a daily challenge of cleaning and repairing train car rooftops. Now, with the completion of a new catwalk, that struggle is over.

Stretching 10 feet wide and 200 feet long and constructed of 56 tons of steel, the catwalk will replace portable scaffolding that maintenance personnel stood on to reach the tops of trains with tools, parts and hoses.

"It's something that was required to comply with OSHA fall prevention standards," says George Kennedy, manager, Metro Blue Line Rail Equipment Maintenance.

The need to construct the catwalk stemmed from concerns over the safety and inefficiency of working on scaffolding.

Maintenance personnel sometimes had difficulty balancing parts, tools and equipment on the old wheeled structure, which had to be repeatedly moved along the side of the car – occasionally scratching the paint.

"The portable scaffolding units were hard to push," says Metro Blue Line Maintenance Specialist Steve Parker. "Most of the time, the guys



The all-steel catwalk provides safer and easier access to train car rooftops. The 200-foot structure spans the length of two train cars.



would use just one portable scaffold on each side of a car to access the roof, which was a real safety concern. Now, with the new catwalk, we're working safer and more efficiently."

Construction of the 11-foot tall catwalk, with a 3½-foot high protective railing, took approximately four weeks. It has been in service since mid-July. Total project cost is approximately \$380,000.

Kennedy's department plans to equip the new catwalk with electrical outlets, lighting, and retractable hose reels for water and air in the near future.

"It's better now that we don't have to use the old scaffolds," says Metro Blue Line Maintenance Specialist Dennis Nacar. "I feel safer."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

TCAP Students Trade Their Skills for 'Real World' Experience

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(Aug. 8, 2003) Students from the Transportation Career Academy Program (TCAP) recently joined MTA as interns for six weeks of "real world" industry learning and experience.

Fourteen TCAP students are assigned to several divisions and departments that fit their interests, including Ethics, Engineering, Economic and Small Business Diversity; Treasury, Management Audit, Contract Management, Customer Relations, and Revenue Maintenance.

"The TCAP students have made a tremendous difference, particularly to those departments that have multiple projects and programs that need to be rolled out at the same time," says Senior Development and Training Specialist Sally Singleton.

She believes MTA supervisors rely on the TCAP students to assist with day-to-day operations.

"This is exactly what the program was designed to do. The TCAP students are very competent, have excellent computer skills and are professional," Singleton says. "I get tons of requests for TCAP interns"

Becoming an intern at MTA is not easy. Students are selected based on the experience listed in their cover letters and resumes. They also go through an employee-screening process, an interview, drug testing and attend new employee orientation.

TCAP interns perform such tasks as writing reports, field observation, preparing spreadsheets, observing assessment procedures and attending meetings.

Available at five high schools

The TCAP program is sponsored by MTA in cooperation with the Los Angeles and Norwalk/La Mirada Unified School Districts and is available only through John Glenn, Franklin, North Hollywood, Locke and Wilson high schools.

"TCAP provides me with good work experience," Metro Rail Intern Derrick Appelzoller says. "It is helping me get prepared for a career in engineering by teaching me about computers and drafting."

"I like doing architecture projects in the TCAP program. I found out that this is a career field that I would like to go into," Westside Central Intern Jessie Sanchez says. "The program helped me find a career path."

"This is not a program to make students do filing and grunt work," says Singleton. "It's a program to mentor them so they can see what transportation is about."

Students like Delores Luevano and Emanuel Higgins have moved on from the TCAP program to become college interns at MTA.

"We have many students who are success stories who move onto college and become professionals," Singleton says. "It is definitely encouraging to know that MTA is a part of developing young people for the future. I am very happy to be a part of this program."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Frank Roberts opens bikeway with "Tour de Lancaster" classic.



PHOTO BY AL RANGEL

Lancaster Mayor Frank Roberts, the newly elected First Vice Chair of the MTA Board of Directors, leads community bike ride to open the Lancaster Sierra Highway Bikeway, Tuesday. The paved, two-lane bikeway runs nearly three miles through the City of Lancaster. The bikeway was funded by MTA through \$1.291 million in STIP grants, plus \$520,000 in local matching funds.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Operations Training Director Mark Anderson is plans to make greater use of technology in revamping MTA's bus operator and mechanic training programs.



PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

Big Changes Coming in Bus Operator, Mechanic Training

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 13, 2003) Big changes are coming in bus operator and mechanic training – and Mark Anderson, MTA's new Director of Operations Training, will be leading the way.

Anderson recently joined MTA's Operations Central Instruction (OCI) after 16 years as head of San Diego Transit's training department. A national award-winning trainer, he has developed bus operator training programs used by hundreds of transit agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

The new training director plans to develop for MTA an innovative "world-class training curriculum" with the best instructors, new training techniques that emphasize the use of technology and a revised training schedule. He expects to achieve that goal within two years.

"We have the resources to do it," says Anderson. "We have the instructors and we have the potential to do some exciting things in training."

Among the training improvements Anderson plans is adding more content – especially on safe driving and customer service – into the training curriculum. He'll bring in two training program design specialists to help develop and implement the new curriculum. Previously, instructors developed the curriculum.

Focus on ADA

PROFILE

Mark Anderson

Born in Guatemala to American parents, Mark Anderson, 41, is the son of a retired coffee plantation owner and missionary, and the youngest of four brothers. Reared in the country's second largest city, Xela, he graduated from high school there and attended the University of Guaremla before moving to the United States in 1983.

In the United States, Anderson completed the Universal Technical Institute in Phoenix and studied instructional design at San Diego State University.

He was hired in the early 1980s by Detroit Diesel as a field service representative to work in Southern California and Mexico. During

One operator training focus will be the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how to provide service to mobility-impaired passengers.

"They are our customers. They rely on us and they have influence in the community," Anderson says. "We need to see these patrons as an opportunity to provide service to a group of very loyal patrons."

An important aspect of Anderson's plans is to train the trainers.

OCI instructors will receive "an incredible amount of training" for certification to teach all 16 operator training subjects. They must become proficient in the use of computers for classroom lectures and student testing, in the use of PowerPoint presentations and other advanced training techniques.

Anderson's plans also call for retraining operating division instructors. "We're trying to create an operations training department that not only is strong, centrally, but that also can support the operating divisions."

Moving maintenance training

Before this year is out, Anderson expects to bring all maintenance training – not just the mechanics' bus driving course – under the OCI wing. The Regional Rebuild Center instruction staff has been conducting maintenance training.

Currently, OCI has 31 approved instructor positions and nine office staff positions. The RRC has three office staff members and 12 positions for maintenance instructors.

MTA's training schedule also will be revised under Anderson's guidance. "We're going to raise our training standards tremendously. Every week we'll look at students' progress."

OCI now offers a six-week course for classes of about 20 bus operator trainees. The trainees start with three weeks of classroom training, followed by two weeks of on-the-road training with a division instructor before returning to OCI for a final week. Graduates then are assigned to a division – not necessarily the same division they trained at.

Under the new procedure, trainees will begin with four weeks in OCI classes. They will have two weeks of on-the-road training at a division and then graduation. Their first assignments should be at the divisions where they were trained.

Considering the overall goal of the training program he envisions, Anderson explains what he believes is the difference between a bus

four years with the company, he also got involved with employee training.

In 1987, Anderson joined San Diego Transit as assistant training manager, but within months was promoted to training department manager.

Over the years, he was responsible for developing a number of bus operator training courses in defensive driving, customer service, dealing with difficult passengers, drug and alcohol regulations, and operator safety.

Three of the better-known courses are "Smart Driving," a defensive driving program; "Have a Nice Day," about dealing with difficult customers; and "Driving Safety Home," an operator safety course.

Anderson is an associate staff member of the Transportation Safety Institute, for which he revised and updated the standard bus operator driving course that is used by most transit agencies in the U.S.

He has won many awards, including Training Professional of the Year, given by the National Transit Institute, as well as awards from other safety organizations.

driver and a bus operator.

"One of the things we do is operate the bus," he says, "but we're really customer service representatives *and* drive the bus."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Chinatown Symbol of Harmony and Peace> City and transportation officials, from left, Los Angeles City councilmen Tom LaBonge and Ed Reyes; Mr. Fang Xiaoming, Guangzhou Foreign Affairs Director; Mayor James Hahn; MTA CEO Roger Snoble, and Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority CEO Richard Thorpe present unveiling of the Yong Bell at the Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station. The replica of the 2,100-year-old bell is a gift of friendship from Los Angeles' sister city, Guangzhou, China.



Replica of Yong Bell Stands Vigil at Metro Gold Line's Chinatown Station

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(August 13, 2003) It took 2,100 years, a transoceanic journey from Guangzhou, China to Los Angeles, and two decades of sisterly love nurtured by the citizens and leaders of two great cities. But, at last, the Yong Bell, a symbol harmony and peace, stands vigil at the entrance to the Metro Gold Line's Chinatown Station.

CEO Roger Snoble joined dignitaries of Los Angeles and its sister city of Guangzhou, China, at the installation and dedication of the Yong Bell at the Chinatown Station, Tuesday.

"Everyday," said Snoble, "people come and go through



CEO Roger Snoble welcomes Yong Bell to Chinatown Station. Below, Snoble, center right, joins with officials to unveil friendship gift from sister city Guangzhou.

this beautiful station on their way to work or to visit Chinatown. Now, they will see this symbol of the friendship between Los Angeles and Guangzhou."

The Yong Bell is a replica of a 2,100-year-old bronze bell discovered by Guangzhou construction workers in 1983 when the tomb of Zhao Mei, a ruler of the Nanyue Kingdom, was unearthed during a construction project.

This type of bell first appeared in the 11th Century B.C., said Jeffrey Cheung, president of the Los Angeles – Guangzhou Sister City Association. The design prevailed throughout the East Zhou Dynasty to 256 B.C. Experts estimate the Yong Bell to be 2,100 years old.

A replica of the unearthed bell, weighing 1,500 pounds, was created as a friendship gift to the City of Los Angeles and sent here to celebrate the 20th anniversary Sister City relationship established by Mayor Tom Bradley and civic leaders in 1981.

The bell has been on display in the lobby of the Cathay Bank in Chinatown since 2001 awaiting the completion of the Metro Gold Line Chinatown Station.

The dedication ceremony was hosted by Mayor James Hahn, Councilman Ed Reyes, in whose district the bronze bell is now permanently installed, and Councilman Tom LaBonge, who heads the Los Angeles International Sister Cities Committee.

[Back to MTA Report](#)



Below, the replica of the Yong Bell.



PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON

MTA's new "Metro Manners" collectible trading cards are designed for kids with messages about bus and rail safety and consideration of others.



MTA Trading Cards Bear Safety, Manners Messages for Kids

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 14, 2003) Kids love trading cards – Pokemon, baseball cards, you name it – and now MTA is offering kids a new set of trading cards with messages about bus and rail safety and consideration for others.

Titled "Metro Manners," the innovative trading cards were conceived by Metro Art to appeal to youngsters from the elementary grades through middle school. Project Manager Alan Nakagawa shepherded the cards from conception through production.

The collectible cards, designed by local arts group "The Meat Collective," have original and whimsical cartoon characters, a simple card game and puzzle-matching features that should appeal to youngsters from the elementary grades through middle school.



Michael Lejeune of MTA Design Studio, left, and Alan Nakagawa of Metro Art play a game of War using the new "Metro Manners" trading cards that will be distributed to kids beginning later this month.

MTA's Community Relations Department will begin distributing the cards later this month to kids at approved community events, during school safety presentations and to youngsters who visit the "Metro Experience" mobile theater. The agency purchased a total of 150,000 foil-wrapped, five-card packs.

"The characters have a unique charm. It's a very creative way to appeal to youngsters while delivering important information about safety and desirable behavior," says Lynda Bybee, deputy executive officer, Community Relations. "We love having such wonderful material to share with the youngsters we meet through our safety program."

Appealing to kids

Metro Art's Nakagawa worked closely with MTA's Design Studio during development of the trading cards project. The effort involved lengthy discussions of effective ways to make messages about transit safety and good manners appeal to kids.

"At the time, my kids were very much into trading cards," says Nakagawa. "I thought it would be fun to do a trading card project. Everyone liked the idea."

MTA issued a national call for illustrators and graphic artists and received almost 100 entries. A review committee narrowed the list to five finalists and then selected The Meat Collective, located in LA's Chinatown, to create the trading cards.

Illustrator Robert Gooden and graphic artist Diana Aspillera created a cast of off-beat characters to demonstrate the safety and manners messages.

The team also developed a simple card game in which higher numbers trump lower numbers – except when two wild cards are played. Backgrounds in varying designs and a complete-the-picture feature provide other graphic elements kids can experiment with.

'Kids are really creative'

"We really don't know how kids are going to play with the cards," says Creative Services Manager Michael Lejeune, who worked with Nakagawa on the project. "But, kids are really creative and they can think of variations that are well beyond our feeble adult minds."

Characters appearing on the cards include the Blab Sisters, who talk to loudly on the train or bus; the Snacker, whose food and drinks make a mess; and Edgy Eddie, who creates a hazard by standing too close to the edges of sidewalk curbs and train platforms.

Messages include, "You must always have a ticket or pass;" "Keep your feet off a Metro seat;" "Other passengers don't want to hear your cellphone calls;" "Rushing to catch a bus or train isn't safe;" and "Writing, spraypainting or scratching trains, buses and stations makes them ugly. And it's against the law."

On the back of each card is an unnamed superhero of sorts with a wide smile on his face and a Metro logo emblazoned on his chest.

Who is that guy?

"We don't know. Meat Collective decided not to name him," says Nakagawa. "But, all the characters on the game side of the cards show what not to do on the Metro system. We thought we should have one character who was the 'Superman,' the good guy."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Crossroads Depot Division 2 will upgrade its NABI 7000 series buses by installing a rubber cover to eliminate a sharp corner on the driver's seat platform.

Operator's Idea Improves Safety for Metro Bus Passengers



By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(August 14, 2003) After witnessing an elderly man trip and hit his head on a sharp corner of the driver's seat platform, Crossroads Depot Division 2 Operator Luis Rodriguez took the first step to make Metro Buses safer for patrons.

Rodriguez brought the sharp corner to the attention of Transportation Manager Thom Pelk. They discussed how the bus could be made safer and coordinated with Maintenance Manager Donell Harris on how to make the improvements.

The result is that Division 2 will upgrade its NABI 7000 series buses by installing a rubber cover to eliminate a sharp corner on the driver's seat platform.

The entire fleet also will receive the upgrade, which is set to be complete in about 30 days.

"Having people like Luis around creates a shortcut for MTA to become a safer agency because they don't just keep information to themselves," says Pelk.

Rodriguez also pointed out that the sharp edge posed a danger to over-anxious children who are not paying attention and hurrying to get on the bus. The elderly man who sustained injuries was transported to the hospital and received stitches.

"Operators are our ears and eyes out there," says Pelk. "When they contribute ideas, they provide information that managers may not be aware of."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Items of Interest: Transportation Plan, Sales Tax, Naming Policy on Committee Agendas

- [Schedule of committee meetings for August](#)

(Aug. 15, 2003) MTA's 2003 Short Range Transportation Plan, proposed sales tax legislation and a consolidated policy for naming MTA properties are among items on Board committee agendas this month.

The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion (Item 7) to adopt the Short Range Transportation Plan to help guide future MTA transit investments, monitor progress, respond to changing circumstances and implement Mobility 21 priorities.

Among the plan's highlights are working with municipal transit operators to coordinate service, continuing implementation of the planned 28 Metro Rapid corridors, and extending Metro Rail and Metro Rapid Transitways to other areas.

The plan calls for adding some 70 lane miles to the county's carpool network, implementing an Intelligent Transportation System and responding to the state's budget deficit with new funding strategies.

The committee also is expected to discuss Item 13, a motion to support SB-314 (Murray), a state senate bill that would authorize MTA to impose a ½-cent sales tax for up to six years. MTA staff recommends support of the bill.

If adopted by the Board and the state and approved by Los Angeles County voters, the bill could generate \$4.16 billion in sales tax revenues and a total of \$5.5 billion for transit projects when state and local matching funds are added, according to a report to the Board.

The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider a motion to establish a consolidated policy for naming such MTA properties as rail stations, transit centers and bus stops. The new policy would supercede any existing naming policies.

The proposed policy would ensure that new names would help transit customer more easily locate stations and stops, would meet ADA requirements, would be developed in a timely, cost-effective manner and would address a broad range of operational needs.

Here's the schedule of Board meetings for August:

- Planning and Programming Committee, 1 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 20.
- Executive Management and Audit Committee, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Aug. 21.
- Finance and Budget Committee, 10:30 a.m., Thursday, Aug. 21.
- Operations Committee, 1 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 21.
- Construction Committee: Canceled for August

- Monthly Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Aug. 28

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Venice Division 6 Operator Darrell Carter Stands Up for Comedy

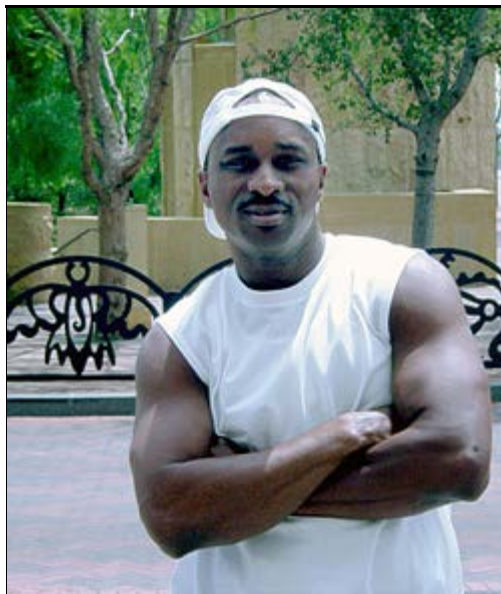
By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(August 15, 2003) There's something funny going on at Venice Division 6.

Just look at the fliers posted around the division. They read: "Darrell Carter, Performing Stand-Up Comedy."

During the day, Carter is a Metro Bus operator. At night, he's a comedian.

Carter, 43, started doing comedy in 1991 when the manager of the Comedy Act theatre dared him to go on stage. The following week, he took the stage and has been doing stand-up ever since.



Darrell Carter: Bus operator by day, comedian by night.

He has performed at the Apollo, the Improv, the Comedy Store, the Laugh Factory, clubs and colleges in North and South Carolina, New Jersey, and New York. When he's in the groove, Carter performs three to four times a week.

"I perform anyplace where there is a mike and a stand," he says.

The next time he'll take the stage will be August 31 at the Pasadena Icehouse on Colorado and Lake Boulevard in Pasadena.

'Just you and a mike'

"There's nothing like getting up in front of the audience, where it's just you, a mike and a stand and nobody else," Carter says. "There is no band or anybody to fall back on but yourself."

But he admits there's more than just the challenge of being on stage alone; the comedian has to make it through the act.

"Once you get the first joke out of the way and get a laugh, you're on a roll. If you don't get a laugh, you think, 'What do I do now?' So it's a challenge," Carter says. "If you lose an audience during a set, you have to regain that audience."

Carter's comedy is influenced by Damon Wayons and Richard Prior.

Throughout his act, he tells jokes about personal experiences, his family and some transit-related jokes. But, mainly, his performance focuses on dating and the single life.

Carter is recently divorced and has two children, Taj and Chaz.

Kids are his focus

"My kids are my focal point as far as raising them and bringing them up right, Carter says. "I try to spend as much time as possible with them."

Carter's family and fellow employees are supportive of his comedy act. His coworkers attend his performances and provide positive feedback.

Throughout his 20 years as a bus operator, he has performed at such MTA functions as the retirement celebration on the Queen Mary for BJ Harris, Lon Harris and Eddie Hill.

Carter hopes to move from comedy to acting in the near future.

"Some people still can't believe that I do comedy," Carter says. "They poke fun at me, but I tell them that when I'm rich and famous, I'll come back here in my limo."

Carter can be booked for a show by contacting (310) 745-3780.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Flexcar will be "another tool in the MTA tool box," CEO Roger Snoble announced at Friday's media event. Flexcar Chairman Neil Peterson, right, said Flexcar "makes so much sense here in Los Angeles."

MTA, Flexcar Unite Transit, Private Autos in New Car-Sharing Service

- [MTA employee program](#): A special arrangement between the agency and Flexcar will entitle employees to membership discounts.

By RICK JAGER

PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

(Aug. 15 2003) MTA and Flexcar, the nation's largest and oldest provider of car-sharing programs, today officially launched an innovative on-demand service during a media event at MTA Headquarters.

Under a broad agreement, MTA employees, users of public transit, vanpools, carpools, Metrolink and Amtrak will have access to a car when they need one during workdays to run errands, go to the doctor or other appointments.

"Flexcar will be another tool in the MTA tool box," said CEO Roger Snoble. "It will give people the opportunity and ability to ride transit, but if they have a special destination to go to, they'll have a way to get there. That's what Flexcar is all about."

MTA employee program

Beginning Sept. 8, MTA employees may enroll through the Employee Rideshare Program as Flexcar members. A special arrangement between the agency and Flexcar will entitle employees to membership discounts. Two Honda Civic gas/electric hybrid Flexcars are located in the MTA parking lot for the convenience of employee members.

Other units of Flexcar's 26-car Greater Los Angeles fleet, will be available at Union Station and at the Long Beach Bike station near



Flexcar CEO Lance Ayrault shows MTA's Jami Carrington how a SmartCard held next to a decal on the rear window will open the car doors.



the Transit Mall Metro Blue Line station. Flexcars also may be checked out at stations along the Metro Gold Line and at locations in Pasadena, Burbank and Santa Monica.

"It's a pleasure to be introducing a concept I think makes so much sense here in Los Angeles," said Neil Peterson, Flexcar's founder and chairman. "You can now have confidence that if you take transit...no matter what happens, you've got a car available during the day...."

Although Flexcar currently has a nationwide fleet of just over 300 cars – at locations in Seattle, Portland, San Diego, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. – CEO Lance Ayrault expects the company to have 2,500 vehicles stationed in Los Angeles, alone, within the next five years.

How Flexcar works

A one-time, lifetime membership fee of \$25 is required to join Flexcar. There also is a \$10 hourly user plan and a monthly plan with varying charges according to individual needs. The pricing includes gasoline, insurance, car cleaning, maintenance and parking at a Flexcar location, and of course, the vehicle.

A typical Flexcar is a new model, four-door Honda Civic hybrid although gas/electric hybrid pickups, vans and larger sedans are offered. All vehicles are located in well-lit, easily accessible locations.

Members can make reservations anytime from a year to a minute in advance. To drive a Flexcar, members use a SmartCard to open the doors and enter a personal PIN code into an dash-mounted computer key pad prior to starting the car. Trip data is sent wirelessly from an on-board computer to Flexcar, which sends the member a bill once a month based on use.

For more information about Flexcar, visit the www.mta.net home page and click on the "Can I borrow a car" link on the center scroll feature or go directly to the Flexcar web site at www.flexcar.com/losangeles or call Flexcar at (213) 482-3539.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Division 4's Thu Nguyen Expresses Creativity Through His Work

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Aug. 19, 2003) In a small room at Non-revenue Division 4, Thu Nguyen stands over a counter, delicately polishing and assembling intricate parts of antique fare boxes.

Known as a jack-of-all-trades by his co-workers, Mechanic "A" Nguyen uses a little bit of elbow grease and a lot of imagination to complete a variety of projects at Division 4.

"He's our chief fabricator," says Mechanic "A" Leader John Kielb. "He can fabricate just about anything."



Mechanic "A" Thu Nguyen displays antique fare boxes he has restored.

In addition to making his own tools – a standard practice among fabricators – Nguyen has designed special brackets for racks, shelving units and a handicap ramp for MTA's "Metro Experience" mobile theater. Nguyen also created a collapsible ladder for a Bus Rodeo trailer.

"Its functionality was quite impressive," says Quality Assurance Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Harold Torres. "The man's got skills."

An ongoing assignment in which Nguyen, a 22-year MTA veteran, takes great pride is the restoration of antique fare boxes.

'Flashing a memory'

"I like it because I see the face of the person who gets the fare box and they think it's wonderful to have something recreated and made brand new," says Nguyen. "When you look at the fare box, you remember your time at the company, flashing a memory in your mind."

When Nguyen is not designing and fabricating at work, he spends his free time designing and fabricating at home – that is, when he's not swing dancing, singing or playing ping-pong.

"I'm actually a very handy person," he says. "I never call anyone to do any handy work. I do it myself."

Nguyen discovered his hidden creativity while studying engineering at the University of Texas in the 1970s. Enrolling at the college marked a significant career change for the talented student – Nguyen left his home and his special agent police officer position in Vietnam to escape communism and start a new life in the U.S.

Nguyen worked as a mechanic at several car dealerships in southern

California before coming to MTA. Eligible for retirement next year, he says leaving the agency is not an option for some time yet.

"But when I do retire," Nguyen says, smiling, "I would like a fare box."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

See metro.net report: ['MTA Adds New 'Series I' \\$50 Bonds to Savings Bond Offerings'](#)

Series I Savings Bond Drive Begins Monday at MTA

By JAN OLSEN

(Aug. 14, 2003) MTA's Series I Savings Bond drive begins Monday, Aug. 18 with information meetings in the Boardroom at 9 and 11 a.m. and again at 1 and 3 p.m.

Employees who attend the meetings not only will learn about the Series I bonds, but also will get information about MTA's other Savings bonds programs.

Representatives from Security Marketing Group will discuss the purchase of savings bonds through payroll deductions, the Bond Continuation Plan and the Critical Illness Plan. They also will answer employees' questions.

The Pension and Benefits Department has arranged for Security Marketing personnel to be on-site from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. beginning Monday, Aug. 18 through Monday, Aug. 25 to meet individually with and to enroll employees in a savings bond program.

Security Marketing representatives are scheduled to move to the RRC Cafeteria in Building 1 for a savings bond enrollment drive beginning Tuesday, Aug. 26 through Friday, Aug. 29.

Representatives will be scheduled for bond drives at each operating division and work location over the next couple of months. Notifications about the drives will be posted at each work location.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

See metro.net report: ['MTA Adds New 'Series I' \\$50 Bonds to Savings Bond Offerings'](#)

Series I Savings Bond Enrollment Sessions Announced

(Aug. 19, 2003) MTA Pension and Benefits has announced a schedule of Series I Bond enrollment sessions for August and September.

Signups will continue at MTA Headquarters through Monday, Aug. 25. Security Marketing Group representatives will be in the building from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. to meet individually with and to enroll employees in a savings bond program.

Enrollment sessions will be held at the Regional Rebuild Center from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. beginning Tuesday, Aug. 26 through Friday, Aug. 29.

Sessions are scheduled at West Valley Division 8 from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. from Tuesday, Sept. 2 through Friday, Sept. 5.

Enrollers will be at the San Fernando Valley sector office at 9 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 4. Sessions also will be held at East Valley Division 15 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m., beginning Monday, Sept. 8 through Friday, Sept. 12.

The new Series I U.S. Savings Bonds are free of local and state taxes and defer federal taxes until the bond is cashed.

The bonds may be purchased through payroll deductions for a face value of \$50 to \$10,000 each. They will pay an annual interest rate of 4.66 percent through October 2003.

Other savings bond enrollment sessions will be scheduled at operating divisions and work locations through the fall. Notices will be posted in advance.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

SGV Sector to Hold Community Meetings August 27 and 28

By DAVE SOTERO

(Aug. 19, 2003) The San Gabriel Valley Service Sector will hold two community meetings, next week, to allow members of the public to comment on proposed bus service changes.

The meetings are scheduled at 6 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 27, in the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District Board Room in the City of Industry and at 6 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 28, at the White Memorial Medical Center in Los Angeles.

System changes also will be discussed at a public hearing scheduled at 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 2 at the SGV sector office in El Monte.

If approved by the sector Governance Council, the changes will become effective in December or later.

Proposed service changes are:

No.	Line Name	Description of Change
250/253	Boyle-State/ Euclid Evergreen	Cancel line.
471	PuenteHills- Whitwood-Brea Mall	Cancel line.
620	Boyle Heights Shuttle	Add Early AM Service on weekdays.
751	Soto Street Rapid Bus	Establish New Rapid Bus Line Along Soto Street corridor.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Funeral Services Set for Kathryn Winzer, Division 2 Stenographer

(Aug. 20, 2003) Funeral services for Kathryn Winzer, 53, a stenographer at Crossroads Depot Division 2, have been scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 21, at Second Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Los Angeles.



Kathryn Winzer

The services will be conducted at 10 a.m. at the church, which is located at 447 East 80th Street at the intersection with Avalon.

Internment following the funeral service will be at Evergreen Cemetery, 204 North Evergreen Ave., Whittier.

"We only had the pleasure of Kathy's company for a short time at Division 2," says Division Transportation Manager Thom Pelk. "It was easy to see she was a very special person."

Winzer, who joined MTA in November 1990, had worked at Arthur Winston Division 5 and Gateway Division 10. She moved to Crossroads Depot Division 2 in July.

She is survived by her husband, Terry, three daughters and a son, four grandsons and three granddaughters.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

You Can Run, But You Can't Hide, 'Mayberry' Man Learns

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 20, 2003) It's a long way from Mount Airy, N.C., to Los Angeles. And the big city might seem like a good place to hide to a feller on the run from the law in a town that prides itself on being Mayberry RFD.

So, Ronnie Payne, who's wanted by Mount Airy authorities on robbery and kidnapping charges, may have thought he was safe riding a Metro Blue Line train. And he might have been – if he'd paid his fare.



Sheriff's Deputies Mark Lodge and Scott Schneider of the Transit Services Bureau apprehended a suspect wanted for robbery and kidnapping in North Carolina.

Payne was arrested for alleged fare evasion, Aug. 8, by Sheriff's Deputy Mark Lodge and Deputy Scott Schneider of the Transit Services Bureau during a sweep of a northbound train.



Actor David Browning portrays the "Mayberry Deputy" in Mount Airy, N.C.

A quick records check determined there was an outstanding warrant against Payne in North Carolina. The suspect tried to pass it all off as a big mistake, but the deputies didn't buy it. They arrested, booked and jailed him.

No doubt Mayberry Sheriff Andy, played by Mount Airy native Andy Griffith, on TV's "The Andy Griffith Show," would have been proud of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies for making the collar.

So would Deputy Barney Fife.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

CEO Roger Snoble will throw the opening pitch during MTA Night at Dodgers Stadium, Wednesday, Sept. 3.



Snoble to Pitch!

- **MTA Night at Dodgers Stadium is Gonna be a 'Hit'**

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(August 20, 03) CEO Roger Snoble will take the mound to throw the opening pitch during MTA Night at Dodgers Stadium, Wednesday, Sept. 3.

The Dodgers will host the Houston Astros at a 7:10 p.m. game sponsored by Northrop Grumman Federal Credit Union. The opening pitch will be thrown around 6:45 p.m., following the National Anthem sung by Northrop Marketing Director Terry Anderson.

Employees will be seated together in the pavilion. Tickets will be discounted to \$4 and can be purchased at the Credit Union's Gateway or Gardena branch offices. Ticket requests also can be faxed to Jim Barnfather at (310) 323-7881.

Requests should indicate Credit Union account number, number of tickets and what account is to be debited. Employees who are not Credit Union members may forward a ticket request and check or money order to Northrop Grumman FCU, Attn: Jim Barnfather, 879 W. 190th Street, 8th Floor Gardena, CA 90248.

Employees can purchase as many tickets as needed for their family, friends and youth/church groups. Questions concerning the event may be directed to Barnfather at (310) 808-4897.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

MTA to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Bus Service Changes

By DAVE SOTERO

(Aug. 21, 2003) MTA will hold a series of public hearings in September to discuss more than 20 proposed changes designed to improve the efficiency of Metro Bus service throughout Los Angeles County

The proposed service changes are planned for implementation October 26, 2003 or later, and may be approved in whole or in part by service sector governance councils following the public hearings.

Hearings will be held at the following locations:

- San Gabriel Valley sector, 6 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 2, at the sector offices in El Monte.
- San Fernando Valley sector, 6:30 p.m., Sept. 3, at the Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center in Van Nuys.
- South Bay sector, 6 p.m., Sept. 9, at the Carson Community Center.
- Westside/Central sector, 6 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 11, in the Gateway Plaza Room, 3rd Floor of MTA Headquarters.
- Gateway Cities sector, 6 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 11, at Progress Park in Paramount.

Planned changes include service modifications or reductions on underutilized bus lines that require a high public subsidy.

Service changes are proposed for lines 58, 96, 119-126, 125, 128, 130, 167, 177, 218, 225, 226, 250, 253, 254, 256, 270, 471, 608, 620, 625, 626, 646 and 751.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Rudy Silva's Big Idea

- **Lifting Heavy Alternators is No Longer a Pain in the Back**

By LISA HUYNH

(August 21, 2003) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Mechanic Rudy Silva has created a device that makes the two-man task of lifting heavy vehicle alternators a thing of the past.

About 9 months ago, Silva was fed up with the back strain he got from manually removing and installing 100-pound alternators in NABI buses. Alternators charge bus batteries and run electrical systems.



Rudy Silva attaches the "holding bracket" tool to an alternator and an engine hoist.



The left part of the "holding bracket" tool connects to the lifting arm of an engine hoist; the right side attaches to the alternator.

PHOTOS BY LISA HUYNH

So, he made a "holding bracket" tool that lifts the alternators with ease.

"It was just a matter of figuring how to make a tool that would connect the alternator to an engine hoist," says Silva. "I made all the appropriate measurements and welded two pieces of strong steel together and we've been using it since."

A mechanic can use the two-part tool by attaching one part to the alternator and the other to a lifting arm of an engine hoist. Once connected, the mechanic can easily remove the alternator from the engine onto a work service.

After servicing the alternator, the mechanic can reverse the process to reinstall it.

"When I made the tool, I was really concerned about the safety of all the guys who have to work on this task," says Silva. "You don't have to worry about hurting yourself, anymore. The tool just makes the job easier and faster."

Silva has made about nine "holding bracket" tools, three for each shift.

"Rudy is a smart guy who likes to use his brain harder than his back," says Assistant Maintenance Manager Richard Famighetti. "This tool will save time, money and maybe a few banged-up fingers."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Division 8 employees Ranjit Basra, Jatinder Singh, Shiv Bhardwaj, Sharanjit Singh, Richard Jajja and Avtar Chatta celebrated Indian Independence Day with a feast for co-workers.



Celebrating Indian Independence Day At Division 8

By ERIC RAPP

(Aug. 22, 2003) West Valley Division 8 is continuing tradition that began three years ago – celebrating Indian Independence Day.

August 15 is a special day for MTA employees who were born in India or who are of Indian heritage. Much like July 4 in the United States, August 15 commemorates the day in 1947 that India gained its freedom from British rule.



Read all about it:

[Click here.](#)

To celebrate, several Division 8 operators who immigrated to the United States from India took it upon themselves to cook a traditional Indian feast for everyone at the division. Ranjit Basra, Jatinder Singh, Avtar S. Chattha, Richard Jajja, and Mandeep S. Sagoo also serve the food and explain what the dishes are to Indian food “novices.”

In addition to familiar items like curried chicken and herb rice, they brought new treats such as “pakoba,” a fried vegetable snack; and a delicious dessert called “jalabi.”

Next year, say the operators, they’ll be celebrating in an even bigger way. In addition to the food, says Basra, “we will be wearing traditional Indian garb and playing Indian music.”

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

GM Jack Gabig's Vision Becomes Reality During SG Valley Sector's First Year

By LISA HUYNH

(August 22, 2003) When the San Gabriel Valley sector was officially launched in July 2002, General Manager Jack Gabig had a vision.

A year later, he looks back at how that vision has become a reality. "We've completed the first year successfully and I'm expecting more achievements this coming year," says Gabig.



Metro San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig

To kick off another eventful year, San Gabriel Valley scheduled an open house celebration, Friday afternoon, at the sector headquarters in El Monte.

During the first year of operation, Gabig and his team focused on customer quality of service, improving the condition of the fleet and facilities, and having a strong community outreach program.

Gabig, who was general manager at Montebello Bus Lines for 12 years, knows a lot about leading a team.

"I'm not the one who makes our sector a success, it's my staff and the management teams at divisions 3 and 9," he says. "Simply put, there's a real dedication to improving our service here in San Gabriel Valley."

In an interview with metro.net, Gabig looked back at the sector's first year of operation.

Q. What were the goals that you set for the first year as Sector General Manager?

A. Our first year here in San Gabriel Valley has been a period of foundation building. Most of last year was focused on building the organization, strengthening the team and concentrating on some basic issues. We undertook a major restructuring of our service to meet the needs of the new Metro Gold Line light rail service. We also refocused on basic customer service, on-time performance and cleaner buses.

Q. Looking back at the first year of operation, what has the San Gabriel Valley sector accomplished this past year?

A. We successfully established a very active and determined Governance Council whose members are respected community leaders from San Gabriel Valley and East Los Angeles.

Our single largest accomplishment that required a massive effort over the entire year was implementing the Gold Line/Bus Interface service. Almost all 30 lines were affected by the Gold Line to Pasadena, whether it was creating new schedules, restructuring existing routes or canceling service that duplicated the Gold Line.

Also, our Safety's First program, has had a very successful year. We

introduced effective Local Safety Committees at divisions 3 and 9 that are looking at key safety issues in both Maintenance and Transportation. Through the leadership of these committees, we've reduced employee injuries as well as new Worker's Compensation claims.

Q. What kinds of obstacles did you and your team face as you pulled the sector together?

A. One of the first that comes to mind is a challenge with our budget. Because FY 03 was MTA's first year under the decentralized sector concept, there were some inaccuracies in how the budget for the entire MTA bus operation was allocated to each of the sectors. Also, we had an ambitious Worker's Compensation cost reduction target which we were not able to achieve. However, we've made significant progress in reducing employee injuries and new claims.

We also have a major graffiti problem on some of our lines. It is a challenge to fully implement a zero tolerance policy.



'The thing that gives me the greatest sense of satisfaction is developing a vision and seeing the commitment of my staff to make that vision a reality.'

Personally, however, my biggest challenge is time. There never seems to be enough time in the day to address all the internal issues and needs within the sector operation and also maintain a strong community presence.

Q. In addition to the organizational things, you have made some physical changes at your two divisions -- particularly at Division 9. What may be coming up in the future?

A. We have a very large transportation complex here in El Monte, constructed 30 years ago. The facility is essentially out of capacity, meaning the service has grown to the point where we need additional repair bays, more room for our operators and additional berths at the passenger terminal. Division 9's existing maintenance and transportation buildings need major improvements.

Over the past year we have prepared an ambitious redevelopment plan that we are now calling the 'El Monte Transit Village.' This plan will be presented to the MTA board at the September meeting. It includes a new operating division for 300 buses, a new sector office, an expanded El Monte station, a large housing component of over 500 units, a commercial office complex, and a major retail complex. And to cap it off, we hope to bring in a new Metrolink station nearby.

Q. What do you enjoy most about your job and working with your team?

A. The thing that gives me the greatest sense of satisfaction is

developing a vision and seeing the commitment of my staff to make that vision a reality. I'm very fortunate to have an exceptional team of managers, operators and mechanics here at the sector office and at both operating divisions. They truly are dedicated, hard-working employees and they're doing wonderful work for us.

Q. You have a very active Governance Council, what kind of issues are being addressed or will be addressed in your view?

A. The Governance Council has met a total of five times since April. Soon they will be addressing what is their primary focus in the San Gabriel Valley, which is service quality and service structuring to meet local needs. In an upcoming meeting, the Council will consider some service reductions on low productivity lines and the implementation of a new Rapid Bus service on Soto Street in East Los Angeles next year.

Q. Now that you've begun your second year of operation, what are your goals for next year?

A. The first goal above everything else is our safety program. We will continue focusing on safety with our employees and our patrons. We have some aggressive goals to further reduce accidents, employee injuries and Worker's Compensation costs. In addition, we're continuing a very steady concentration on improving customer service, on-time performance and bus cleanliness.

A hope and a goal of mine is to begin the first phase of our redevelopment plan in El Monte. Although, the large 'El Monte Transit Village' project will take some time to review and develop, we are excited about the future of Metro San Gabriel Valley.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Yo-Yo Whiz

- **Employee's Son Places 2nd in Yomega World Event**

(Aug. 22, 2003) Thomas Dodd, the 12-year-old son of MTA Software Engineer Robert Dodd, has more than a few yo-yo tricks up his sleeve.

Thomas showed that he has what it takes, recently, winning 2nd place in the Yomega World Yo-yo novice competition in Las Vegas, an event where only Yomega yo-yos are used.

Thomas had never entered a competition before, and he had only been using a yo-yo for about year.

His mother bought him his first yo-yo, and he began practicing weekly with the La Mirada Yo-yo Club at a park near his home. He soon learned tricks like "creeper" and "breakaway" that helped him in the competition.

Thomas plans to keep practicing and having fun yo-yoing with his friends.

"I'm proud of my son and his dedication," Dodd says. "I look forward to seeing him win more competitions."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)



Thomas Dodd, son of MTA Software Engineer Robert Dodd, stands proudly with his second-place Yomega World Yo-yo Competition trophy.

South Bay Sector Outlines Plans at Community Meetings

By RICH MORALLO

(Aug. 26, 2003) Metro South Bay conducted two community meetings, Aug. 9 and 19, at Arthur Winston Division 5 to outline planned bus service improvements in the South Bay.



PHOTO BY RICH MORALLO

"The meetings went very well," said General Manager Dana Coffey who welcomed residents and bus riders. She started both meetings with an organizational overview of her facilities and staff. "As expected, we received comments and suggestions on our new Metro Rapid line, local bus lines, hours of operation, and bus routes," she said. "We were happy to share with the audience how Metro South Bay was evaluating how we can improve service especially where our ridership figures call for increased service."

Community members view a presentation on Metro South Bay facilities and staff during recent meetings at Arthur Winston Division 5.

Service Development Manager Madeline Van Leuvan also outlined proposed service projects such as the proposed "hub and spoke" network, and the continued expansion of Metro Rapid service along Vermont, Florence, Western and Manchester avenues, and Crenshaw and Hawthorne boulevards.

"I also talked about the proposed super limited service, which is basically characterized by stops only at major transfer locations with the potential of yielding savings while providing a faster way to travel for our customers," Van Leuvan said.

Some attendees at the meetings commented that the proposed fare increase is reasonable, duration of the telephone wait time for Customer Information has been reduced, and that they were glad to see that the agency is buying new buses. Other attendees asked for security at various park-and-ride lots, and for extended operation hours.

Several members of the Metro South Bay governance council attended the meetings.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

TCAP interns, from back row, left, are Jorge Castillo, John Jue, Jesse Sanchez, Laura Vargas, Jaime Romero, Joshua Wong, Francisco Acosta and Tanya Felix. Front row from left, Dolores Luevano, Horace Kwok, Michael Szeto, Vincent Cendejas, Jessica Infante, Derrick Appelzoller, Helen Ramos and Sally Singleton.



PHOTO BY FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

TCAP Interns Say Goodbye to MTA

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(August 26, 2003) Transportation Career Academy Program (TCAP) interns gathered for a farewell reception, Aug. 22, to celebrate the completion of their six-week internship at MTA.

Supervisors and coordinators of the program thanked the interns for their hard work.

"We are thankful that the students get an opportunity to share their talents with the departments they work for," said senior training and development specialist Sally Singleton.

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Nancy Smith is the new crime analyst for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

No Badge, No Gun but LASD Analyst Helps Prevent Crimes

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(August 28, 2003) She may not wear a uniform, carry a badge or a gun, or make daily rounds in a squad car, but Nancy Smith plays a fundamental role in the prevention of crime on Metro bus and rail lines.

Smith is the new crime analyst for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau – a job she took late last month after leaving the Marina Del Rey station.

She was settled into her new job for just two weeks when her investigative work contributed to the arrest of a man wanted for murder and other crimes, including several robberies on the Metro Green Line.

Using a database to transmit criminal suspect information to 700 law enforcement agencies across the country, Smith sent out a "wanted" bulletin with the suspect's photo. With the bulletin in hand, two Las Vegas bicycle police recognized and apprehended the suspect.

From her office on the Plaza level of MTA headquarters, Smith monitors criminal activity at MTA properties by evaluating written crime reports issued by the Sheriff's deputies.

"One of the things that I do is watch the crime to see if we have any trends, spikes or anomalies that we need to pay attention to," she says.

Reports and maps

From the compiled data, Smith creates monthly reports and geographical maps that detail which MTA properties have experienced crime and at what frequency.

"I'm in a unique position to read all the reports, which no one else has the luxury of time to do," she says. "From this analysis, I let the lieutenants know where to best deploy our officers."

The information is passed on to MTA Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein, who determines how many deputies must be deployed into a problem area.

"I am very excited about adding Nancy to our staff," says Finkelstein. "Her skills and equipment will allow us to work smarter, rather than harder to better serve the MTA. Coordination of crimes to geographic locations or common suspect descriptions will be critical in the investigation of crimes such as vandalism - a big cost issue for the MTA."

Smith received her bachelor's and master's degrees in sociology/behavioral science from California State University, San Marcos. Before joining the LASD six years ago, she had worked as a crime analyst at the Cold Case Homicide Unit in San Diego.

As crime analyst for MTA, Smith has several aspirations. She hopes to have cameras installed on additional buses and "wanted" bulletins of transit crime suspects posted in the neighborhoods of Metro Bus routes.

"I would like to have an open relationship with the people of MTA so they feel like they can ask me for anything they want," she says. "My office is open to them for any questions they may have."

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Division 3's transportation team wins most improved division for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2003.



Division 3 Takes Home Most Improved Transportation Division

By LISA HUYNH

(August 28, 2003) North Los Angeles Division 3's transportation team won the "How You Doin!" award for most improved division for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2003.

"I'm so proud of these bus operators, I'm not taking any credit," says Transportation Manager Dan Frawley. "It's my staff and the operators who have earned this award."

General Manager Jack Gabig came by the division to congratulate the team for their achievement and presented them a \$500 check.

Frawley plans to get a DVD player and a stereo for the weight room. "We still have \$200 from the last award, so we'll get something nice. They deserve it."

Division 3 significantly improved on new Worker's Compensation claims, complaints and accident rates. They also came in second place in in-service on-time performance.

"Both the transportation and maintenance teams are working together for the same goal and that is, Safety's First," says Frawley. "We'll continue to be successful as long as we concentrate on the performance indicators of the 'How you Doin!' program."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Division 9's Maintenance team wins Best Maintenance Division for fiscal year 2003.



Division 9's Maintenance Team Earns Top Honors for FY 2003

By LISA HUYNH

(August 28, 2003) The maintenance team of San Gabriel Valley Division 9 is at the top once again - winning the "How You doin'!" award for Best Maintenance Division for Fiscal Year 2003.

General Manager Jack Gabig gave the team a trophy and a check for \$1,000.

Maintenance Manager John McBryan may buy the team polo shirts with the prize money.

"With out the support of our transportation folks we could not have achieved this award," says McBryan.

Division 9, which had nearly perfect attendance, came in first place in the category of miles between mechanical failures. The division also placed second in on-time pullouts and bus cleanliness.

"We have a group of dedicated people here at division 9," says McBryan. "It just feels great to win best maintenance team again."

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Board Approves Six-year Short Range Transportation Plan

Transportation Plan Highlights:

- [Improve Quality of Local Bus Service](#)
- [Expand the Metro Rapid Program](#)
- [Expand the County's Light Rail System](#)
- [Introduce Metro Rapid Transitways](#)
- [Improve Metrolink Service](#)
- [Expand the Countywide Carpool Lane System](#)
- [Improve Traffic Flow Through System Management](#)
- [Encourage Alternatives to Driving Alone](#)
- [Plan and Implement a Comprehensive Freight Movement Program](#)
- [Implement Mechanisms to Link Growth with Transportation](#)

By RICK JAGER

(August 28, 2003) The MTA Board of Directors today approved a six-year Short Range Transportation Plan that focuses on the phasing-in of transportation improvements in Los Angeles County through 2009 that will help put together the pieces of the region's mobility puzzle.

The plan relies on performance-based modeling to identify the best solution for each mobility challenge. In total, \$19.3 billion is available to fund the plan's transportation priorities through 2009. These include the costs of operating the current transportation program and funding new transportation solutions.

"Our region can expect to grow by nearly a million residents in the next six years, and this plan offers some creative yet practical solutions for improving mobility within the limited resources we'll have at our disposal," said MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky.

The Short Range Transportation Plan calls for an expansion of light rail into East Los Angeles, the completion of the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway project, implementation of 28 Metro Rapid bus lines, adding high-capacity buses into service, building 70 more miles of carpool lanes on area freeways as well as numerous highway projects and hundreds of local transportation and joint development projects.

"This Short Range Transportation Plan is a tool designed to bring the mobility and financial pieces of the puzzle together," said MTA CEO Roger Snoble. "The plan also emphasizes that our county must come together and speak with one voice about our transportation funding needs."

Highlights of the newly approved 2003 Short Range Transportation Plan include:

- **Improve Quality of Local Bus Service.** MTA will continue to restructure and improve Metro bus services, which are provided by five new service sectors. These were created to improve customer service by providing communities with more input into operations. Local bus providers and MTA will work together to provide efficient routing, service coordination, and to introduce new technology that will make travel more convenient, such as the implementation of the Universal Fare

System and the use of smart cards that allow seamless transfers. MTA will also implement a “hub and spoke” bus system that will improve bus service to LA County’s most popular destinations by serving major transportation centers throughout the region.

- **Expand the Metro Rapid Program.** A total of 28 new Metro Rapid bus lines will be in operation by FY2009 that will reduce travel times for bus riders by 25 percent. This will result in over 400 miles of Rapid, high capacity bus service that will serve 34 cities and 11 unincorporated LA County communities.
- **Expand the County’s Light Rail System.** With the completion of the Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Gold Line, MTA is poised to begin construction on the Eastside extension to be completed in 2009. These will form a single operating line extending from East Los Angeles into the San Gabriel Valley. Another rail line, the Exposition line toward Culver City, is under design with completion after 2009 (subject to funding availability). Finally, preliminary design is planned to begin on a Metro Gold Line extension eastward to Claremont.
- **Introduce Metro Rapid Transitways.** New, cutting-edge bus service using dedicated traffic lanes will be introduced in 2005. The centerpiece will be the 14-mile exclusive San Fernando Valley Rapidway, followed by a project along Wilshire Boulevard that proposes exclusive, peak hour access to buses, subject to approval by cities. Initial steps in beginning rapid bus service for the North/South Transitways in the San Fernando Valley and along Crenshaw Boulevard will also begin during this planning period.
- **Improve Metrolink Service.** Commuters will benefit from new trains that expand and improve service. To improve efficiency and reduce travel time, track work and signal upgrades will also be completed.
- **Expand the Countywide Carpool Lane System.** MTA plans to add 70 lane miles of carpool lanes by 2009, resulting in a 517-mile network throughout the county. Specific improvements include completing carpool lanes and/or connectors along I-5, I-10, SR-60 and I-405. In addition, carpool lanes on the SR-14 and the I-5 near Orange County would be the next priorities if additional funding is secured.
- **Improve Traffic Flow Through System Management.** Information and technology, such as real-time management of our roadway system, will play larger roles in getting the most out of our system. Other programs like the Freeway Service Patrol will expand to bring traffic incident relief to more freeways and support freeway construction projects.
- **Encourage Alternatives to Driving Alone.** Providing options to travelers is one way to reduce traffic congestion. Programs that encourage ridesharing, pedestrian travel, and move toward completion of a 406-mile Class I bicycle system will be developed and promoted. MTA will also implement parking policies for its Metro stations and explore a park-and-ride facility study.

- **Plan and Implement a Comprehensive Freight Movement Program.** MTA will work with its partners to develop analytical tools and a strategic plan for addressing future goods movement growth. These partnerships will help develop dedicated funding sources that will pay for comprehensive freight related projects without impacting other transportation funding sources.
- **Implement Mechanisms to Link Growth with Transportation.** The Mobility 21 Coalition for Los Angeles County will work to form public/private partnerships that can implement programs that provide meaningful incentives to better link land use and transportation planning.

MTA estimates that implementation of the Short Range Transportation Plan will create 95,000 jobs and generate over \$10 billion for the region's economy over the next six years. In addition, the plan will help reduce up to 50 percent of air pollution emissions along our most congested freeways.

"By laying out a framework for the next six years that prioritizes our needs and allocates available resources, this Short Range Transportation Plan becomes a living document that provides direction in reducing congestion, tackling traffic hotspots, and improving our quality of life," said Snoble.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Board Holds Action on Proposed Sales Tax, Approves Naming Policy

(Aug. 29, 2003) The MTA Board took a wait and see position, Thursday, on state sales tax legislation, but approved a motion setting a policy for naming MTA properties.

During a discussion of SB-314, a bill proposed by State Sen. Kevin Murray, CEO Roger Snoble recommended that the Board adopt a "work with author" stance on the bill. The legislation would authorize MTA to impose a half-cent sales tax for up to six years.

If eventually adopted by the Board and the state and approved by Los Angeles County voters, a half-cent sales tax could generate \$4.16 billion in revenues and a total of \$5.5 billion for transit projects when state and local matching funds are added, according to a report to the Board.

The Board also approved a motion establishing a consolidated policy for naming such MTA properties as rail stations, transit centers and bus stops. The new policy supercedes any existing naming policies.

The policy ensures that new names help transit customer more easily locate stations and stops, meet ADA requirements, will be developed in a timely, cost-effective manner and will address a broad range of operational needs.

[Back to MTA Report](#)

Hoax E-Mails Invade MTA Computer Network

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(Aug. 29, 2003) In the aftermath of last week's real and hoax computer virus attacks, the damage that electronic viruses can cause is beginning to sink in.

"The truth is that as every day goes on, the electronic world that we live in is becoming more dangerous," says Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett.

Earlier today, federal agents arrested Jeffrey Lee Parson, 18, of Hopkins, Minn., on suspicion of creating the computer program responsible for the hoax e-mails and other viruses that have plagued computers – including MTA's – worldwide.

READ ALL ABOUT IT: [Computer worm suspect arrested.](#)

Last Thursday, a few MTA employees received the hoax e-mail virus and unknowingly sent it to coworkers. Once the e-mails were sent, ITS realized something was going on in the network.

"Like too many cars on a freeway, all these e-mails slowed things down," says Bennett.

When viruses hit, employees can't access the network to do business; consequently, dollars and productivity are lost.

Last week for example, CSX, a major rail transportation company located in the eastern United States, was hit by a virus that crippled its dispatching and signal systems. As a result, passenger and freight traffic was halted for several hours until CSX was able to contain the damage sufficiently to resume service.

"ITS is very diligent in protecting the health of MTA's electronic environment. The payoff ... we have been able to dodge the onslaught of virus attacks," says Bennett.

Employees can help avoid virus attacks by keeping an eye on the e-mails they receive. E-mails that could contain viruses may have a vague subject line or no subject line at all. They also are notable for subject lines that don't match the body of the e-mail.

"Looking out for viruses is like a neighborhood watch, says Bennett. "If you want a neighborhood to be safe, everyone has to keep an eye out for problems and report them."

As a little caution is all it takes, here are some tips on how to protect MTA's computer network:

Dos and Don'ts of Computer Viruses

Do...

- Call the ITS Help Desk at ext. 2HELP if you suspect a virus.
- Sign off computers every day so anti-virus updates can be automatically loaded when signing-on.
- Be suspicious of e-mails that ask you to do something that is not of a business nature (for example, the e-mail may ask you to check out an attached file that contains the virus).
- Delete e-mails that are suspicious or forward them to the ITS Help Desk for analysis.

Don't...

- Take matters into your own hands.
- Open attachments from senders you don't know.
- Be a participant in spreading viruses or hoaxes.

[Top](#)

Computer Worm's Suspected Creator Due in Court

(Aug. 29, 2003) CNN reports that Jeffrey Lee Parson, 18, of Hopkins, Minn., is scheduled to appear before a U.S. magistrate in a St. Paul, this afternoon, to answer charges that he created a computer virus that has affected thousands of computers.

Federal officials said the suspect is known online as "teekid."

The damaging viruslike infection, known as "Blaster," LovSan" and "MSBlast," struck the Internet weeks ago. Some experts said it has infected more than 500,000 computers across the globe.

One of the most widespread computer worms this year, the virus does not damage data or programs, but replicates itself repeatedly, eating up computer capacity.

Some versions of the worm began spreading via e-mail attachments with such subject lines as "Thank you," "Re: Details" or "Re: approved."

The fast-spreading Blaster worm took advantage of a flaw in Microsoft's Windows software. Experts urged computer users to install a free patch offered on Microsoft's site since the software giant acknowledged the vulnerability July 16.

[Top](#)

[Back to Bulletin Board](#)

Cleaning Machine> From left, Doug Massoth, equipment service supervisor, Leo Gomez, laborer, "A" Stops and Zones; Henry Benitez, equipment service supervisor ; Ray Baldonado, equipment service supervisor lead Metro Clean-up efforts at a bus stop in Venice.

PHOTOS BY DAVE SOTERO

MTA Urges Angelenos to Help 'Clean Up L.A.' Labor Day Weekend

More! [Metro Clean Program Does its Part](#)

By DAVE SOTERO

(Aug. 29, 2003) In anticipation of the large outdoor crowds expected at Los Angeles-area parks and beaches over the long Labor Day weekend, MTA is urging Angelenos to do their part to "Clean Up L.A."

MTA has been conducting a "Clean Up L.A." public outreach campaign over the last couple of months using radio ads and posters that ask everyone to take personal responsibility for ensuring that public facilities remain clean and graffiti-free for the enjoyment of all.

The campaign is part of a broader MTA effort to work aggressively to deter graffiti on all of its trains, buses and facilities.

MTA "Clean Up L.A." ads appear on more than 300 trash receptacles at beaches in Playa Del Rey, Venice, Marina Del Rey, Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach for the large numbers of people expected to flock to these shoreline communities starting Saturday.

Metro Clean program

MTA is also doing its part to clean up L.A. via its Metro Clean Program. In operation since 1995, the program works every day to help keep Metro Bus facilities and surrounding areas clean for the region's public transit customers.

Under the Metro Clean program, Los Angeles County courts refer adult and juvenile misdemeanor offenders to MTA for alternative sentencing in the form of community service.

Metro Clean work crews help eliminate blight on public sidewalks, at bus stops, on MTA properties and along MTA's inactive rights-of-way, making them safer and keeping them clear of debris.

"The Metro Clean program provides MTA the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the communities it serves," says CEO Roger Snoble. "We're constantly helping spruce up facilities to make it nicer for people in our communities to take public transportation. While we're making headway, everyone's help is needed to keep our city clean."



Metro Clean Program Does its Part

(Aug. 29, 2003) In Fiscal Year 2003 alone, Metro Clean work crews cleaned up 48,061 bus stops, 32,237 buses, pressure-washed 541 bus terminals and removed 43,117 bags of trash from the streets of Los Angeles.

Open 359 days per year, the Metro Clean Department cleans an average of 134 bus stops, 90 buses and pressure-washes another two terminals while removing 120 bags of trash each day.

Crews have participated in community clean-ups for Atwater Village, Rampart Police and Lafayette Park.

[<TOP](#)

[Back to MTA Report](#)