

Metro Report Archives

September 2003 Articles

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- [New Machine Prevents Track Friction on the Metro Gold Line](#) (Sept. 30, 2003) A device designed to reduce track friction is being introduced to the Metro Gold Line, this week, in response to several residents' complaints about noise from trains near the Southwest Museum station.
- [Board Approves Land Exchange for New Bus Division in West LA](#) (Sept. 25, 2003) The MTA Board today approved an agreement with RAD Jefferson, LLC, on plans to exchange MTA's antiquated bus yard property in Venice for construction of a new bus division in a more centralized, industrial area of West Los Angeles. **PLUS>** [Board actions update.](#)
- [Graffiti Cleanup Project Keeps the Metro Gold Line Golden](#) (Sept 24, 2003) Sheriff's deputies assigned to MTA's Transit Services Bureau have gathered a posse to clean up the graffiti that can be seen from Metro Gold Line trains traveling alongside the L.A. River.
- **UPDATE>** [Sept. 23, 2003 New Bus Division, Transit Service Policy on Board Committee Agendas](#) - Committee actions.
- [Division 3 Mural Pays Tribute to Cypress Park Recreation Center and Popular Soccer Coach](#) (Sept. 23, 2003) In the shade of a row of Cypress trees that lines the wall between the Cypress Park Recreation Center and the North Los Angeles Division bus yard, friends and neighbors came together, Saturday, for the dedication of the Gol Mural, a 70-foot long mural by artist Leo Limón.
- [Catoe Sees MTA Beginning Shift to 'Hub and Spoke' in Mid-2004](#) (Sept. 19, 2003) Beginning in mid-2004 and continuing for the next several years, Metro Bus service will experience a transformation. A radical change not only for MTA, but also for other transit agencies in Los Angeles County.
- [San Gabriel Valley Governance Council Tours Divisions](#) (Sept. 19, 2003) General Manager Jack Gabig invited members of the San Gabriel Valley Sector governance council for a tour, Friday, of the sector's El Monte Division 9, North Los Angeles Division 3 and the Regional Rebuild Center.
- [Groundbreaking at Santa Clarita Transit Maintenance Facility](#) (Sept. 19, 2003) Santa Clarita city officials, joined by MTA Director Frank Roberts and Kevin Michel, director, San Fernando Valley-North County Area Team, broke ground last week on a new 22,000-square foot maintenance facility for Santa Clarita Transit.
- [MTA Kicks Off Public 'Safety Begins With Me' Campaign](#) (Sept. 18, 2003) To help prevent accidents on MTA properties, trains and buses, MTA has launched a "Safety Begins With Me" public outreach campaign.
- [MTA's 'Safety's First' Campaign is Reducing Employee Injuries](#) (Sept. 18, 2003) Safety is MTA's top priority, both for its employees and its customers. Similar to the just-announced public outreach campaign, MTA's ongoing "Safety's First" employee safety campaign advocates personal responsibility for preventing workplace accidents.
- [Cypress Park Community Will Honor Local Artist for His Vision](#) (Sept. 18, 2003) Community members will come together, Saturday, to honor and celebrate the

completion of local artist Leo Limon's "The Gol Mural," a colorful artwork located on the west wall of North Los Angeles Division 3.

- **[New Bus Division](#), Transit Service Policy on Board Committee Agendas** (Sept. 16, 2003) A motion authorizing CEO Roger Snoble to reach an agreement with a local developer for construction of a new bus operating division in West Los Angeles is among items on MTA Board committee agendas this week.
- **[MTA Increases Photo Enforcement](#) on Metro Blue Line** (Sept. 16, 2003) In an effort to reduce the number of red light violations on street portions of the Metro Blue Line, MTA has recently installed new camera boxes at nine rail crossings along the 22-mile alignment.
- **[U.S. DOT Secretary Mineta](#) Delivers \$45 million in Federal Funds to MTA** (Sept. 15, 2003) U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta presented MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky with federal grants totaling \$45 million in federal money during a news conference Saturday on Patsaouras Plaza.
- **[Div. 7 Manager Jim McElroy](#) Named GM of Westside/Central Sector** (Sept. 12, 2003) West Hollywood Division 7 Transportation Manager Jim McElroy has been named general manager of the Westside/Central Service Sector, Deputy CEO John Catoe has announced. The appointment is effective Monday, Sept. 15.
- **[What's MTA?](#) Agency is Working to Strengthen its Identity** (Sept. 11, 2003) Do you know FedEx? 7-Eleven? Starbucks? Most people do. But, a significant percentage of Angelenos don't know what MTA means.
- **[MTA's HR Department](#) is Going to the LA County Fair** (Sept. 11, 2003) MTA's Human Resources Department will be part of the Los Angeles County Fair, Sept. 12 to 28, to help promote the MTA system, as well as to inform people about employment opportunities at MTA.
- **[SGV Staff Gathers Comments](#) on Proposed Bus Service Changes** (Sept. 10, 2003) The San Gabriel Valley Service Sector has worked closely with the community to gather comments on proposed bus service changes planned for October or later.
- **[Gold Line Construction Chief](#) Will Head MTA Project Management** (Sept. 9, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble today announced the hiring of Rick Thorpe, one of the most highly regarded builders of light rail systems in the United States, as executive officer for MTA project management.
- **[MTA Can Reduce](#) Gold Line Crossing Bell Duration, CPUC Says** (Sept. 5, 2003) The California Public Utilities Commission agreed, Thursday, to allow MTA to shorten the duration of warning bells at seven Metro Gold Line rail crossings in South Pasadena and Los Angeles.
- **[SWAT Team Plans](#) 'Terrorist' Drill, Saturday, at MTA HQ** (Sept. 5, 2003) It may look like a movie shoot-out, Saturday, when an LAPD SWAT team uses the roof of the MTA Headquarters building as the location for an anti-terrorist drill.
- **[Rail Safety Week](#) to Highlight Caution Around Crossings and Tracks** (Sept. 4, 2003) Metrolink, MTA and regional rail operators will use California Rail Safety Week, Sept. 8 – 12, as a high-profile effort to remind drivers and pedestrians to exercise caution around rail crossings and tracks.
- **[High School, Housing Development](#) Set Near NoHo MTA Station** (Sept. 3, 2003) Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn, along with representatives of LAUSD, the Community Redevelopment Agency and MTA announced an agreement, Tuesday, to facilitate construction of a much-needed high school and housing development in North

Hollywood.

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- [MTA Takes 2nd Place at APTA International Bus Rodeo](#) (Sept. 30, 2003) In a photo-finish with a scant six points separating them, Tri Delta Transit of Contra Costa County, Calif., nosed past a hard-charging MTA team to win "best overall transit property" at the 2004 APTA International Bus Rodeo.
- [MTA Operations Joins Metro.net with New Web Pages](#) (Sept. 30, 2003) Metro.net welcomes MTA Operations to the Intranet family, today, with the posting of web pages and links that will provide a depth of information about one of MTA's major areas of responsibility.
- [New Contract Services Director >](#) **MTA's Mark Maloney Wants to Grow Metro Bus Service** (Sept. 26, 2003) As Mark Maloney sees it, one way to grow MTA service is to plant small contract bus lines in areas where there are few riders, cultivate their loyalty with good service, and reap a harvest of increased ridership for regular Metro Bus lines.
- [Division 3's Andre Hanna](#) **Turned up the Heat at the County Fair Bake-Off** (Sept. 25, 2003) North Los Angeles Division 3 Transportation Operations Supervisor, Andre Hanna, who has been baking goodies for more than 40 years, recently won two ribbons at the 2003 LA County Fair bake-off.
- [MTA's Comm Rel Staff](#) **Attends 16 de Septiembre Resource Fair** (Sept. 25, 2003) Community Relations staff members attended the annual 16 de Septiembre Resource Fair, this past weekend, at the Lucille Beserra Roybal Youth & Family Center in Boyle Heights.
- [Maria Reynolds Named](#) **West Valley Division Transportation Manager** (Sept. 23, 2003) Starting as a college intern in 1985 with SCRTD, West Valley Division 8's Maria Reynolds rose through the ranks and made her way to the top as MTA's newest division transportation manager.
- [Obituary](#) Funeral Services Set for Operator Drew Andrews
- [New Admin Chief Don Ott](#) **Learns Jobs from the Inside Out** (Sept. 23, 2003) Don Ott, MTA's new executive officer for Administration, has always learned his jobs from the inside out.
- [Robert New](#) **Named MTA's Director of Purchasing** (Sept. 23, 2003) Robert F. New, Jr. has been named Director of Purchasing in the Material Management Department. His appointment was effective August 18.
- [MTA's Community Relations](#) **department honored Sheriff's Deputy Gary DeBondt** (Sept. 23, 2003)
- [Building on the Past:](#) An Interview With Gateway Cities GM Rich Rogers (Sept. 17, 2003)
- [20 Employees Honored](#) as Employees of the Quarter (Sept. 17, 2003)
- [Singer Mary Lee](#), an assistant administrative analyst in Regional Programming, to Perform in Lou Rawl's Televised Special 'An Evening of Stars' at the Kodak Theatre. (Sept. 12, 2003)
- [MTA Café to Adjust Menu Prices](#) (Sept. 12, 2003) - MTA Café will revise menu prices beginning Sept. 29 to reflect the increased costs of food and services,

cafeteria manager Bruce Ueno announced today.

- [LA City Councilman](#) **Martin Ludlow Visits Division 7** (Sept. 12, 2003) Los Angeles City Councilman Martin Ludlow, recently appointed to the MTA Board by Mayor James Hahn, paid an official call, Sept. 9, at West Hollywood Division 7.
- [Gateway Cities Events](#) **Features Both Ends of the Age Spectrum** (Sept. 11, 2003) Metro Gateway Cities sector participated in two events with U.S. Rep. Linda T. Sánchez (D-39), recently, with entirely different audiences – kids and seniors.
- [Home Show Attendees](#) **React to New Metro Gold Line** (Sept. 11, 2003) A month after the Metro Gold Line opening, MTA volunteers staffing an information table during a home show at the Pasadena Convention Center, Aug. 22-24, learned how the public is reacting to the new rail line.
- [New Communications Technology](#) **for MTA's Operating Divisions** (Sept. 10, 2003) The second phase of an 18-month project that is bringing state-of-the-art communications technology to MTA's operating divisions will be completed this month. The entire project will be finished by year's end.
- [MTA's Logistics Department](#) **Makes Stretching 'A Way of Life'** (Sept. 10, 2003) MTA's Logistics Department is reaching for a better alternative to reducing injury and fatigue in the work place.
- [MTA's 2nd Place Showing](#) **at SoCal Bus Roadeo Holds Promise for International Finals** (Sept. 9, 2003) It was a great day at the Southern California Regional Bus Roadeo in Chula Vista, last Saturday, when MTA's team captured second place against stiff competition from area transit agencies.
- [They're Doin' Great!](#) East Valley Division 15 took home the "How You Doin!" award for Most Improved Maintenance Division for Fiscal Year 2003.
- [They're Doin' Great!](#) West Valley Division 8 Maintenance team won the "How You Doin!" award for Best Maintenance Division for the fourth quarter, FY 2003.
- [MTA Joins Red Cross](#) **in 2nd Annual 9/11 Memorial Blood Drive** (Sept. 5, 2003) MTA and the American Red Cross are teaming-up Sept. 8 and 9 to save lives through sponsorship of the second annual 9/11 Memorial Blood Drive.
- [MTA Wins with Snoble](#) **on the Mound; Dodgers Lose 8-2 to Astros** (Sept. 4, 2003) Maybe CEO Roger Snoble should have stayed on the mound after throwing a ceremonial first pitch at Wednesday night's Dodgers game against the Houston Astros.
- [Not a Record, But a Good Building Evacuation Drill](#) (Sept. 3, 2003) 14 to 15 minutes. Not a record, but a decent time for a building evacuation, according to General Services Director Brian Soto.
- [They're Doin' Great!](#) Dedication and teamwork are the driving factors behind Central City Division 1's recently receiving four "How You Doin'" awards, including Best Transportation Division for Fiscal Year 2003.

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Central City is crowned Best Transportation Division for the 2003 fiscal year.

Central City Division: Driven to be the Best

By FRANKLIN A HOLMAN

(Sept. 3, 2003) Dedication and teamwork are the driving factors behind Central City Division 1's recently receiving four "How You Doin'" awards, including Best Transportation Division for Fiscal Year 2003.

The division cashed in at the awards ceremony, receiving \$1,000 for best transportation division, \$1,000 for most improved division, \$500 for outstanding division of the fourth quarter and the award for outstanding transportation division for June 2003.

"It takes a team effort to get these awards," General Manager Rich Rogers said. "Division 1 consistently demonstrated teamwork month after month."

Transportation Manager Sonja Owens said the team effort consisted of helping each other on the line, being conscious of how to make improvements, and committing to high performance standards.

They are family

Teamwork has a deep meaning to Division 1 according to Rogers. "This division is more than a team; they are a family. They enjoy working with one another; they support each other and are continually motivated by being the best."

"Last time I was at Division 1, I challenged you to take it to the next level," Rogers said. "So, not only have you proven yourself each month to be the best, you have proven that you have continued to move the bar higher and higher."

As Best Transportation Division, Division 1 raised the bar by placing first in in-service/on-time performance and first in reducing complaints per boarding. They also had an on-time pullout percentage of 99.81 percent.

Rogers ended the awards presentation by challenging the division to, "Step it up, continue to improve and be the best of the best."

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Employees forge a pathway across Cesar Chavez Avenue in mid-morning emergency evacuation drill.



PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

Not a Record, But a Good Building Evacuation Drill

(Sept. 3, 2003) 14 to 15 minutes. Not a record, but a decent time for a building evacuation, according to General Services Director Brian Soto.

An evacuation drill held at MTA Headquarters a year after the 9/11 tragedy was accomplished in 12 minutes, Soto said.

Wednesday morning's drill saw employees winding down emergency stairwells and pouring out of the 25-story structure in an orderly fashion. Except for one incident involving an asthma attack, no other problems cropped up.

Sheriff's deputies and MTA Security officers held traffic at the intersection of Cesar Chavez and Vignes so the crowds could cross the street to the assembly point in the Location 31 parking lot.

"It's very good to get a building this size cleared in 15 minutes," said Soto. "It was a good effort on everybody's part."

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Floor wardens Kevin Tvedt and Sandra Gonzalez check the 24th floor roster while Norm Stabeck signals employees to the rally point.



High School, Housing Development Set Near NoHo Metro Station

- **MTA Joins City, LAUSD and CRA for Project**

By ELIZABETH KALTMAN

(Sept. 3, 2003) Los Angeles Mayor Jim Hahn, along with representatives of LAUSD, the Community Redevelopment Agency and MTA announced an agreement, Tuesday, to facilitate construction of a much-needed high school and housing development in North Hollywood.

LAUSD, CRA and MTA own property on the NoHo Commons project site. Under the agreement, the MTA-owned Chandler right-of-way that runs through the NoHo Commons redevelopment site will be relocated.

The agreement is based on a common goal of all the agencies involved to strategically plan and coordinate development projects to build schools and revitalize Los Angeles neighborhoods, while maintaining MTA's rail corridor. Groundbreaking is expected in early 2004, with possible project completion in mid-2006.

A major element of NoHo Commons will be a new high school that will serve nearly 2,000 students and alleviate overcrowding at Grant and North Hollywood high schools.

The adjacent \$218-million complex will include new residential units, retail and commercial office space, and community space near the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station and the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway station.

Engineering Challenges

Despite engineering challenges for MTA, the realignment of the Chandler right-of-way will help create a far superior housing project and school site and establish a more balanced approach to the planning of the entire community.

"By agreeing to move the MTA right-of-way, we are sending a message to students, residents and business owners in North Hollywood that the health and vibrancy of this neighborhood is important to all of us," said Hahn.

"The NoHo Commons redevelopment is a key component among the efforts underway to revitalize North Hollywood," CEO Roger Snoble said in a statement. "MTA is pleased to facilitate construction of the high school and housing development, which we know will be excellent contributions to the community."

MTA Chief of Staff Maria Guerra, who spoke at the event, said, "As we continue to expand the transit system, MTA envisions developments that will make the areas around transit stations livable and sustainable communities."

"Development of the NoHo Commons with a housing component and high school together, which are located near a transportation portal, the Red Line, is smart urban development," said LA City Councilman and MTA Board Member Tom LaBonge, whose district includes NoHo

Commons. "This is a great example of public agencies working cooperatively for the greater benefit."

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Four-quadrant crossing gates seal off key intersections when trains are crossing.



PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

Rail Safety Week to Highlight Caution Around Crossings and Tracks

- **Rail operators to launch campaign during California Safety Week, Sept. 8 – 12.**

(Sept. 4, 2003) Metrolink, MTA and regional rail operators will use California Rail Safety Week, Sept. 8 – 12, as a high-profile effort to remind drivers and pedestrians to exercise caution around rail crossings and tracks.

The operators will launch Rail Safety Week with a media event, Monday morning, at Union Station. Scheduled speakers include state Business, Housing and Transportation Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet, Metrolink CEO David Solow and CEO Roger Snoble.

Underscoring the need to emphasize safety around the tracks are the 140 incidents and 30 fatalities at highway-rail crossings in California in 2002.

The Southern California Rail Safety Team offers a safety outreach program with tips for drivers and pedestrians at schools and community organizations throughout the year.

Metrolink is sponsoring a new public service announcement emphasizing safety, while MTA will open its [“Metro Experience”](#) mobile theater to the public for the entire week at the East Portal on Patsoauras Plaza.

Employee hours for ‘Metro Experience’

MTA employees are invited to visit “Metro Experience” from about 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., Monday. Public hours for the mobile theater are scheduled from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

Members of MTA’s Rail Safety Team – Barbara Burns, Yoon Ham, Joanne Longsdon, Carlos Valdez, Maria Mora, Walter Gonzalez and Jennifer Mendoza -- will host the mobile theater.

Along with vigorous law enforcement efforts, MTA has taken a number

of measures to ensure safety along its 73 miles of railway.

These include installation of four-quadrant crossing gates that seal off key intersections when trains are crossing, and pedestrian and swing gates that close many crossings to pedestrian foot traffic.

MTA also has placed loops in the roadway to detect and release vehicles caught between intersection crossing gates. Fiber optic signs also have been installed on at-grade traffic signal poles to give drivers advance warning of approaching trains.

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No one clocked CEO Roger Snoble's ceremonial pitch, seen live on the giant screen at Dodger Stadium, but the Dodgers could have used him at the helm against the Astros.



PHOTO: BILL HEARD



PHOTO: DIANE CORRAL-LOPEZ



PHOTO: BILL HEARD

MTA Wins with Snoble on the Mound; Dodgers Lose 8-2 to Astros

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 4, 2003) Maybe CEO Roger Snoble should have stayed on the mound after throwing a ceremonial first pitch at Wednesday night's Dodgers game against the Houston Astros.

Snoble, who had previous first-pitch experience at a San Diego Padres game, lobbed the ball squarely across the plate. But, he was off the field when the Dodgers suffered an 8-2 loss to the Astros in what a Los Angeles *Times* sportswriter called "a late bullpen meltdown."

The CEO's windup and pitch were caught in full color on the giant scoreboard during pre-game ceremonies. Watching from pavilion seats beyond right field were dozens of employees attending "MTA Night at Dodgers Stadium."

"It was a big thrill to be on the field and feel what the ballplayers must feel every day," said Snoble. "They may lose sight of how great it is, but it was certainly a thrill for me."

The annual event was sponsored by the Northrop-Grumman Federal Credit Union, which arranged for Snoble's ceremonial first pitch. Members of MTA's Credit Union board – Brian Soto and Kathi Harper – were introduced to the fans along with Deputy CEO John Catoe.

Snoble noted that the Dodgers event gave him an opportunity to meet the Northrop-Grumman Federal Credit Union staff. "I feel confident that the Credit Union is in good hands," he said. "It's a very important institution for our employees."

Wednesday's night's loss dropped the Dodgers into a third-place tie with St. Louis in the

Just like in 'Field of Dreams'

PHOTO: JUAN OCAMPO



Ceo Roger Snoble leaves the mound...

National League wild-card standings, the *Times* reported. The team is now 2 ½ games behind co-leaders Philadelphia and Florida.

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cheered on by loyal fans...



and returns to the stands victorious.

PHOTOS OF CROWD: BILL HEARD

MTA Can Reduce Gold Line Crossing Bell Duration, CPUC Says

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 5, 2003) The California Public Utilities Commission agreed, Thursday, to allow MTA to shorten the duration of warning bells at seven Metro Gold Line rail crossings in South Pasadena and Los Angeles.

Once software modifications are completed, warning bells at the seven crossings will ring for only about 12 seconds each time a train passes, rather than the 45 to 50 seconds they currently are sounded.

Changes to the duration of the bells will be made at five intersections in South Pasadena – Fremont Avenue/Grevelia Street, Hope Street, Orange Grove Avenue, Indiana Avenue and Arroyo Verde Road.

Bell alterations also will be made at the Avenue 59 and Avenue 60 intersections in the Highland Park section of Los Angeles.

About 200 Metro Gold Line trains make the roundtrip between Union Station and Sierra Madre Villa each day. In service from 4 a.m. until 2 a.m. the following day, the trains operate on 10-minute headways during peak periods with a north- or southbound train entering an intersection about every five minutes.

Currently, bells begin ringing and lights flash on intersection crossing gates when an approaching train activates the system, according to Vijay Khawani, director of Rail Operations Safety.

The bells begin ringing while the gates are lowered and continue ringing until the train has passed and the gates are raised – about 45 to 50 seconds under normal conditions.

Under the revised operation approved by the CPUC, the bells at the seven crossings will begin ringing while the gates are lowered, but will stop when the gates are in the horizontal position – a duration of about 12 seconds. The bells will remain silent during the passage of the train and while being raised.

"This is a significant difference, especially at night," says Khawani. "It's a considerable mitigation as far as noise is concerned when you have residences in the area."

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MTA Joins Red Cross in 2nd Annual 9/11 Memorial Blood Drive

- **RSVP:** Contact [Becky Quinteros](#) to schedule and reserve appointment time.

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(Sept. 5, 2003) MTA and the American Red Cross are teaming-up Sept. 8 and 9 to save lives through sponsorship of the second annual 9/11 Memorial Blood Drive.

The blood drive is scheduled from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday and Tuesday, in the Windsor Conference Room on the 15th floor.

"As we remember 9/11, we look at people who were caught in a situation beyond their control," Occupational Health and Safety Manager Pamela Engelke says. "When we give blood to those kinds of people, we contribute toward improving the quality of life."

The first blood drive took place at the Gateway Building and several divisions. "The upcoming blood drive will only be held at Gateway, which makes it imperative that as many people as possible can come from the outside and contribute," Engelke says.

The blood donating process is simple. The donor checks in with the nurse and fills out health history forms. Then a nurse checks the donor's vital signs and discusses the blood drawing process. After that, the donor is ready to give blood.

"We appreciate managers who allow employees to give blood as part of the job duty," Engelke says. "Donors give back to the people of the community who need the blood to survive."

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SWAT Team Plans 'Terrorist' Drill, Saturday, at MTA HQ

(Sept. 5, 2003) It may look like a movie shoot-out, Saturday, when an LAPD SWAT team uses the roof of the MTA Headquarters building as the location for an anti-terrorist drill.

Helicopters will hover over the helo pad atop the 25-story building while officers, using weapons with laser attachments, fire simulated rounds at the "terrorists."

The purpose of the training is to test a SWAT team's effectiveness in opposing terrorists in a roof-top standoff. Two helicopters and some 15 to 35 officers will be involved in the exercise.

Saturday's drill, scheduled from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., will be LAPD's first opportunity to train using a downtown high-rise building, according to Officer Jaime Marin of LAPD's Air Support Division.

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Celebrating Southern California Bus Rodeo trophies are, from left, Frank Cecere, Operator Mark Holland, mechanics Frank Forde, Rommel Vargas and Andrew Warren, Jr. and Alex DiNuzzo and Steve Mullaly.



MTA's 2nd Place Showing at SoCal Bus Rodeo holds Promise for International Finals

By STEVE MULLALY

(Sept. 9, 2003) It was a great day at the Southern California Regional Bus Rodeo in Chula Vista, last Saturday, when MTA's team captured second place against stiff competition from area transit agencies.

The showing by San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Operator Mark Holland and the Arthur Winston Division 5 maintenance team of Andrew Warren, Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde holds promise for the APTA International Bus Rodeo finals, Sept. 27, in Salt Lake City.

This was the second time Holland has competed in the regional Rodeo in the past four years.

Going up against 16 of Southern California's best bus operators, Holland thought he had a good chance at first place. But, OMNITRANS operator Bill Lauwers took the first place honors, beating Holland by a small margin.

Holland is now looking forward to representing MTA during the finals competition in Salt Lake City. It will be his third trip to an APTA International Bus Rodeo.

Division 5's maintenance team did amazingly well for first time contenders at the regional Rodeo. The crew scored the highest number of points in the ABS Air Brake Board event and on the Thermo-King A/C module, a demonstration event.

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) took first place in the maintenance event. The team has been together and competing for the past five years.

During the competition, the Division 5 team was cheered on by their spouses, by Maintenance Manger Alex DiNuzzo and his wife, by Deputy Executive Officer Milo Victoria, and five other mechanics from Division 5.

Special recognition should go to MTA employees who donated their time and hard work to ensure that all who attended the regional Bus Rodeo would have a day they will always remember.

Thanks to Vehicle Operations Supervisor Frank Cecere, Maintenance Instructor Brain Markey, Maintenance Instructor Carlos Rojas,

Maintenance Instructor Richard Au and Transit Operations Supervisor Ernie Martinez.

For more information on the competition, visit the Southern California Regional Bus Rodeo's website at www.scrbr.com.

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Division 15 employees are all smiles: The team received the 'How You Doin'?' award for Most Improved Maintenance Division in FY03.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER BROGIN

'Most Improved' Div. 15 Maintenance Wins 'How You Doin'?'

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 9, 2003) East Valley Division 15 took home the "How You Doin'?" award for Most Improved Maintenance Division for Fiscal Year 2003.

General Manager David Armijo presented the team with a \$1,000 check.

"It was the collective efforts of the maintenance employees that made a difference," says Armijo. "They worked hard together, using creativity to improve the performance of the division. I am very proud of their product."

Division 15 took first place in the categories of On-time Pullouts, Miles Between Mechanical Failures, and Attendance.

"The Division 15 staff has worked very hard on improving our performance while keeping a close eye on the budget," says Maintenance Manager John Roberts. "We are looking forward to progressing from most improved to the best division."

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GM David Armijo congratulates Division 8's maintenance team during a 'How You Doin'?' celebration.



PHOTO BY JENNIFER BROGIN

Division 8 Wins Best Maintenance for 4th Quarter

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 9, 2003) West Valley Division 8 Maintenance team won the "How You Doin'?" award for Best Maintenance Division for the fourth quarter, FY 2003.

While employees enjoyed an appreciation barbeque, General Manager David Armijo dropped by to present the team a \$500 check for a job well done.

Division 8 had the lowest number of new Worker's Compensation claims. The division also placed third in on-time pullouts, miles in between mechanical failures and bus cleanliness.

"Division 8's recognition is a result of our dedicated staff who continually keep our buses cleaned and properly maintained," says Maintenance Manager Jim Pachan. "'Thank you,' to the employees for their continued dedication and support."

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Gold Line Construction Chief Will Head MTA Project Management

By ED SCANNELL

(Sept. 9, 2003) CEO Roger Snoble today announced the hiring of Rick Thorpe, one of the most highly regarded builders of light rail systems in the United States, as executive officer for MTA project management.

Thorpe has served as chief executive officer for the Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Construction Authority since October 1999.

He has notified the Authority's board regarding his plans and will officially begin his duties at MTA within 60 days.



Rick Thorpe

"Rick will be a tremendous asset to MTA and to our future construction efforts," said Snoble. "He brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record that will ensure timely delivery of projects as we expand the Metro bus and rail systems in the coming years."



Rick Thorpe, right, celebrates opening of the Metro Gold Line with CEO Roger Snoble at dedication ceremonies on July 25.

As executive officer for MTA project management, Thorpe will be responsible for oversight of the 14-mile San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway, which is now under construction and will open in August 2005.

Other projects will include the Eastside Light Rail Project, a six-mile extension of the Metro Gold Line.

Thorpe comes to MTA following the opening of the Metro Gold Line, which he successfully

completed on time and under budget.

'A proven record'

"While I am very disappointed at Rick Thorpe's departure as CEO, I can say without reservation that our loss will be MTA's gain," said LA City Councilman Ed P. Reyes, chairman of the Los Angeles to Pasadena Metro Construction Authority. "Rick has a proven record of delivering quality projects on time and on budget. Residents of Greater Los Angeles should feel very lucky in having Rick Thorpe as MTA's new project management chief."

Thorpe's prior experience includes serving as the program manager for the \$312 million Salt Lake City light rail project (TRAX) and as director of engineering and construction for the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB).

His duties at MTDB included oversight of a \$1 billion rail and bus

capital improvement program, which included the design and construction of six separate light rail extensions.

A registered professional civil engineer in California and Utah, Thorpe holds bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering from San Diego State University. He is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers and the American Public Transportation Association, serving on the light rail and construction management subcommittees.

Thorpe has also authored numerous publications on light rail design and construction.

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New Communications Technology for MTA's Operating Divisions

By **BILL HEARD**, Editor

(Sept. 10, 2003) The second phase of an 18-month project that is bringing state-of-the-art communications technology to MTA's operating divisions will be completed this month. The entire project will be finished by year's end.

Spearheaded by the Information Technology Services (ITS) department, the project involves wiring 18 transportation and maintenance facilities to receive upgraded computer service, high-speed telephone lines and modern phone sets.

"It's exciting for the divisions," says Chief Information Officer Elizabeth Bennett, "because, from a technology standpoint, it puts them on a par with MTA Headquarters for deploying new technology now and into the future."

Scheduled for completion, this month, are wiring projects at divisions 6, 8, 9, 4 and 15. Divisions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 18 and the Metro Gold Line's Midway Yard were wired earlier this year.

Scheduled for December completion are the Metro Red and Blue Line yards, the Red Line Maintenance of Way facility, the Regional Rebuild Center and the Vernon Yard.

Crews have been stringing wires and installing jack boxes for computers and phones at each facility. At some divisions, a communications room with connections for the new equipment had to be constructed.

Bennett credited Systems Project Manager Larry Fordon of ITS, Supervising Engineer Rudy Rey of Facilities Engineering and Senior Contract Administration Frank Foster of Construction Contract Administration for moving the project toward completion.

New digital phones

Three-button analog telephones, which many divisions have had for 20 years or more, are being upgraded to Nortel digital systems that can support an unlimited number of area codes. For the first time, divisions will have voice mail, teleconferencing and hands-free options.

The new wiring system has lines dedicated to computer use that will give operating divisions access to MTA's network with more features and faster service. Videoconferencing between operating divisions and the downtown headquarters a possibility for the future.

Employees will be able to use all current management information systems, such as FIS. M3, the new Maintenance and Material Management System, and ATMS, the new Advanced Transportation Management System, also will be available once they are implemented.

The new wiring system also is being deployed to support an important element of the M3 project: Fleetwatch, a computer-based fueling system for CNG and diesel buses. All bus divisions will be wired into Fleetwatch by the end of November.

Bennett expects to see more computers in use at the operating divisions, not only by office staff, but also by mechanics working on

MTA's new generation of high-tech equipment, and even by operators who may have access to computer terminals in the division train rooms.

"Part of the reason for doing this," she says, "is to support the new systems, like M3, that will be implemented shortly."

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SGV Staff Gathers Comments on Proposed Bus Service Changes

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 10, 2003) The San Gabriel Valley Service Sector has worked closely with the community to gather comments on proposed bus service changes planned for October or later.



Transportation Planning Manager Callier Beard reviews proposed San Gabriel Valley bus service changes with members of the community.

In preparation for its public hearing, Sept. 2, the sector provided two opportunities for community members to discuss proposed changes to Metro Bus lines 177, 250, 253, 254, 256, 270, 471, 620 and 751.

All comments gathered from the community meetings and the public hearing will be reviewed for action by the San Gabriel Valley Governance Council at its Oct. 7 meeting.

MTA is considering whether to consolidate bus lines in the San Gabriel Valley in an effort to improve the efficiency of countywide bus operations. The meetings, held in the City of Industry and Boyle Heights, also provided an excellent opportunity for the sector staff to communicate directly with customers.

"Overall, I think we got some excellent feedback from the public on proposed changes," said General Manager Jack Gabig. "I think the community really appreciated being able to contribute their issues and concerns on three separate occasions. It really bolsters our goal to be more accessible to our local transit riders."

Most public comments were directed at the proposed cancellation of Line 471, which travels to Puente Hills, Whitwood and Brea Mall. Several community members said they depended on that line to get to and from work, and said they didn't know how they would get to work if the line was cancelled.

Jon Hillmer, manager, Service Development, said the proposed cancellation was a worse case scenario, and that MTA would consider a number of alternatives to canceling service, including working with other transit providers to pick up the service.

One community member thanked MTA for holding the meeting at a location with a Line 471 bus stop in front of it. He said it showed that MTA cares about its customers and is sensitive to their needs.

If approved, the proposed contracted bus line changes are scheduled to go into effect Oct. 26 or later. MTA-operated bus line changes, pending San Gabriel Valley Governance Council review, would take effect in December or later.

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Occupational Therapist Denise M. Miller from Glendale Adventist Medical Center teaches Logistics second shift employees how to reduce tension along the side of the upper body.



Daily stretching helps you work in your comfort zone:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increases circulation• Improves strength and stamina• Increases flexibility and mobility• Helps recover faster from sickness | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduces fatigue at the end of the day• Improves mental alertness• Helps you work more effectively |
|---|---|

MTA's Logistics Department Makes Stretching 'A Way of Life'

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 10, 2003) MTA's Logistics Department is reaching for a better alternative to reducing injury and fatigue in the work place.

The department has adopted the Well@work Program, a three-minute stretching routine employees participate in before the start of a shift.

The Logistics department has gone nearly a year with only one lost-time injury – an injury that occurred May 23. The department hopes to prevent any more accidents with the help of the Well@work Program.

"Our stock clerks, storekeepers and receiving clerks are generally always moving boxes, lifting heavy materials and are constantly using their bodies," says Dieter Hemsing, Logistics' director of material management. "This program would be a good way for the employees to prepare for the days work and to have it be a daily regimen."

Occupational Therapist Denise M. Miller from Glendale Adventist Medical Center held training sessions, last month, for the Logistics department's day and afternoon shift workers.

Did you know...

In 2001, before the implementation of the Safety's First Program, the Logistics Department had nine lost-time injuries. As a result, the department lost a total of 504 days of work. In 2002, after adopting the Safety's First Program, the department had only two lost-time injuries. The program has seen about a 90 percent reduction in the number of lost days.

Miller taught the employees Well@Work fundamentals, which include stretching of the hands, arms, shoulders, neck and legs.

Stretching promotes well-being

"Stretching is a way of life," says Miller. "Stretching promotes well-being, increases flexibility and helps you recover faster from injury or illness. As you age, it will also reduce the wear and tear on the body."

Miller also gave the class tips on how to stand properly and lift heavy objects to prevent injuries and accidents.

"I think this is a great program," says Material Supervisor Dino Gutierrez. "It not only brings us together in the morning, but it also wakes us up and makes us alert."

Hemsing says the program has been getting positive feedback.

"The whole point is that we want our employees to be healthy. We want them to feel better at work and we don't want them to get hurt," says Hemsing. "The Well@work Program will make people think about stretching on a daily basis."

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What's MTA? Agency is Working to Strengthen its Identity

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 11, 2003) Do you know FedEx? 7-Eleven? Starbucks? Most people do. But, a significant percentage of Angelenos don't know what MTA means.

Even though it's been 10 years since a merger created MTA, the name still draws blank looks. Many citizens, including the taxpayers who fund the agency, can't describe what it does.

Developing a clear identity is a challenge facing management as MTA moves forward with a far-reaching program for planning, building and operating transportation services in LA County.

"Nobody sees our services as 'Metro.' They see them, individually, as the Red Line, the Blue Line, as Metro Rapid," says Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond. "We want to bring MTA under one identity umbrella."

Recently, the agency has accelerated efforts to reach the public with its messages and to clarify its identity. Brochures and timetables have been given a distinctive appearance, as have MTA posters and bus ads.

The efforts include two new publications – *Metro Quarterly Magazine* and the monthly *Metro News* patron newsletter – along with a quarterly cable TV show, "Metro Motion," and Metro Briefs ads published in nine languages in more than 100 newspapers.

'Discover Gold' campaign

To date, the most successful effort to promote a new identity and image was the "Discover Gold" campaign leading up to the opening of the Metro Gold Line in July. The unprecedented campaign included a full-court press of new-look print and broadcast ads, posters, brochures, billboards and other elements.

The result: a highly favorable reception by the media and the public, word-of-mouth "buzz" throughout the region and a high level of recognition for the new rail line.

"We're in the process of giving all our materials – signage, customer information, ads – a uniform appearance so our customers will recognize one unified brand," says Raymond. "They'll realize that Metro Buses are linked with Metro Rail, with Metro carpool lanes, with Metro bikeways."

One of the next steps toward updating the agency's identity will be an effort to de-emphasize use of the acronym "MTA" and to promote, instead, the more commonly used word "Metro" to identify bus, rail and other transportation services

In effect, "Metro" and the new logo will become the "brand" for agency products and services. The "corporate" name – Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority – and the acronym "MTA" will usually be reserved for more formal use on such things as public documents.

Introducing new 'M' logo

Symbolizing this change will be the replacement of the current "M" logo with an original new logo that reflects the strength, clarity and precision MTA seeks for its image. The major element of the new logo will be a more prominent use of the word "metro," which will be displayed with the redesigned "M".

Although the new logo will begin appearing on MTA materials later this year, it will come into its own beginning in January 2004 when all new materials will feature the updated "brand." Stocks of materials bearing the old logo will remain in use until depleted.

The transition to the new logo, which also will be placed on buses and trains, non-revenue vehicles and division facilities, will be accomplished within annual budgets and is expected to take three years.

And, perhaps one day, "Metro" will gain the same recognition that is enjoyed by FedEx, 7-Eleven and Starbucks – at least in Los Angeles County.

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Home Show Attendees React to New Metro Gold Line

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 11, 2003) A month after the Metro Gold Line opening, MTA volunteers staffing an information table during a home show at the Pasadena Convention Center, Aug. 22-24, learned how the public is reacting to the new rail line.

"A security guard who generally drives his car finds that he can now take the Gold Line and ride from Compton to Pasadena," said Tom Langer, one of 30 staff members who distributed Metro transit and safety information at the home show.

Langer also described how other visitors to the MTA table shared their Metro Rail experiences. They included a Pasadena family making regular trips to Los Angeles without the family car, a young couple learning how to travel to Long Beach, and a professional worker becoming a regular rail commuter to his downtown Los Angeles job.

Most of the MTA home show volunteers, recruited and organized by Yolanda Rosales, had worked crowd control or events during the July 26-27 Gold Line opening.

At the home show they answered bus and train questions, and distributed safety coloring books and crayons throughout the three days of the event, which was attended by 25,000 residents and families.

Sudhir Agrawal, who worked all three days at the Metro booth, confirmed that the the most requested MTA pamphlet was the Metro Gold Line train schedule.

"All in all, it was an eye-opening experience for me to promote our organization and get the feedback from the public on how well we are doing," said Langer.

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Carson Division 18 Manager Cindy Karpman helps a visitor at the MTA table.

MTA's HR Department is Going to the LA County Fair

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 11, 2003) MTA's Human Resources Department will be part of the Los Angeles County Fair, Sept. 12 to 28, to help promote the Metro system, as well as to inform people about employment opportunities at MTA.

For the 16 days of the annual event, Human Resources personnel will be at the Fair distributing some 40,000 fliers, brochures and destination maps of the Metro system.

The team also will be talking to fair-goers about positions that are open throughout the agency.

The County Fair, which will be held at the Fairplex in Pomona, is the third largest in the country.

"The reason we decided to go there is because every year the LA County Fair averages between 1.5 to 2 million people," says Human Resources Supervisor Scott Lloyd. "With that kind of visibility, it's a great place for us to be."

Human Resources will have its own booth in Building 5. Lloyd, who has coordinated the project, hopes MTA will be a part of the Los Angeles County Fair every year.

"I'm excited and I'm looking forward to it," says Lloyd. "It's a true team effort. I couldn't have done this without the help of everyone in the HR department."

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MTA's HR team will be conducting business at a booth, shown below, in Building 5 during the LA County Fair.



Gateway Cities Events Features Both Ends of the Age Spectrum

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(Sept. 11, 2003) Metro Gateway Cities sector participated in two events with U.S. Rep. Linda T. Sánchez (D-39), recently, with entirely different audiences – kids and seniors.

Sánchez spoke at both events and thanked MTA for their participation and assistance. MTA provided transportation to a group of seniors, and handed out materials, for the congresswoman's First Annual Senior Fair, Aug. 27, at the Lakewood mall.

The Senior Fair featured a number of information tables with literature and items of interest to senior citizens. Ellen Blackman and Monique Ramos, from the agency's ADA Para-Transit program, handed out materials and answered questions at the event.

Gateway Cities Division Advisory Committee (DAC) member Albert Hinojos drove the bus transporting the seniors from the Watts area to Lakewood, and talked about how they can utilize MTA's bus and rail system to get around the area.

On Aug. 29, Sanchez hosted a Back To School event for the Boys & Girls Club of Whittier at Lee Owens Park. The event included the participation of Gateway Cities DAC members Robert Rodriguez, Dyana Elorriaga, Maria Avila, and Elizabeth Arellano. DAC members staffed the information table and gave a safety and anti-graffiti presentation to a number of the children in attendance.

The DAC safety and anti-graffiti program is currently being revised to ensure uniformity throughout all sectors. Safety and anti-graffiti DAC presentations will be one of the components of a new school program MTA's community relations department will be instituting in partnership with the Los Angeles Times.



U.S. Rep. Linda T. Sánchez, center, joins Gateway Cities Community Relations Officer Cathy Manzo, at left, Gateway Cities Community Relations Manager Dave Hershenson, and Division 2 Operator Robert Rodriguez at 'Back-to-School' event in Whittier.

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Metro Café to Adjust Menu Prices

- New value combinations are offered to offset rising costs in food service industry

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 12, 2003) - Metro Café will revise menu prices beginning Sept. 29 to reflect the increased costs of food and products, cafeteria manager Bruce Ueno announced today.

"We have successfully resisted rising costs until recently, said Ueno, who noted cafeteria prices have not been raised since April 2000. "Increases in food and transportation costs, insurance, and other overhead have made a price hike necessary," he said.

Rising costs of food products were clocked at a nearly 4 percent rate of inflation by an industry report in February. According to the report, higher prices, fueled by tighter supplies and reduced inventories, now represent the largest increase in costs in several years.

The cafeteria will offset some of the costs with a variety of new value combinations, which offer a savings over ala carte prices.

Cheeseburger, hot dog, and turkey burger combos will include a 20 oz. fountain soft drink for a new value price of \$3.50.

Customers also will have the option of adding a 20 oz. fountain soft drink and fries to any item on the grill menu for \$1.59 more.

In addition, customers can add a regular bag of chips and a 20 oz. fountain soft drink to any deli specials for \$1.49.

A new price list, which will be published and made available prior to Sept. 29, reflects a price increase of 2 cents for such items as toast, to 15 cents more for a hamburger.

Seeking additional ways to increase values, Metro Café will conduct a customer preference survey beginning Monday, Sept. 15. The brief surveys will be available in the cafeteria at the check-out stands. A completed survey is good for a coupon that can be exchanged for a 20 oz. soft drink or an order of fries.

"We know that value is important to our customers at MTA," said Ueno. "We will continue to introduce more combination options to our lunch menu that will offer additional value to our patrons."

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Deputy CEO John Catoe, left, hosted LA City Councilman Martin Ludlow during a visit to Division 7. Joining them were Denise Longley, DEO, Facility Operations, and Westside/Central General Manager-select Jim McElroy.



PHOTO BY JODY LITVAK.

LA City Councilman Martin Ludlow Visits Division 7

By JODY LITVAK

(Sept. 12, 2003) Los Angeles City Councilman Martin Ludlow, recently appointed to the MTA Board by Mayor James Hahn, paid an official call, Sept. 9, at West Hollywood Division 7.

Deputy CEO John Catoe hosted the visit, which included a briefing and tour of the facility. It was the new Board member's first opportunity to learn about the day-to-day activities at an MTA operating division.

Ludlow and the MTA executives also discussed MTA plans to build a new operating division in the councilman's district to replace Venice Division 6.

As a student at Ohio State University, Ludlow gained grassroots experience in the transit industry. He earned \$4.75 an hour driving Grumman Flexible and Eagle buses 20 hours a week for the university. Ohio State has the nation's second largest student population.

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Singer Mary Lee to perform in Lou Rawl's Televised Special 'An Evening of Stars' at the Kodak Theatre.

PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 12, 2003) If you miss Mary Lee's debut tonight at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, you can catch her performance on television in January. That's when the networks will air the 25th Anniversary of "An Evening of Stars," Lou Rawl's televised special that caps off a year of fundraising for the United Negro College Fund.

Lee, an assistant administrative analyst in Regional Programming, will perform as a member of "The Voices of Free," an ensemble of 26 singers who will back up performances of Grammy Award-winning recording stars. Lee's daughter Dyee Dysart will also perform as a member of the ensemble.

The stars include Yolanda Adams, Donnie McClurkin, Shirley Caesar, Fred Hammond and Smokie Norful. Also performing solo, is a favorite of Lee's, Canadian superstar Celine Dion. "I admire her, not only for her talent, but for the warmth she projects," said Lee, who is looking forward to a backstage meeting.

Lee has been singing professionally since the age of 15, when she took third place honors at a talent contest staged at the Regal Theater in Chicago. She was nudged out of first place by The Five Stairsteps, who won the recording contract and the fame and fortune that followed.

As a teenager, Lee sang with the internationally renowned Wendall Phillips High School Acappella Choir, whose alumni included the late Nat King Cole and Sam Cooke.

Lee's vocal talents are soon to re-emerge, this time in Solomon Burke's new Gospel album "Angels of Victory," produced by Terry Young. In the album, Lee sings a duet with Grammy Award recipient Solomon Burke. Burke, proclaimed as the "King of Rock 'N Soul," won a Grammy in 2003 for Blues vocals.

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On the A-List: Singer Mary Lee, with backstage pass to Lou Rawl's 'An Evening of Stars,' performs tonight at the Kodak Theatre in an ensemble of voices.



Tickets (\$15-\$20) are available at the Kodak Theatre box office (doors close at 7 p.m.) or at Ticketmaster outlets: (213) 365-3500, ticketmaster.com or through kodaktheatre.com

Div. 7 Manager Jim McElroy Named GM of Westside/Central Sector

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 12, 2003) West Hollywood
Division 7 Transportation Manager Jim McElroy has been named general manager of the Westside/Central Service Sector, Deputy CEO John Catoe has announced. The appointment is effective Monday, Sept. 15.



Metro Westside/Central
General Manager Jim McElroy

McElroy has been Division 7 transportation manager since June, having joined MTA after serving as general manager of Unitrans, the Davis, Calif., transit service.

McElroy was named sector general manager following a nationwide search that saw candidates applying from across the country. All four MTA general managers participated in the selection process.

"During the interview process, Roger Snoble and I were impressed with Jim's understanding of the issues and challenges facing Westside/Central," said Catoe. "The other sector general managers and I have great confidence that we've chosen the right leader for the sector."

"I'm grateful for all the assistance shown me by my assistant managers Frazier Watts, Nita Northington and Derick Mahome, as well as by Maintenance Manager Ron Whitney and my other co-workers here at the West Hollywood division," said McElroy. "I look forward also to working with the fine folks at Gateway Division 10 and Venice Division 6. Westside/Central is the heart of MTA's service area and we have a big job to do for our customers."

San Fernando Valley General Manager David Armijo led the Westside/Central sector during the interim period between managers. He now will return to his primary duties.

"We all appreciate the excellent job David Armijo has done in stepping in to oversee the sector while continuing his duties as general manager in the San Fernando Valley," Catoe said. "He has done a superb job of leading Westside/Central and will hand it over in excellent shape to Jim McElroy."

Thanks to the staff

"I want to thank the sector office staff, the division staffs, the operators and maintenance teams of all three Westside/Central divisions for their support," said Armijo. "I know they will welcome Jim McElroy and give him the same great backing they gave me."

McElroy's involvement in transportation began as a youth. His career route started with driving family-owned trucks as a teen and progressed to working as general manager of Unitrans.

As general manager at Unitrans, he converted the entire fleet to natural gas. The agency recently received the City of Davis' annual

Environmental Recognition award.

McElroy has served as chairman of the California Transit Association (CTA) and chairman of the Sacramento region's transit management coordinating committee. He also served four terms on CTA's Executive Committee.

McElroy, a native of Los Altos, earned a degree in civil engineering from UC Davis and has taken graduate courses in administration.

He enjoys exploring the outdoors, running, cycling and whitewater kayaking. McElroy was a ski instructor for three years and has two levels of certification.

--Jody Litvak and Frank Holman contributed to this story.

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U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta presents poster-size government check to MTA Board members. Pictured, from left, Tom LaBonge, Deputy CEO John Catoe, Mineta, Zev Yaroslavsky, Gloria Molina, and Beatrice Proo.

U.S. DOT Secretary Mineta Delivers \$45 million in Federal Funds to MTA

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 15, 2003) U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta presented MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky with federal grants totaling \$45 million in federal money during a news conference Saturday on Patsaouras Plaza.

The grants are earmarked for the purchase of eight CNG articulated buses, estimated to cost \$4.9 million, and the \$39.8 million balance of a federal pledge for the completion of the Metro Red Line.

"This check for nearly \$45 million helps pay for two major transportation improvement programs," said Mineta. "And that will help MTA live up to its critical mission for the people of Los Angeles County. I applaud your efforts."

The funds, symbolized by a poster-size government check signed by Mineta, were received by MTA Board members Yaroslavsky, Gloria Molina, Beatrice Proo and Tom LaBonge.

The MTA Board officials were joined in the presentation by Deputy CEO John Catoe. Following remarks, Secretary Mineta was escorted aboard a ring of CNG buses that lined the plaza. The buses, which served as a backdrop for the conference, were freshly painted with the new design and color scheme that designate different types of service offered by MTA.

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MTA Increases Photo Enforcement on Metro Blue Line

PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Sept. 16, 2003) In an effort to reduce the number of red light violations on street portions of the Metro Blue Line, MTA has recently installed new camera boxes at nine rail crossings along the 22-mile alignment.

The photo enforcement project was designed to identify motorists who make illegal left turns through rail crossings at intersections with high accident rates.

"Hopefully, the cameras will act as a deterrent for violating laws," says Abdul Zohbi, manager of System Safety, Rail Operations. "This is strictly to tell people that this is dangerous and illegal."

Records indicate the photo enforcement project has played a significant role in reducing the number of rail accidents since its inception in 1995. A total of 17,874 citations for red light violations at rail crossings had been issued as of July 2003.



Abdul Zohbi hopes cameras will deter red light violations at Metro Blue Line crossings.



Sign warns motorists of surveillance in advance.

Six state-of-the-art cameras – priced at \$50,000 each – will be rotated among the nine new camera boxes. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department will determine the frequency of the rotation.

Illuminate motorists' faces

The new installations will use a flash bulb to illuminate motorists' faces and license plates – two features needed in order to issue a citation. LASD will issue the citations, which will be processed in Compton Superior Court.

For the first few weeks of September, Sheriff's deputies have issued notices instead of citations, allowing motorists the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the new cameras.

After this period, red light violators will face a \$271 fine and a hold on their automobile registration renewal if the fee is unpaid.

MTA worked with Affiliated Computer Services and the Los Angeles Department of Transportation on the project.

"I would also like to extend thanks to the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, without whom, the program could not have been as successful," Zohbi says. "Working with the LASD has been a terrific and rewarding experience. We have had a great conviction rate over the years thanks to LASD's tenacity in pursuing and enforcing the grade crossing laws."

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UPDATE > Sept. 23, 2003

New Bus Division, Transit Service Policy on Board Committee Agendas

- [Item 26](#), a motion concerning construction of a new bus operating division, was forwarded to the full Board by the Operations Committee without recommendation.
- [Item 24](#), Updated Transit Service Policy, Approved, sent to full Board for Consent Calendar.
- [Item 23](#), Vandalism of MTA Property. Received and filed by Operations Committee.
- [Item 25](#), New Rail Traction Substations. Approved, sent to full Board for Consent Calendar.
- [Item 10](#), Campo de Cahuenga. Sent to full Board without recommendation.
- [Item 6](#), Easy Transit Pass Program. Approved, sent to full Board for Consent Calendar.

(Sept. 16, 2003) A motion authorizing CEO Roger Snoble to reach an agreement with a local developer for construction of a new bus operating division in West Los Angeles is among items on MTA Board committee agendas this week.

If approved by the Operations Committee and the Board, the agreement calls for the developer to build a new bus operating facility on Jefferson Boulevard between Rodeo Road and National Boulevard that would meet MTA's requirements.

Also on committee agendas are motions to update MTA's Transit Service Policy to focus on high-quality service and efficiency, and a motion providing funding for an interpretive display at historic Campo de Cahuenga near the Universal City Station.

The motion before the Operations Committee, [Item 26](#), would authorize the CEO to enter into an exchange agreement with the proposed new division's developer, RAD Jefferson, LLC.

The developer plans to build a new 4.66-acre bus operating and maintenance facility in exchange for MTA's 3.13-acre Division 6 property in Venice.

Under the terms of the agreement to be presented to the Board, the developer would be obligated to conduct a thorough environmental review and meet all mitigation requirements. Construction is to be completed by June 30, 2006 if the agreement is signed this month.

With the Venice division valued at \$12.9 million, the agreement calls for MTA to contribute \$8 million to make up the difference in the cost of the newly built bus division.

Equipped with a CNG fueling station, it would accommodate up to 157 40-foot buses or approximately 100 60-foot articulated buses. The two-story transportation and maintenance building would have 15 maintenance bays and rooftop employee parking.

Operations Committee, Sept. 18

Item 24. Approved, sent to full Board for Consent Calendar.

Updated Transit Service Policy. Item 24. The Operations Committee will consider a proposed MTA Transit Service Policy that focuses on providing high-quality service in major travel markets within LA County and improving the overall efficiency of service.

The new policy would include a greater emphasis on serving major transit markets, deploying MTA resources based on demand rather than population and the use of shopper surveys to monitor service quality. It also calls for restructuring service to a hub and spoke network, reducing minimum headways from 60 to 30 minutes when possible, and a policy of cancelling poorly performing bus lines that have been in operation for more than 18 months.

Item 23. Received and filed by Operations Committee.

Vandalism of MTA Property. Item 23. During the four-year period of 1999 to 2003, a total of 273 vandalism cases were submitted to the District Attorney for prosecution, according to a report to the Operations Committee. At least 59 percent of those resulted in guilty verdicts and restitution to MTA of about \$40,000.

To encourage more restitution by convicted vandals, Sheriff's detectives will begin including a restitution request for the amount of graffiti damage in court filings. If the convicted vandal is unable to pay, the letter will ask the court to order the individual to perform community service on behalf of MTA of a value equal to the amount of damage.

Item 25. Approved, sent to full Board for Consent Calendar.

New Rail Traction Substations. Item 25. Metro Gold Line trains currently operate on electricity from 10 traction power substations placed along the line. The Operations Committee will consider a motion to buy four more substations and two property sites for a total project cost of \$8.7 million.

With the extra substations, the Metro Gold Line could operate a mix of two- and three-car trains at 10-minute headways. The new substations also would provide redundancy in the event substations were taken off line due to power failures or other causes.

Construction Committee, Sept. 17

Item 10. Sent to full Board without recommendation. Campo de Cahuenga. Item 10. The Construction Committee will be asked to approve \$550,000 to provide an interpretive display of the archeological remains of the historic Campo de Cahuenga structure.

The foundation stones of the original tile and adobe brick building – where the signing of an 1847 peace treaty ended the Mexico-U.S. War in California – are just a few yards away from the Universal City Station in Campo de Cahuenga City Park.

The display will include a replica of portions of the structure, a walkway, fence and interpretive panels to assist the public in viewing the historical site. The site was exposed when Lankershim Boulevard was widened during construction of the Universal City station.

Planning and Programming Committee, Sept. 17

Item 6. Approved, sent to full Board for Consent Calendar.

EZ Transit Pass Program. Item 6. The Planning and Programming

Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to enter an agreement with the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), to include Metrolink fare media in the EZ Transit Pass program.

Under such an agreement, Metrolink fare media would be accepted by MTA and other operators in the EZ Transit Pass program. Each participating agency would be reimbursed by SCRRA for Metrolink passenger boardings. The EZ Transit Pass program was launched in August 2002.

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New Bus Division, Transit Service Policy on Board Committee Agendas

- [Updated Transit Service Policy](#)
- [Vandalism of MTA Property](#)
- [New Rail Traction Substations](#)
- [Campo de Cahuenga](#)
- [EZ Transit Pass Program](#)

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The motion before the Operations Committee, Item 26, would authorize the CEO to enter into an exchange agreement with the proposed new division's developer, RAD Jefferson, LLC.

The developer plans to build a new 4.66-acre bus operating and maintenance facility in exchange for MTA's 3.13-acre Division 6 property in Venice.

Under the terms of the agreement to be presented to the Board, the developer would be obligated to conduct a thorough environmental review and meet all mitigation requirements. Construction is to be completed by June 30, 2006 if the agreement is signed this month.

With the Venice division valued at \$12.9 million, the agreement calls for MTA to contribute \$8 million to make up the difference in the cost of the newly built bus division.

Equipped with a CNG fueling station, it would accommodate up to 157 40-foot buses or approximately 100 60-foot articulated buses. The two-story transportation and maintenance building would have 15 maintenance bays and rooftop employee parking.

Operations Committee

1 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 18

Updated Transit Service Policy. Item 24. The Operations Committee will consider a proposed MTA Transit Service Policy that focuses on providing high-quality service in major travel markets within LA County and improving the overall efficiency of service.

SCHEDULE

**Wednesday
Sept. 17**

1 p.m. - Planning and Programming Committee

2 p.m. - Construction Committee

**Thursday
Sept. 18**

9:30 a.m. - Executive Management and Audit Committee

10:30 a.m. - Finance and Budget Committee

1 p.m. - Operations Committee

The new policy would include a greater emphasis on serving major transit markets, deploying MTA resources based on demand rather than population and the use of shopper surveys to monitor service quality. It also calls for restructuring service to a hub and spoke network, reducing minimum headways from 60 to 30 minutes when possible, and a policy of cancelling poorly performing bus lines that have been in operation for more than 18 months.

Vandalism of MTA Property. Item 23. During the four-year period of 1999 to 2003, a total of 273 vandalism cases were submitted to the District Attorney for prosecution, according to a report to the Operations Committee. At least 59 percent of those resulted in guilty verdicts and restitution to MTA of about \$40,000.

To encourage more restitution by convicted vandals, Sheriff's detectives will begin including a restitution request for the amount of graffiti damage in court filings. If the convicted vandal is unable to pay, the letter will ask the court to order the individual to perform community service on behalf of MTA of a value equal to the amount of damage.

New Rail Traction Substations. Item 25. Metro Gold Line trains currently operate on electricity from 10 traction power substations placed along the line. The Operations Committee will consider a motion to buy four more substations and two property sites for a total project cost of \$8.7 million.

With the extra substations, the Metro Gold Line could operate a mix of two- and three-car trains at 10-minute headways. The new substations also would provide redundancy in the event substations were taken off line due to power failures or other causes.

Construction Committee

2 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 17

Campo de Cahuenga. Item 10. The Construction Committee will be asked to approve \$550,000 to provide an interpretive display of the archeological remains of the historic Campo de Cahuenga structure.

The foundation stones of the original tile and adobe brick building – where the signing of an 1847 peace treaty ended the Mexico-U.S. War in California – are just a few yards away from the Universal City Station in Campo de Cahuenga City Park.

The display will include a replica of portions of the structure, a walkway, fence and interpretive panels to assist the public in viewing the historical site. The site was exposed when Lankershim Boulevard was widened during construction of the Universal City station.

Planning and Programming Committee

1 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 17

EZ Transit Pass Program. Item 6. The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to enter an agreement with the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), to include Metrolink fare media in the EZ Transit Pass program.

Under such an agreement, Metrolink fare media would be accepted by MTA and other operators in the EZ Transit Pass program. Each participating agency would be reimbursed by SCRRA for Metrolink

passenger boardings. The EZ Transit Pass program was launched in August 2002.

Other Board committee meetings scheduled this month are:

Executive Management and Audit Committee

9:30 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 18

Finance and Budget Committee

10:30 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 18

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20 Employees Honored as Employees of the Quarter

[::Honor Roll](#)

(Sept. 17, 2003) Twenty employees have been honored as MTA Employees of the Quarter for the fourth quarter of FY 2003.

The employees represent Procurement, Operations Administration, Rail Operations, Finance, the Executive Office and the Communications Department.

In Procurement, Lead Senior Contract Administrator Edward Velasquez was honored for guiding a two-year effort in the rail fleet's contract for light-rail vehicles. He provided excellent quality and a professional perspective toward innovative resolutions. Velasquez recently was elected regional vice president of the NCMA.

In Operations Administration, service development managers Mike Brewer, Jon Hilmer, Dan Nguyen and Madeline Van Leuvan were honored for their work in developing the June 2003 shakeup. Faced with demands of the Consent Decree, they worked tirelessly to find new ways to expand service and increase efficiency simultaneously. Their work to automate the bus scheduling improved bus productivity by 2.3%.

In Rail Operations, Steve Mendoza and Michael Soto were selected for their volunteer work in the monumental task of conducting Safety First training of every MTA employee. Together, they accounted for 46 separate training sessions, instructing 467 individuals. It was their desire that every employee receive safety training, regardless of whether they worked first, second, or third shift.

In the Finance Department, Marie Kim was honored for playing a key role in preparing the Budget System (BIAS), although she had no prior experience with the system. Her tireless efforts to learn the technical and business aspects of the system, while working with ITS and an outside vendor to implement system enhancements, were an essential factor in OMB's ability to develop, and have adopted on schedule, the FY04 Budget.

In the Executive Office, three employees – Yoon Ham, Abdul Zohbi and Harold Torres – were selected for their work in the acquisition, programming and video production of "The Metro Experience", MTA's 3-D mobile safety theater. No other transit agency has such an exceptional tool to attract and educate the public about their personal safety around light-rail systems.

The Communications Department honored nine Design Studio employees – Michael Lejeune, Neil Sadler, Carolynne Clifford, Lydia Iacono, Tuan Le, Theresa Renn, Paula Cummings, Elizabeth Bain and Volker Durre – for their work in updating MTA's public image. They helped develop MTA's "brand" and image and are closely involved in ensuring that all MTA collateral materials have a standard, more professional and cohesive appearance.

In the Administration Department, Senior Programmer Analyst Cindy Pe Tran in the Organizational Training and Development unit was honored for helping meet a critical deadline in the development of a web-based form that will allow management to easily select individual strategic goals and objectives. She is focused, genuinely concerned about client needs, and maintains a high standard for the

product she delivers.

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Gateway Cities General Manager Rich Rogers

By **FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN**

(Sept. 17, 2003) One year ago General Manager Rich Rogers had a vision for the Gateway Cities Service Sector. Today, he looks back at the foundation that has been laid and envisions a growing and continually improving sector.

"You see cleaner buses on the street and operators with positive attitudes," Rogers says. "But as standards are raised in the agency, patrons also raise their standards."

"Our challenge is to get ahead of the customers to continually meet and exceed their expectations," he says.

With the bar raised, and a new vision in mind, Rogers took a look at how the sector's first year has paved the way for the Gateway Cities sector to make a difference in the communities they serve.

Q. What was your vision for this sector a year ago?

A. The vision was to develop a strong team with common goals and objectives, and to strive towards continued improvement.

I looked at the start of the sector as the introduction of a new business unit. Each of the individuals selected for the team is an expert in a particular field and was chosen to help lead us to continual improvement.

From the beginning, we worked at providing training tools for our managers to achieve the ambitious goals we set. If you are going to raise expectations, everybody has to have the same vision and the training to be the best leaders they can be. Then, they can share the vision with all of the employees.

The sector was built to support the operating divisions, to get out to the communities we serve, and to improve relations with the public. It was important for the divisions and managers to move in a positive direction to improve the services we provide.

Q. What has been accomplished this year to make that vision a reality?

A. We raised the bar on our performance standards. We looked at **everything** we do operationally to serve the customer and critiqued what we did and what we could improve on. The focus was to exceed customer expectations and to promote MTA. I quickly found that this is a huge challenge.

The good news is, we are doing a better job promoting MTA, but with that heightened publicity comes increased expectations from our customers. Even though we are raising the bar on our performance standards, the customers are raising their expectations of us as an agency, so we have to get ahead of the customers to continually meet and exceed their expectations.

Specifically, we have improved on safety. We have a heightened awareness of safety. Employees are working safer and smarter, which has reduced our Worker's Compensation claims by almost 40 percent.

Q. How have the changes made this year affected employees?

A. It's been a very challenging year for employees. You have to take into consideration that change is not generally accepted with open arms. Employees are skeptical about change, but we are progressing away from that skepticism. We have to ultimately change the culture of the agency. If you look at Roger Snoble's strategic plan, it sets the foundation for us to define our priorities. For now, we have established a foundation and aligned our vision, mission, goals and objectives. We are going to be moving together in the same direction.

Q. What are patrons saying to you during the public meetings you've attended?

A. Now that MTA is reaching out to the public with focus groups and town hall meetings, people are responding positively to the fact that we are out there and available.

When we have public hearings dealing with service changes, the community does not view it very positively. It's hard for riders to understand the rationale behind reducing or eliminating a line.

Overall, the community wants to see clean buses, professional operators who are courteous, and buses that run on time. These are simple ingredients, but the dynamics of getting there is a little challenging. For us to meet and exceed their expectations, we are going to have to deliver what patrons want, so we have to continue to improve upon our service.

Q. One year ago you had planned to improve communications, with an emphasis on upgrading the image of Metro Operations. How has the image of Metro Operations changed over the past year?

A. We have a very aggressive community relations plan that has worked hard at opening up the lines of communication between our sector and the 26 cities we serve. They have set up meetings with a number of elected officials' representatives to explain the sector concept and communicate our plans and programs. We have also held a number of Town Hall meetings, participated in various community events, become active in some of our local Chamber activities, and effectively communicated information about sector activities such as public hearings, town hall meetings and agency programs.

We have also been much more pro-actively involved with our operating divisions, ensuring that we prioritize ongoing communication at all levels.

The end result has been that you see cleaner buses on the street and operators with a positive attitude. One of the key components of that is that employees have a heightened awareness of accountability. Everyone understands the expectations and everyone knows that there is accountability associated with striving toward meeting those

expectations.

Q. What issues are currently being addressed or will be addressed in the future by your governance council?

A. Our governance council was just recently formed — we had our first meeting in August. We had to immediately put our council members into the fire because our second meeting included a public hearing on potential reduction or cancellation of service or some of our contract lines.

My role is to educate the council members about the sector from an operational and community perspective, including what our needs are and how we go about meeting our objectives. The governance council's role is to evaluate and decide if they should endorse staff recommendations on operational decisions that impact our region.

Q. What do you enjoy most about being general manager of this division?

A. Watching our team exceed their goals. I enjoy helping them achieve success. My role is to develop our managers to be as effective as they can be.

Q. Looking ahead, what do you plan to accomplish next year?

A. We want to continue to foster a safety conscious environment. We also want to make sure employees are recognized for achieving a heightened safety level.

The other thing we are focused on is continually improving communication. Managers not only need to be out there and visible, but also to be available to communicate with our employees about what is going on.

I am going to continue conducting all hands meetings, facilitating quarterly management meetings and conducting employee feedback surveys. With the results, we can talk to employees about what we can do to improve, and we can establish goals together as a team.

We will continue to foster and build new relationships with the communities we serve in the Gateway Cities region. We're also looking forward to working with our Division Advisory Committee (DAC) members to work with us in our community outreach efforts and our anti-graffiti and safety school program.

Q. What would you like to say to the employees and coworkers who have worked alongside with you this year?

A. My team has made my job a lot easier. Each and every one of them is an expert. They are the ones who make it happen. I am extremely proud of the improvements shown throughout our first year together. As everyone continues to share the common vision of the agency, that momentum will continue to accelerate. We will see improvements happening faster and faster. I envision our team successfully making the strides necessary to exceed our customer's expectations.

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Cypress Park Community to Honor Local Artist at Dedication of Mural

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 18, 2003) Community members will come together, Saturday, to honor and celebrate the completion of local artist Leo Limon's "The Gol Mural," a colorful artwork located on the west wall of North Los Angeles Division 3.



Gol Mural artist Leo Limon

MTA and the Cypress Park Neighborhood Council will sponsor the event, which begins at 11 a.m. at the Cypress Park Recreation Center, 2930 Pepper Ave.

Limon started working on the 70-foot long mural at the end of 2002 and completed it last month, turning a graffiti-scarred wall into a work of art.

The mural not only promotes education and sportsmanship, but also reflects everyday life in the community. It features an Olympic torch and children playing various sports, like soccer, basketball and gymnastics.

There will be food, music and entertainment at the dedication event. There also will be a soccer tournament in memory of the late soccer coach Artie Hernandez, whose portrait is featured on the mural.

The "Gol Mural," which runs along Avenue 27, is an extension of the 200-foot long "Vista de Harmony" mural that Limon painted six years ago.

In the future, Limon hopes to paint the entire wall on Avenue 27 and an adjacent wall on Gay Street, which extends an additional 3,000-feet.

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"Safety Begins With Me" campaign ads began appearing, this week, in area newspapers, on the sides of Metro Buses and at Metro Bus and Rail stations.



Campaign messages save lives:

Always wait for rail crossing gates to close and reopen before crossing an intersection.

Hold on to your child's hand when using the escalators or getting on or off a Metro Bus or Train car.

Never run near a bus or train. Wait for the next one.

Never play near or on train tracks.

Always use crosswalks, and make sure that motorists see you while crossing or making turns.

MTA Kicks Off Public 'Safety Begins With Me' Campaign

By DAVE SOTERO

READ > [MTA's 'Safety's First' Campaign is Reducing Employee Injuries](#)

(Sept. 18, 2003) To help prevent accidents on Metro properties, trains and buses, MTA has launched a "Safety Begins With Me" public outreach campaign.

The campaign urges residents within MTA's 1,433-mile service area to take personal responsibility and be aware of their own safety when riding MTA's nearly 2,400 Metro Buses and 73 miles of Metro Rail service throughout Los Angeles County.

The campaign will be supported by newspaper and outdoor advertisements and a community safety outreach program,

"This is not just an MTA issue, but a community-wide issue for prevention of traffic-related injuries to pedestrians and others who live, work, and play in the Los Angeles area," said CEO Roger Snoble.

"Safety Begins With Me" campaign ads began appearing, this week, in area newspapers, on the sides of Metro Buses and at Metro Bus and Rail stations. The ads urge people, young and old, to follow simple safety precautions to ensure their safety around the public transit system.

Focus on safety

MTA continually focuses on improving safety on its rail and bus lines. On the Metro Gold and Blue Lines, for example, MTA has installed four-quadrant crossing gates that seal off key intersections when trains are crossing.

Other safety measures include:

- Pedestrian and swing gates that close crossings to pedestrian foot traffic.
- Vehicle detection loops that sense and release vehicles caught within intersection crossing gates.
- Fiber optic signs placed on at-grade traffic signal poles to give drivers advance warning of approaching trains.
- Buses equipped with rear wheel guards that will push fallen pedestrians away from bus tires, preventing a more serious and possibly life-threatening injury.
- More than 700 new low-floor buses that reduce the need to climb steps to board the bus.
- New Metro Buses that will come equipped with yellow painted poles to encourage passengers to hold onto rails while in transit.

Community safety education also is a critical part of the "Safety Begins With Me" outreach campaign.

Since September 2002, MTA's Community Relations Rail Safety Outreach Team has conducted presentations that detail rail safety issues. The team attended scores of community events and made presentations that reached 50,400 students with the safety message.

MTA also dispatches the "Metro Experience" mobile safety theater to educate the public about rail safety. The mobile theater employs advanced video and 3-D effects to simulate the true operation of a Metro train.

"The number of accidents and injuries on the Metro system has consistently declined over the years, proving that MTA's ongoing safety efforts are making a positive difference," said Snoble. "But we must continue to do better. Our goal is zero accidents."

"Preventing accidents saves lives, and that is our first priority," he said. "At the same time, improved safety allows us to use our precious transportation dollars for improving and expanding Metro Bus and Rail service throughout Los Angeles County."

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MTA's 'Safety's First' Campaign is Reducing Employee Injuries

READ> [MTA Kicks Off Public 'Safety Begins With Me' Campaign](#)

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 18, 2003) Safety is MTA's top priority, both for its employees and its customers.

Similar to the just-announced public outreach campaign, MTA's ongoing "Safety's First" employee safety campaign advocates personal responsibility for preventing workplace accidents.



Sign of the Times> Safety 1st sign stands sentry at Gateway Division 10.

The campaign has proven instrumental in steadily reducing the number of new injuries. In FY 2003, total new Worker's Compensation claims per 100 employees decreased 31 percent from FY 2002 levels, while the number of lost workdays decreased by 14.4 percent.

Public liability and property damage claims also fell sharply in all five service sectors and on Metro Rail lines. Between FY 2002 and FY 2003, total public liability and property damage claims decreased by 18.3 percent.

Similar claims for Metro Rail decreased by 27.6 percent. MTA's total public liability and property damage expenses decreased 46.7 percent, representing a substantial reduction in safety-related costs for MTA.

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Hefting the first shovelfuls of earth at the site of Santa Clarita Transit's new maintenance facility are (2nd from left) Kevin Michel, director of MTA's San Fernando Valley-North County Area Team, Santa Clarita Councilmember Laurene Weste (4th from left) and MTA Director Frank Roberts, (3rd from right), along with other local officials.



Groundbreaking at Santa Clarita Transit Maintenance Facility

(Sept. 19, 2003) Santa Clarita city officials, joined by MTA Director Frank Roberts and Kevin Michel, director, San Fernando Valley-North County Area Team, broke ground last week on a new 22,000-square foot maintenance facility for Santa Clarita Transit.

Partly funded by MTA and the Federal Transit Administration, the maintenance facility will have seven bus bays, an automated bus washer, CNG and diesel fueling stations and parking for 110 buses and 163 autos.

The maintenance facility will be located in the Rye Canyon Industrial Park.

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Artist's renderings of the new Santa Clarita Transit maintenance facility.



San Gabriel Valley Governance Council Members Tour Divisions

By RICK JAGER

(Sept. 19, 2003) General Manager Jack Gabig invited members of the San Gabriel Valley Sector governance council for a tour, Friday, of the sector's San Gabriel Valley Division 9, North Los Angeles Division 3 and the Regional Rebuild Center.

Governance Council Members got a first hand look at the day-to-day operations of a major operating division, as well as a tour of the painting facility and other aspects of the RRC.

The tour was designed to show council members how the sector operates so they will have a better understanding of what it takes to field a large fleet of buses every day and how the sector maintains those buses in a effort to provide quality service for sector customers.

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PHOTOS BY RICK JAGER



San Gabriel Valley Governance Council members stopped for fuel at San Gabriel Valley Division 9 during tour set up by General Manager Jack Gabig. Pictured left to right are Sector Service and Development Manager Jon Hillmer, Gabig, Council Vice Chair Sid Tyler, Maintenance Manager John McBryan, Council Chairman Bart Doyle, and council members Rosie Vasquez, Henry Lopez, Emile Bayle and Sharon Martinez.



San Gabriel Valley's division Maintenance Manager John McBryan (far right) briefs San Gabriel Valley Governance Council members (left to right) Bart Doyle, Rosie Vasquez, Sharon Martinez, Emile Bayle, Henry Lopez and Sid Tyler on various aspects of bus maintenance in the service sector.



Getting a grip on the day-to-day operations of division

life is San Gabriel Valley Governance Council Member Rosie Vasquez as other council members look on. During the council's tour, Vasquez volunteered to fuel a CNG bus at the division.

Catoe Sees MTA Beginning Shift to 'Hub and Spoke' in Mid-2004

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 19, 2003) Beginning in mid-2004 and continuing for the next several years, Metro Bus service will experience a transformation. A radical change not only for MTA, but also for other transit agencies in Los Angeles County.

The vision, as outlined by Deputy CEO John Catoe, is a future in which MTA routes its buses through a network of 15 to 18 regional transit "hubs" – including Metro Rail stations – connected by "spokes" of express service lines.



Deputy CEO John Catoe at Patsaouras Plaza of the Gateway Transit Center.

Hubs would be located in major shopping or employment centers and in other traffic-generating areas. Municipal buses or city-owned shuttles would coordinate service with Metro Bus schedules to transport passengers to local destinations between the hubs.

"The hub and spoke system will maximize MTA's resources and minimize duplication with the munis," says Catoe. "It will put the right buses in place for the right services and get people to their destinations quicker and on time."

Possible locations of hubs include Warner Center, Westwood, Wilshire/Western, Union Station, the El Monte Transit Center, the Long Beach Transit Center and the Pico/Rimpau bus terminal. Some already act as transfer points between MTA-operated buses and those operated by other transit agencies.

Replace the 'grid system'

The hub and spoke network would largely replace MTA's current "grid system" which has bus lines – some 20 or more miles long – laid out in a checkerboard pattern across the county.

"Ours is a system based upon what the area looked like two or three decades ago," says Catoe. "We've made changes in headways and adjusted a few things, but we haven't basically restructured our service."

A proposal for converting Metro Bus service to a hub and spoke network will be presented to the MTA Board in January. Catoe expects to see the first changes – perhaps in El Monte, the San Fernando Valley and Westside/Central – beginning in June 2004.

"I can guarantee you that whatever we do, we're going to have to adjust," says Catoe. "What's planned and what is reality are two different things."

In an interview with *metro.net*, Catoe also commented on other aspects of the hub and spoke concept:

Do you have a sense of how many hubs a patron would go through on an average ride?

I don't envision them going to different hubs. An average customer travels only three to four miles. That means they would go through only one hub.

In a hub and spoke system, how do customers get to destinations between the hubs?

We will do destination studies to determine whether we should have smaller buses taking people to those destinations or whether we should take them to a rail station so they can continue their trip.

What capital investments will be required for the hub and spoke system?

In the future, it will require facilities at the hubs. They could be public/private partnerships with housing, retail, government offices and a transportation center. At the federal building in Westwood, for example, there's an outdoor facility, but nothing more. Over time, we would put a facility there – parking, small retail and a waiting area for customers.

Two studies are underway. One is for the routes we'd put into a hub and spoke system and the other is what capital facilities we'll need. The capital facilities are going to lag the services themselves.

What role do you see the municipal operators playing?

A major role. They're one-fourth of the transit capacity in this county. We're going to do what we've talked about doing for over a decade and that is, let's stop duplicating muni services. They'll pick up more people with their existing resources, although in a couple of cases, they may have to buy more buses. Some money already has been made available for that. Two years ago, we began providing \$15 million to the municipal operators as a fair share to expand their services. Each operator gets a share.

The other group that will play a big role is the city operators. There are hundreds of buses that we've never fit into the plan. They provide valuable shuttle services within their cities and we need to integrate those into MTA services.

Have the munis indicated a willingness to take on this role?

I believe the munis will support this as we convince elected officials that this is the best way to use transit dollars. The muni operators will work with us and we intend to include them in the entire process, but this will take a regional agreement by elected and public transit officials.

MTA has said for several years that our system will continue to grow. Will that continue to be true under the hub and spoke concept?

Our system will maintain itself and will grow, collectively, with rail and bus. But, to say that we're going to have a 4,000-bus system is not realistic. Will MTA be the biggest operator in this county? No question about it, but we're not the only operator in this county. Our

past practice has been to operate everywhere despite the munis. We will continue to be the major regional operator, but we will work with the munis and their resources to make us more effective.

Will it take more buses to operate a hub and spoke system?

In some locations, yes, and different types of vehicles. But, in other locations, we might use fewer buses. One intent of the hub and spoke system is to increase ridership. And, if you increase ridership, you'll need that capacity. This is not an attempt to cut the size of the MTA. This is an attempt to design it to face a new reality.

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During the dedication, San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig presented a community service award to artist Leo Limón, "in appreciation of the Gol Mural, which will be enjoyed by the community of Cypress Park and MTA employees for many years."



PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON

Artist Leo Limón at the Gol Mural. The mural features a portrait of the late Artie Hernandez, popular soccer coach and driving force behind the Cypress Park soccer league.

Division 3 Mural Pays Tribute to Cypress Park Recreation Center and Popular Soccer Coach

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 23, 2003) In the shade of a row of Cypress trees that lines the wall between the Cypress Park Recreation Center and the North Los Angeles Division bus yard, friends and neighbors came together, Saturday, for the dedication of the Gol Mural, a 70-foot long mural by artist Leo Limón.

The 540-square-foot mural is an extension of "Vista de Harmony," a 200-foot mural completed by Limón in 1997. Depicting education and sportsmanship within the context of everyday life in the community of Cypress Park, the mural has transformed a graffiti-scarred wall into a community landmark.

The vibrant mural celebrates the successful athletic programs of Cypress Park Recreation Center, including the award-winning youth soccer program, a senior women's basketball team and a youth baseball league. Notably, the mural features a portrait of the late Artie Hernandez, popular soccer coach and driving force behind the Cypress Park soccer league.

Friends and Neighbors> Community members raised funds for paint and supplies at car washes staged in Cypress Park; MTA contributed wall preparation services and an anti-graffiti coating.



During the dedication, San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig presented a community service award to artist Limón, "in appreciation of the Gol Mural, which will be enjoyed by the community of Cypress Park and MTA employees for many years."

A resident of Cypress Park, Limón has been a local treasure for the past three decades, producing whimsically colorful murals, paintings and sculpture that reflect urban realities in the context of ancient cultures.

Limón's work has been featured in "Chicano Visions: American Painters on the Verge" and "Contemporary Chicana" and "Chicano Art: Artists, Works, Culture and Education." His works are also being displayed at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C. and in an exhibit at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, N.M.

Limón was recently recognized by the Los Angeles City Council for outstanding achievement in the community.

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MTA team, background, from left, Community Affairs officer Helen Ortiz, Division 3 Manager Dan Frawley and Metro Art officer Alan Nakagawa, help celebrate Limón's achievement at dedication Sept. 20.

New Admin Chief Don Ott Learns Jobs from the Inside Out

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 23, 2003) Don Ott, MTA's new executive officer for Administration, has always learned his jobs from the inside out.



Don Ott, Executive Officer,
Administration

That was true when, as a graduate business student, he was the pathology course coordinator at the University of Cincinnati and found himself preparing for autopsies – even laying out human organs – for students in the medical school.

That was true when he joined the SCRTD as an assistant budget analyst in 1986 and began learning the ins and outs of the various departments he was assigned to.

And that was true when he was named Facilities Maintenance manager in 1993 and took over a 70-member crew of plumbers, carpenters, electricians, technicians and maintainers at South Park. And later, when he started a custodial unit at the Metro Rail Division 20 yard to shift work from a contractor to MTA employees.

Good insights

"Those experiences really gave me a lot of very good insights into operations from the facilities standpoint and what the divisions need to be able to operate the service," he says.

Ott's eagerness to adapt and to learn paid off in 2000, when he was appointed director of Facilities Maintenance. He was in charge of some 550 employees who maintained MTA's far-flung bus divisions as well as Metro Rail communications and properties.

Among many other things, he also was responsible for managing public-private partnership contracts for construction and maintenance of CNG fueling stations at most operating divisions and for providing new offices for three of the five service sectors.

Ott continued as Facilities director until this past June 30, when he was named to head MTA Administration, succeeding Carolyn Flowers who is now executive officer for Operations.

Reporting to Chief of Staff Maria Guerra, he now is responsible for Human Resources, for ADA compliance, General Services, Real Estate and Organizational Development and Training. He also provides administrative services for Guerra's staff.

Goals and plans

Ott was pleased to learn when he joined Administration that the executive staff and department heads already had established goals, action plans and key performance indicators and measurement criteria.

"Before I came to Administration, I was impressed," Ott says. "As a customer of Human Resources, for example, I have seen considerable improvement in reducing the time it takes to fill a vacant position."

He intends to ensure that Administration stays "on course" in achieving

its goals. He also plans to fine-tune the department's strategies for achieving those goals.

Ott is a native of Wadsworth, Ohio, a small town near Akron. One of six brothers and sisters, his father is a former county judge and safety manager for the Firestone tire and rubber company. His mother is deceased.

He is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati where he earned degrees in education and French. He enjoys early morning workouts before work, loves travel and is an avid reader.

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PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

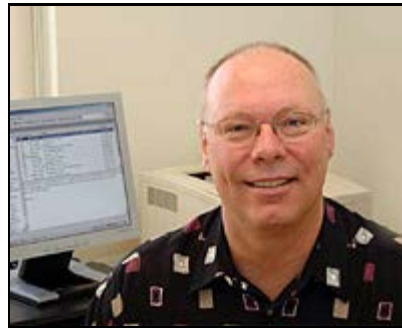


MTA's Community Relations department honored Sheriff's Deputy Gary DeBondt (with plaque) at a staff meeting, Monday, for his "tireless work and dedication" over the past five years. During that time, DeBondt has attended numerous MTA events as a good will ambassador for the Sheriff's Department. He also has frequently worked with Community Relations to provide color guards for ceremonies and Sheriff's Explorers for crowd control and to coordinate other valuable assistance at MTA events. Joining DeBondt are, left to right, Lt. Leo Norton, Community Relations Manager Helen Ortiz and Lt. Mike Herek. (9/23/03)

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Robert New Named MTA's Director of Purchasing

(Sept. 23, 2003) Robert F. New, Jr. has been named Director of Purchasing in the Material Management Department. His appointment was effective August 18.



Robert New, Director of Purchasing

New has more than 25 years' experience in procurement, contract administration, negotiations, programs management, finance, pricing and cost estimating, and compliance.

He succeeds Ron Dupuis, who is now Director of Contracts for Professional Services.

New has worked for such companies as Crane Aerospace Hydro-Aire, Inc., L-3 Communications Inc., AlliedSignal Inc., Rockwell International Inc., Hughes Aircraft Company and TRW Inc.

Since 1981, he also has worked as a professional business instructor, trainer and consultant for UCLA, Cal State Northridge, and the University of Phoenix, as well as for several Fortune 500 companies.

New holds a B.S. degree in business administration from USC, an MBA from Loyola Marymount University and certificates in acquisition management and executive management. In addition, he has won several awards for excellence in teaching and scholarship.

He has been an active member of the National Contracts Management Association (NCMA) for more than 20 years.

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Funeral Services Set for Operator Drew Andrews

(Sept. 24, 2003) Funeral services are scheduled Saturday for retired Metro Bus Operator Sylvester (Drew) Andrews, 58, who died of a heart attack, last week, in his hometown of Chicago.

Joining MTA in December 1974, Andrews drove out of a number of divisions during his 23-year career. He retired in December 1997 from South Bay Division 18.



Drew Andrews

A viewing is scheduled from 3 p.m. until 8 p.m., Friday, Sept. 26, at Simpson's Funeral Home, 1557 West Baseline, San Bernardino. Services at the funeral home are set for 11 a.m., Saturday, followed by burial at Veterans' Cemetery in Riverside.

Andrews, who lived in Riverside, is survived by his wife, Linda, and several children.

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Graffiti Cleanup Project Keeps the Metro Gold Line Golden

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(Sept 24, 2003) Sheriff's deputies assigned to MTA's Transit Services Bureau have gathered a posse to clean up the graffiti that can be seen from Metro Gold Line trains traveling alongside the LA River.

The graffiti cleanup project, which started in late August, aims to make people feel safer by eliminating the tagging from the concrete riverbank. It will also allow Metro Gold Line riders to view the city in a more favorable light and better enjoy the ambiance of the city.

The LA River Cleanup project began with a comment from the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau command staff: "If you can see it from the Gold Line, it becomes the Sheriff's handle."

From that point, Sgt. Dale Gulley, Lt. Mike Parker, Deputy Edmond Ohandjanian, Deputy Robert Anderson, Deputy James Johnson, Deputy Manolito Lawsin and Sgt. Ronald Williams of the Special Problems Unit took the initiative needed to get the graffiti removed.

A series of meetings and direct contacts by the deputies resulted in cooperation from a number of sources. Providing support are the City of LA's Operation Clean Sweep, Central City Action Committee, Supervisor Gloria Molina's office, Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard's office, Councilman Ed Reyes' office, the LAPD and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Broken window theory

"The project revolves around the broken window theory," says Gulley. "If you take an area and let it be degraded, it will be riddled with crime. If you clean it up, the criminal won't see it as a target. They will keep moving on."

Funding for the project involved a lot of effort and a bit of luck. During a meeting, a Corps of Engineers representative explained, "It nearly takes an act of Congress to get the funding for the cleanup."

An aide to Roybal-Allard overheard that comment and helped to get the necessary funding. The fact that Gulley is friends with a Corps of Engineers manager also helped.

Between the two sources, \$100,000 was raised for the graffiti

FYI > If you see someone tagging MTA property, call the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau at 323-563-5000.



Workers clean up tagging along the LA River, above, in an effort to remove all graffiti that can be seen, below, along the Metro Gold Line route.



cleanup efforts.

A contractor hired by the Corps of Engineers is removing the graffiti, which will be sandblasted and painted over. About 50 percent of the tagging has already been removed from the LA River banks.

"If we can control the graffiti, we are ahead of the game," says Deputy Johnson. "We have to do the best we can to let the criminals know that we are here. We can't let these guys take over the area. By cleaning the graffiti, we can help reduce crime and make the city safer and cleaner."

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Maria Reynolds Named Division 8 Transportation Manager

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 24, 2003) Starting as a college intern in 1985 with SCRTD, West Valley Division 8's Maria Reynolds rose through the ranks and made her way to the top as MTA's newest division transportation manager.

Reynolds, 39, was promoted last month, after Grant Myers, former division transportation manager, transferred to East Valley Division 15.



West Valley Division Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds

"Maria brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise, having been with MTA for a long time," says General Manager David Armijo. "She's extremely dedicated and committed to her work."

While obtaining a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration at USC, Reynolds interned in the Employee Relations Department at SCRTD during her senior year.

"Throughout my internship, I was able to work on contracts, work with unions, participate in arbitration and do various research," she says. "It gave me an excellent background and has given me tools that I use now as manager."

A multitude of jobs

Having interned at SCRTD and graduated from USC, little did Reynolds know that a multitude of jobs would follow at the agency.

The mother of two has done everything from labor relations analyst, to chief analyst, to working at the manpower desk, to working directly with transportation directors, and now to becoming West Valley Division's transportation manager.

While working as a labor relations analyst, Reynolds continued with her education and received a masters in Public Administration at Cal State Long Beach. She also earned a certificate in Employee/Employer Relations and Personnel Management.

"She is self-motivated, has very high integrity and applies this to all aspects of her duties," says Myers. "Maria works diligently to ensure that the division runs smoothly."

Reynolds says working with Myers has been a wonderful experience.

Huge win-win

"Now that he's at Division 15 and I'm here, we're going to work together and share our resources to make our sector the best," she says. "That's going to be a huge win-win for us. We have similar goals that we would like to accomplish."

Division 8 has always been a top-performing division. The division reduced the number of customer complaints and accidents, and improved its in-service on-time performance.

"We have an excellent group of employees here," says Reynolds. "We get along. We try to treat each other like family because we spend more waking hours at our work place than we do at home. This is our home away from home."

Reynolds is happy to be a part of Division 8 and MTA, and hopes to stay a while longer.

"With the 18 years that I have here, I have a lot invested in this agency," says Reynolds. "I have my heart and soul invested here. I care about these employees and I care about the success of MTA."

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PHOTO BY LISA HUYNH

EDITOR'S NOTE: Did you win a ribbon in the 2003 LA County Fair? Metro.net wants to know! Contact Bill Heard at heardw@mta.net

Division 3's Andre Hanna Turned up the Heat at the County Fair Bake-Off

- [Try two of Andre Hanna's favorite recipes](#)

By LISA HUYNH

(Sept. 25, 2003) North Los Angeles Division 3 Transportation Operations Supervisor, Andre Hanna, who has been baking goodies for more than 40 years, recently won two ribbons at the 2003 LA County Fair bake-off.



TOS Andre Hanna, who has been baking since he was 8 years old, has won numerous ribbons at the LA County Fair for his sweet creations.

Hanna entered three different cakes in this year's County Fair – a cream cheese-frosted, almond flavored cake, which won a third place ribbon; a triple-layer double-chocolate cake, which earned a fourth place ribbon; and a vanilla-glazed, lemon bundt cake.

"It felt really good getting placed with a couple of ribbons," says Hanna. "It's two more ribbons that I can add to my collection. I'm very proud of my cakes."

The judges determined the winners by looking at five criteria: presentation, smell, taste, texture and overall.

Hanna, 50, grew up watching his grandmother bake cakes and by the time he was 8 years old, he baked his first cake by himself. Although his first sweet creation wasn't award-winning, his passion for baking developed soon after.

He has been entering his sweet temptations in the County Fair every year since 1984 and has won at least 25 ribbons, ranging from first to fifth place.

Hanna, who bakes frequently, says one of his favorite things to bake is a butter-glazed pound cake, which won a first-place ribbon some years back.

"I'll do this for as long as I can," says Hanna. "I'm already thinking about what recipes I'll enter for next year's competition."

Try two of Andre Hanna's favorite recipes:

The 1-2-3-4 Cake	Cream Cheese Frosting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 cup butter or margarine (= 2 sticks of butter), softened (room temp.)• 2 cups of sugar• 3 cups of cake flour, sifted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 stick of butter, softened (room temp)• 1 package of Philadelphia cream cheese (8oz.)• 1 package of powdered

<p>or 2 2/3 of all purpose flour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 teaspoons baking powder• ½ teaspoon of salt• 4 eggs• 1 cup milk• 2 teaspoons vanilla extract <p>Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease or butter and flour 2 9x2 or 3 9x1/2 inch cake pans. In a mixing bowl, cream butter and gradually add sugar, creaming until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. In another bowl, sift flour with baking powder and salt. Add flour mixture alternately with milk and flavoring to creamed mixture, beating after each addition until smooth. Pour batter equally into cake pans. Bake for 25 to 30 mins. (approx. 35 mins. for 9x2 inch pans). Cool in pans for about 10 mins. Remove from pans and finish cooling on racks.</p>	<p>sugar (16oz.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 teaspoon of vanilla <p>Begin to cream the butter and cream cheese in mixing bowl at low speed, increasing to medium until blended. Gradually add in powdered sugar and the flavoring, continue beating until all powdered sugar is well blended and icing becomes light and spreading consistency (approx. beating time 5 to 6 mins.).</p> <p>One more suggestion on frosting: If your taste buds are calling for a chocolate flavor, simply add 2/3 cup of Hershey's cocoa powder to the butter, blend and cream first, proceed with the remaining ingredients and then VOILA! chocolate cream cheese frosting.</p>
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MTA Board Director Antonio Villaraigosa, center, stops at the Metro booth to thank, from left, Liz Armijo-Holbrook, Yesica Perez and Olga Lopez for their participation.



MTA's Comm Rel Staff Attends 16 de Septiembre Resource Fair

(Sept. 25, 2003) Community Relations staff members attended the annual 16 de Septiembre Resource Fair, this past weekend, at the Lucille Beserra Roybal Youth & Family Center in Boyle Heights.

Liz Armijo-Holbrook of Metro San Gabriel Valley teamed with Olga Lopez and Yesica Perez of the Eastside Extension Project to distribute literature and answer questions regarding Metro services. The Center is located on First Street where the future Eastside Extension is planned.

Many members of the community stopped at the Metro booth to ask questions and express their excitement about the project.

The 16 de Septiembre Resource Fair commemorates Mexican Independence Day and provides an opportunity for the community to receive free health screenings and information from the many social service agencies in attendance.

The day included entertainment by the Roosevelt High School Mariachi group as well as a visit by Councilmember Antonio Villaraigosa who is also a member of the MTA Board of Directors.



Liz Armijo-Holbrook is pictured with Ramona Garcia Coronado, who will be 100 years old on her next birthday. She appeared in the movie "Real Women Have Curves" and is a popular and active member of the community.

--Story provided by Liz Armijo-Holbrook.

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Board Approves Land Exchange for New Bus Division in West LA

- **New, larger facility will help meet area's growing demand for service**

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 25, 2003) The MTA Board today approved an agreement with RAD Jefferson, LLC, on plans to exchange MTA's antiquated bus yard property in Venice for construction of a new bus division in a more centralized, industrial area of West Los Angeles.

The land-swap agreement will enable MTA to better meet current and future public transit demand in the Westside/Central area of Los Angeles, which contains some of MTA's most heavily traveled bus lines.

The motion approved by the Board included an amendment by Supervisor Yvonne Burke directing MTA and the developer to work closely with the community during the environmental review process and construction period. The amendment also requires full mitigation of increased traffic and noise in the neighborhood caused by buses and employees' cars.

Under the exchange agreement, MTA will swap its 3.13-acre facility, located in Venice, for a 4.66-acre site, now vacant, located on Jefferson Boulevard between Rodeo and National in West Los Angeles.

Before the swap occurs, RAD Jefferson, LLC, would build a state-of-the-art bus division for MTA complete with CNG fueling. With the Venice division valued at \$12.9 million, the agreement calls for MTA to contribute \$8 million to make up the difference in the cost of the newly built division.

Outgrown Venice property

"MTA has long outgrown the Venice property," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "MTA and its predecessor agencies have used this facility for more than 100 years. It remains our smallest and oldest bus division."

"We now have the opportunity to relocate closer to our riders, which improves our operational efficiency and allows us to put more buses on the road to accommodate future service requirements on the Westside," Catoe said.

MTA spends approximately \$5 million per year on wasted drive time, which represents the distance in miles a transit bus must travel before entering into regular revenue service.

The West Los Angeles area is now served by buses from three different locations: Venice, West Hollywood and Los Angeles, all of them already at or near capacity. The Venice bus division now accommodates only 77 buses and cannot handle CNG fueling.

CNG fueling station

The new facility, when complete, will handle nearly double that number -- 150 buses. All of them will operate on clean-burning CNG that will be fueled on-site.

"It's been more than 20 years since MTA has built a new facility of this type," Catoe said. "Since that time, there have been major technological advancements that we can utilize to improve our bus operations and create an attractive facility that enhances the community. MTA must continually seek to improve its facilities throughout Los Angeles County if we are to keep pace with technology and public transit demand."

In the next phase of the project, the developer will conduct a full environmental review of the project at the new site, including traffic and noise impacts, and will meet all mitigation requirements prior to beginning construction.

MTA, meanwhile, will conduct extensive community outreach to gather public input on design and other issues. Construction is scheduled for completion in 2006.

In other board actions:

UPDATE: September 25, 2003

- **Item 26, Division 6 Land Exchange.** A motion concerning construction of a new bus operating division in West Los Angeles, was approved by the full Board, as amended. The amendment directs MTA and the developer to work with the community and to mitigate the impact of traffic and noise in the neighborhood caused by buses and employees' cars. (See full story: Board Approves Land Exchange for New Bus Division in West LA)
- **Item 24, Updated Transit Service Policy,** Approved, by the full Board, as amended. The amendment holds for further consideration by the Board a section of the policy concerning restructuring Metro service to a hub and spoke system.
- **Item 23. Vandalism of MTA Property.** Received and filed by Operations Committee.
- **Item 25. New Rail Traction Substations.** Postponed for further action by the Board.
- **Item 10. Campo de Cahuenga Preservation.** Approved by the full Board.
- **Item 6. Easy Transit Pass Program.** Approved by the full Board.

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MTA's Mark Maloney Wants to Grow Metro Bus Service

- New Contract Services Director

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 26, 2003) As Mark Maloney sees it, one way to grow Metro service is to plant small contract bus lines in areas where there are few riders, cultivate their loyalty with good service, and reap a harvest of increased ridership for regular Metro bus lines.



Mark Maloney, MTA's new director of Transportation Contract Service

Maloney, MTA's new director of Transportation Contract Services, believes that – marketed and operated correctly – contract bus lines can be converted to new Metro bus lines when ridership reaches appropriate levels.

In his new post, Maloney – who reports to Gateway Cities General Manager Rich Rogers – currently oversees about \$40 million in contract bus services, a total of about 180 buses ranging in size from 16-passenger vehicles to full-size, 40-foot coaches.

He's now reviewing MTA's contract service lines for inefficiencies and expects to begin working with Operations Planning and Scheduling later this year on proposals for new contract service lines under the proposed hub and spoke concept.

Maloney and his five-member staff are responsible for monitoring handicap accessibility and ADA compliance on all Metro lines, and for overseeing MTA's contract with Access Services, which provides paratransit services for LA County.

Managed contract services

Managing contract services is nothing new to Maloney. For the previous seven years, he managed contract transit services for the City of Glendale. During that time, it grew to become the largest of the area's local contract transit services.

Maloney began his transportation career in 1988 as a planning technician at the Orange County Transportation Authority. During his eight years at OCTA, he also served as superintendent of service planning and manager of the new service department.

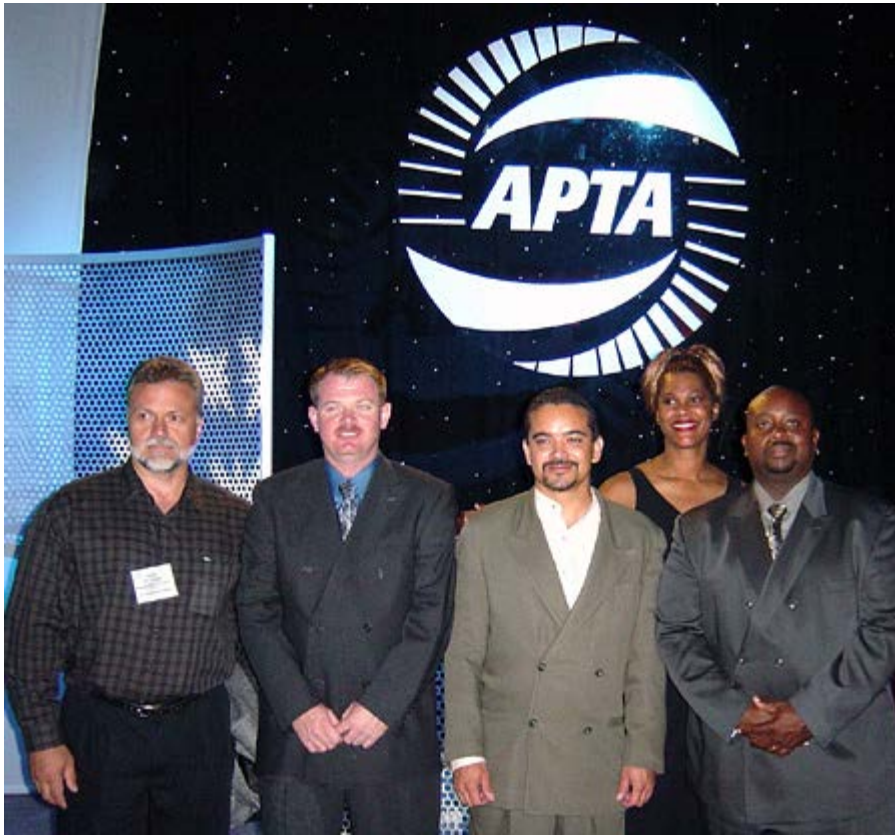
As manager of new service, Maloney was responsible for planning, development and implement of local bus service, rail feeder service, commuter express service and rideshare services. Most recently, he was project manager for computer automated scheduling and service planning.

Maloney is a 1987 graduate of USC where he earned a bachelor's degree in public administration, urban and regional planning. He and his wife, Vanja, a paralegal in an Orange County law firm, live in Lemon Heights with their 9-year-old son Patrick.

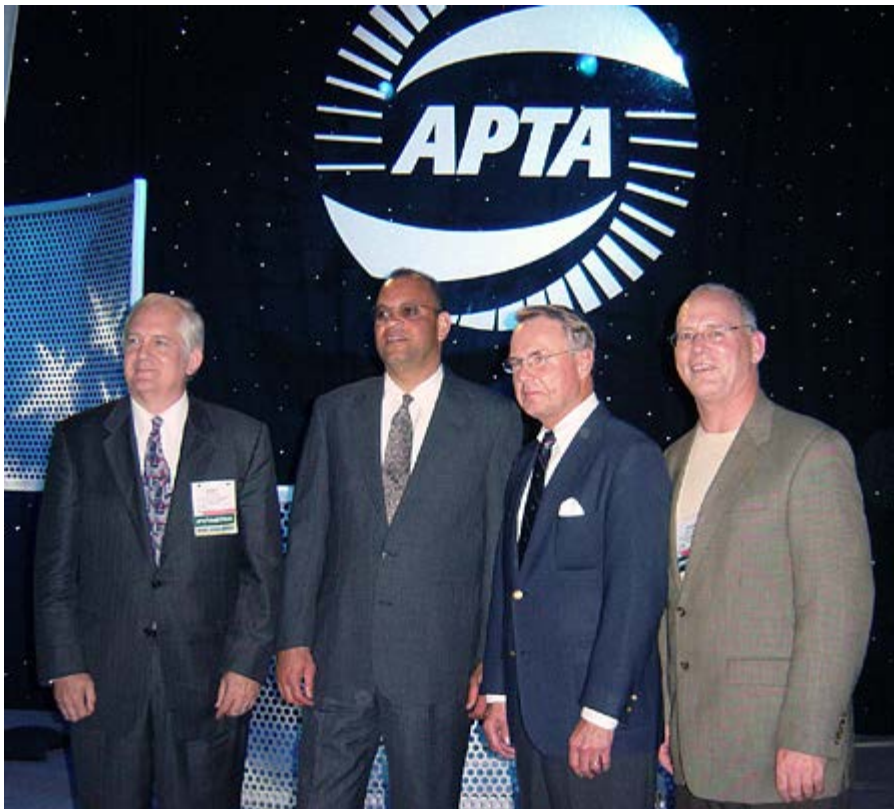
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APTA International Bus Rodeo

[MTA Takes 2nd Place](#)



On stage during the International Bus Rodeo awards ceremony are, from left, Division 5 Maintenance Manager Alex Di Nuzzo, maintenance team members Franke Forde, Rommel Vargas and Andrew Warren, Jr. With them is General Manager Dana Coffey. Below, MTA's Bus Rodeo champ Mark Holland, second from left, and San Gabriel Valley Governance Council members Bart Doyle and Bruce Heard. With them, at right, is General Manager Jack Gabig.



MTA Takes 2nd Place at APTA International Bus Rodeo

(Sept. 30, 2003) In a photo-finish with a scant six points separating them, Tri Delta Transit of Contra Costa County, Calif., nosed past a hard-charging MTA team to win "best overall transit property" at the 2004 APTA International Bus Rodeo.

MTA's 1,487 points earned the team a solid second place behind Tri Delta's 1,493 during the Rodeo finals, Saturday, in Salt Lake City. It was the highest an MTA team has ever scored in a competition that pits the nation's best bus operators and maintenance teams.

"This is the best MTA has ever done in the overall competition at the APTA Bus Rodeo," says Steve Mullaly, a senior equipment maintenance instructor who accompanied the team to Utah.

El Monte Division 9's Mark Holland, a three-time MTA Bus Rodeo champ, drove to third place in the APTA event, scoring 589 points. He was edged out by Gilbert Castro of Tri Delta, who took first place with 608 points; and Robert Lawrence of Santa Clara Valley Transit, who placed second with 594 points.

Meanwhile, mechanics Frank Forde, Rommel Vargas and Andrew Warren, Jr., of the Arthur Winston Division 5 team were racking up a score of 897.5 to place fifth out of 44 transit agencies entered in the bus maintenance competition.

Forde, Vargas and Warren received special recognition and a individual plaques for achieving a perfect 300 score in one portion of the maintenance event – the ABS air brake board. No other team did as well.

"They are a very new team," says General Manager Dana Coffey. "To come this far in such a short time is outstanding!"

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Metro Operations Joins metro.net with New Web Pages

- [Check it out](#)

(Sept. 30, 2003) Metro.net welcomes Metro Operations to the Intranet family, today, with the posting of web pages and links that will provide a depth of information about one of MTA's major areas of responsibility.

Located in the drop-down menu labeled "Department Home Pages" on the Intranet home page, clicking on the "Metro Operations" link opens the door to information about the Operations organization, budget and financial data and other key documents.

"We wanted to have a web site where everyone could get information and gain a better understanding of Operations," says Carolyn Flowers, executive officer, Operations. "The Communications staff did a really great job of supporting us in developing the site."

One unusual feature of the Metro Operations pages is the "Operations Document Road Map," a PDF file. The Road Map describes a number of required monthly administrative and financial reports and notes whose signature is required.

The link to "Operations FY 2004 FTEs" provides a breakdown of the numbers of employees – bus operators, maintenance personnel, technicians, security and other categories of employees – and where they are assigned within the department.

There's also an up-to-date department organizational chart and a link to a complete listing of phone numbers. Other links take the user to web pages for the Regional Rebuild Center, Bus Operations Control and Vehicle Technology – all of which have many pages of information.

"This is just a 'footprint' for us," says Flowers. "We want to expand our web site with more specific reference and policy information, warrantee information, best procedures and other information specific to Operations."

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New Machine Prevents Track Friction on the Metro Gold Line

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Sept. 30, 2003) A device designed to reduce track friction is being introduced to the Metro Gold Line, this week, in response to several residents' complaints about noise from trains near the Southwest Museum station.

As trains approach Southwest Museum, operators apply the brakes frequently to negotiate a stretch of track with several curves. The friction of steel against steel generates a high-pitched squeal as train cars roll into the station.

"The concept is similar to running your fingers across a chalkboard," says Rob Chappell, deputy executive officer, Metro Rail Wayside Systems.

To eliminate the noise, an MTA contractor will install two Wayside Lubricators – one for the north side of the track and the other for the south side of the track. The machines cost \$9,000 each.

Ultra-thin liquid coating

The solar-powered devices, located alongside the tracks, are equipped with hoses that squirt an ultra-thin liquid coating from a 40-gallon tank onto the track surface to reduce friction and prevent the sound of metal-on-metal.

As trains pass over the coated area, the wheels will spread the liquid over a greater portion of the track. The "friction modifier," gray in color and thinner than nail polish, works by embedding itself into the pores of the steel track. The result is a silky-smooth finish the wheels can quietly glide over.



Two Wayside Lubricator machines will be installed on the Metro Gold Line near the Southwest Museum Station to reduce the sound of track friction.



Since the noise complaints were received shortly after the Metro Gold Line opening, maintenance-of-way workers have applied the substance by hand, spreading it with paint rollers.



Pausing for passing trains, workers have

"The device is totally self-sufficient and will do away with the majority of our noise problems at Southwest Museum," Chappell says.

Since the noise complaints were received shortly after the Metro Gold Line opening, three maintenance-of-way workers have applied the substance by hand, spreading it with paint rollers. Pausing for passing trains, workers have manually covered 2,000 feet of track daily – 1,000 feet on each side of the station.

manually covered 2,000 feet of track daily – 1,000 feet on each side of the station.



PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

"Once we get the Wayside Lubricator, the only maintenance will be going out there to fill up the tank," says Keith Kandra, Metro Gold Line track manager.

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