

Metro Report Archives

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- [Field Techs and Sector Staff Jump into Action During Strike](#) (Nov. 20, 2003) Field Equipment Technician George Perez prepared this article about his colleagues in the Fleet Maintenance and Support Department.
- [LABOR NEWS UPDATE:](#) ATU members ratify contract; all Metro Bus lines in full operation; rail service resumes on the Metro Green and Gold Lines at 4 a.m., Thursday; regular operation on all Metro Rail lines begins Saturday.
- [First Day Back](#) Div. 10 Operators Greeted with Many Smiles, but Few Patrons ... Mechanics happy to be back, but have a lot of work to do
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- [Toastmaster's International President](#) Ted Corcoran Visits MTA
- MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE [Day 23](#) SEIU, County Reach Tentative Contract Agreement; ATU Prepares to Vote on MTA Contract Offer
- [MTA to Provide](#) 100% Subsidy in Employer Vanpool Lease Program (Nov. 6, 2003) MTA will subsidize the vehicle lease cost for new employer vanpools to help employees get to and from work during the transit strike and beyond.
- [Mobility 21 Summit](#) MTA, Chamber, Auto Club to Call for United Effort to Secure Transportation Funding (Nov. 6, 2003) Traffic congestion and transportation funding will be the focus of the day, Nov. 17, when MTA and the LA Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California, host the second annual Mobility 21 transportation summit.
- MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE [Day 23](#) Mechanics to Vote Friday on MTA's Last, Best, Final Offer
- [MTA Transportation Supervisors Convoy Firefighters](#) to Southland Wildfires (Nov. 5, 2003) It wasn't an ordinary drive from one familiar place to another. This drive had a mission – to take firefighters to the California wildfires.
- [MTA Library Selected for National Network of Transportation Libraries](#) (Nov. 5, 2003) Recognized as one of the nation's best, MTA's Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library is one of just 15 libraries recently selected to participate in a resource-sharing network.

- [VIEWPOINT](#) Working Safely is Important – Even During the Strike By JOHN CATOE, Deputy CEO (Nov. 5, 2003)
- [MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE](#) (Nov. 4, 2003) ATU Calls News Conference for 'Major Announcement'; Members Scheduled to Vote Friday on MTA Proposal
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Making Holiday Magic

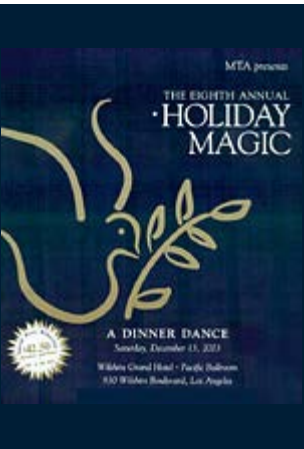
Division Employees: [Take a chance to win free tickets!](#)
Pick up an entry form at Division offices.

MTA Employee Activities will present the 8th annual Holiday Magic dinner dance on Dec. 13 at the Wilshire Grand Hotel. Festivities begin with cocktails at 6:30 p.m. dinner at 8 p.m. and dancing until 1 a.m. Guests are invited to enjoy casino gaming for prizes throughout the evening. Tickets are \$65 at the door or \$42.50 if purchased before Dec. 12. Purchase tickets at the Employee Center. Information: 922-4740.



PHOTO: VERONICA TORREJÓN

From left, Kathi Harper, Rebecca Lee and Alicia Morales-Rodriguez staff the Holiday Magic ticket booth in the 3rd floor lobby of Gateway.



Division Employees: Try Your Luck!

Pick up entry forms at division offices.

Here's a Chance to win Free Tickets to Holiday Magic

Employee Activities will hold a drawing for free Holiday Magic tickets on Dec. 5. Five pairs of tickets will be given away at each division. Entry forms, which will be available at division offices, must be completed and returned through inner-office mail to Employee Activities by Dec. 4.

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Service Sector Governance Councils to Hold December Public Meetings

By RICK JAGER

MTA's community-based transit service sector governance councils will hold public meetings in December to discuss transit issues pertaining to their individual service sectors.

Residents within the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, South Bay and Gateway Cities areas of Los Angeles who are interested in helping improve bus service in their communities are invited to attend the meetings where they can comment on governance council agenda items.

The following is a list of governance council meeting times and locations:

- **Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector**
Tuesday, December 2, 2003
5 p.m.
Grapevine Room
San Gabriel Adult Recreation Center
324 S. Mission Drive
San Gabriel
- **Metro San Fernando Valley Sector**
Wednesday, December 3, 2003
6:30 p.m.
Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center Community Room
6262 Van Nuys Boulevard
Van Nuys
- **Metro South Bay Sector**
Friday, December 12, 2003
9:30 a.m.
Carson Community Center
801 East Carson Street
Carson
- **Metro Gateway Cities Sector**
Thursday, December 18, 2003
2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
The Gas Company
9240 Firestone Boulevard
Downey

Governance councils work closely with MTA's community-based service sectors in studying and planning service to improve the efficiency of MTA bus operations in their respective service sectors.

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Volunteer Registration Details

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Sign-up form

Want to volunteer to help get Metro Buses and Trains ready for when the strike ends? Here are the details:

- Excel file: [Click here for the sign-up sheet](#)

Volunteers must complete and return the linked form to Renee Willis by close of business, Thursday, Nov. 13. In order to ensure there is adequate assignment allocation of volunteers across the various divisions, please provide three preferred assignment locations, including Metro Red Line stations, bus divisions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 18; Rail Division 20 for rail car cleaning (Vehicle Maintenance), and Rail Division 20 for Metro Red Line station cleaning (Rail Wayside).

Volunteer Pay:

Paid overtime will be limited to pay grade P and below. Exempt employees will be paid straight time for overtime hours (payroll earn code OSK), and Non-Exempt employees will be paid time and a half for overtime hours (payroll earn code OTP).

Your overtime hours at the Division will be reported on your regular timesheet and charged to Project 300006, Task 02.04 (If you have a regular work assignment on Saturday, you will not be able to volunteer for this assignment).

Keep in mind that you qualify for overtime if you have worked 40 hours this week as of Friday, Nov. 14, for Saturday's OT work, inclusive of Time Off With Pay.

Mileage is not reimbursed since this is a volunteer assignment and not an alternative work location.

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Intern Volunteers:

Interns may volunteer provided they meet the following criteria:

- Interns must obtain the permission of their immediate supervisor prior to volunteering
- Interns cannot work overtime
- Hours worked will be paid as straight time
- Interns can work Saturday, provided the total hours per week, Sunday through Saturday, does *not* exceed 40 hours, inclusive of the volunteered hours.

Plan To Get Dirty:

Please expect to get dirty, so dress appropriately (long pants), but for safety reasons, please wear closed-toe and closed-back shoes with a rubberized or non-slip sole, such as tennis shoes, running shoes or safety shoes. Consider a hat or baseball cap, in case you work outside the bus in direct sun light.

You must wear a safety vest during your work assignment. All Divisions will provide you the safety vest. If required, the Division will provide all other safety wear, such as gloves and eyewear.

First Come, First Served:

Assignments will be allocated on a "first come, first served basis." Please feel free to volunteer for Saturday, but we do request that you complete a full eight hours of service for the day you volunteer. All assignments will start at 8 a.m. at each location (Division addresses will be provided with the assignment sheet).

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First Transit Restores Service on 12 MTA Contract Bus Lines

- For links to free shuttle service, municipal operators and latest transit service update, go to www.mta.net and click on [Transit Service Update](#)

By RICK JAGER

(Nov. 4, 2003) First Transit Inc., under contract to MTA, resumed operation today of 12 bus lines that had been sidelined due to a separate labor dispute between the company and its drivers.

The 12 additional bus lines will help increase "lifeline" transit service that is being provided by private operators during the mechanics strike against the MTA.

On Tuesday, First Transit Inc. resumed operating the following bus lines: Line 125 (Rosecrans Ave.), Line 128 (Alondra Blvd.), Line 130 (Artesia Blvd.), Line 177 (Glendale/La Canada/Pasadena/Monrovia/Duarte), Line 205 (Willowbrook/Harbor City/San Pedro), Line 214 (Broadway/Main Street Loop), Line 225/226 (Aviation Blvd./Palos Verdes Peninsula/Palos Verdes Drive West), Line 232 (Pacific Coast Highway), Line 254 (Willowbrook/Huntington Park/Lorena Street), Line 256 (Eastern Ave./Avenue 64/North Hill Ave./Commerce to Altadena), Line 266 (Lakewood/Rosemead Boulevards), and Line 270 (Monrovia/El Monte/Norwalk).

Patrons can plan their trips on these lines by accessing the Metro Trip Planner on MTA's Internet web site at www.mta.net.

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MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE

Tuesday, November 4, 2003

Day 22

ATU Calls News Conference for 'Major Announcement' Members Scheduled to Vote Friday on MTA Proposal

The president of the striking mechanics union has called a news conference for 2 p.m., today, to make a "major announcement." ATU members are scheduled to vote, Friday, on MTA's multi-year last, best and final offer.

ATU has demanded that MTA sign a nine-point agreement that includes binding arbitration, health benefit payments and vacation cash-out provisions in exchange for permitting his union members to vote on the proposal. MTA has repeated its opposition to allowing an outside arbitrator to make a decision that would affect more than 400,000 daily commuters and would involve hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.

MTA is urging ATU active and retired members to approve the contract offer in Friday's vote. The last, best and final offer includes wage increases totaling 5 percent over three years, an immediate cash infusion of \$4.7 million to the ATU Health & Welfare Trust Fund, along with increased contributions to the Fund by MTA.

Meanwhile, members of Teamsters Local 572, who drive buses for MTA contractor First Transit, went back to work this morning. The union's 18-day strike had curtailed service on 12 of the 15 bus lines First Transit operates under contract for MTA.

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President of Toastmasters International Will Pay a Special Visit to MTA

- Special guest Ted Corcoran is manager of safety for the Irish Railways

By ADRIENNE S. BLYTHE

(Nov. 4, 2003) MTA employees will be treated to a taste of Ireland on Thursday. Special guest Ted Corcoran, president of Toastmasters International, will speak at noon in the MTA Boardroom.



Ted Corcoran speaks at Toastmasters meeting on Thursday at noon.

Corcoran is of special interest to MTA because he is the manager of safety for the Irish Railways. And, as a three time winner of the Toastmasters Humorous Speech Contest, listeners can expect to hear a joke or two during his talk.

Aside from Toastmasters International, Corcoran has been involved with Rotary International and is a former president of the Dublin Rotary Club. He is also a member of the Institute of Transport and Logistics and the Irish Marketing Institute.

As Toastmasters president, Corcoran hopes to use his experience, commitment and enthusiasm to extend the organization worldwide. MTA employees can join him on this quest by becoming involved in MTA's chapter of Toastmasters.

The MTA chapter meets weekly and membership is a great way to improve communication skills, overcome the fear of public speaking, and get to know co-workers.

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- Want to volunteer to help get Metro Buses and Trains ready for when the strike ends? [Click here for the details.](#)

Clear Sailing as Volunteers Clean Buses, Rail Cars; Another Round Set for Saturday

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Nov. 4, 2003) The bright, clear skies and cool breezes were a relief to those who volunteered to clean buses and rail cars for a second weekend.

And the accomplishments showed it. Division maintenance managers reported that volunteers cleaned some 473 buses and rail cars in eight-hour shifts, Saturday and Sunday.

"As with the weekend before, they did excellent work with interior details," said General Manager Jack Gabig of the San Gabriel Valley Sector. "They're a big support to us and we're hoping they'll come out again this weekend."

Volunteers will be needed again this weekend – Saturday, Nov. 8 only – at the Metro Red Line yard and at divisions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15 and 18. Some volunteers will be assigned to clean Metro Rail stations. The deadline for weekend volunteers is close of business, Wednesday, Nov. 5. [Click here to download the excel file sign-up sheet.](#)

On Saturday morning at Division 18, Administrative Analyst Vernisa Mitchell and her partner Buyer Jean Belvin were hard at work on a particularly dirty Line 60 bus that normally carries passengers between Long Beach and Union Station.

"We're cleaning seats, we're cleaning window sills, mopping, cleaning dashboards and ceilings," Mitchell laughed. "I think we should get credit for cleaning two or three buses after cleaning this one."

Nearby, Jim McElhattan of ITS and Teresa Robbins, a Payroll accountant, were finishing up another coach. Robbins was especially impressed with one of the chemicals she was using.

"The graffiti is fun," she said. "With the stuff we have to clean it, you just spray it on and the graffiti wipes right off!"

Looking at his volunteer crew, Division 18 Maintenance Manager Ken Matsuno had high hopes. "They've been doing a great job. I hope to clean 40 to 50 buses this weekend."

Joe Medrano, equipment maintenance supervisor at Arthur Winston Division 5 echoed Matsuno's confidence. With a plan to clean 20 buses on Saturday, a dozen already had been scoured by 11:30 a.m.

Out at El Monte Division 9, seven volunteers were cleaning buses. The division has won a number of awards in the "How You Doin'" monthly contest for bus cleanliness and the crew was taking

[SLIDE SHOW](#)

Click on image to view slide show of bus cleaning efforts.

PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON/BILL HEARD



Rain and volunteers help put the sparkle back in Gateway Division 10's fleet of buses.

particular care with its work.

"This is not just a general 'wipe it down and go,'" said Maintenance Manager John McBryan. "You know the bus is clean when you can walk inside and it smells clean."

Pausing to squeeze out a mop, Jose Miranda of Scheduling said it took him and his partner, Scheduling Supervisor Thang Tran, three to four hours to finish a bus. "This is a lot of work."

One Division 9 volunteer wasn't assigned to clean buses. Dieter Hemsing, director of Inventory Management, had gone back to his roots and was in the bus bay busily performing a front brake realignment.

Along with McBryan, Hemsing got his start as a mechanic at Division 9, working there from 1979 to 1982. Promoted to supervisor, he subsequently worked at divisions 7, 10, 12. "Basically, I've been all around."

Outfitted in a blue overall instead of his customary dress shirt and tie, Hemsing completed the job on one wheel, rolled it across the floor and leaned it against the bus. Then, he positioned the second wheel on the lathe, adjusted the dial and set the machine in motion.

Hemsing watched the machine begin reshaping the brake drum with satisfaction. Exercising once again the skills he had learned those many years ago, he was obviously a happy man.

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MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE

Wednesday, November 5, 2003

Day 23

Mechanics to Vote Friday on MTA's Last, Best, Final Offer

Striking mechanics are scheduled to vote, Friday, on the MTA's last, best and final multi-year contract offer. Results of the balloting should be announced sometime Friday evening. At a news conference, Tuesday, the president of the ATU advised members to vote against the contract and he again demanded that MTA agree to binding arbitration in the 23-day-old labor dispute.

During a separate news conference, MTA Board members repeated their opposition to binding arbitration. Faced with a serious budget deficit, they said MTA cannot offer the mechanics more than the \$30 million in the last, best and final offer for wages and benefits.

The Board members said MTA cannot turn over the negotiations of employee contracts valued at hundreds of millions of dollars to a third party that is not accountable to the taxpayers. If an arbitrator should award the ATU more than is currently on the table, MTA would be forced to cut service and raise transit fares.

As the best option to end the strike quickly, they urged ATU members to ratify the proposed contract. The proposal includes wage increases totaling 5 percent over three years, an immediate cash infusion of \$4.7 million to the ATU Health & Welfare Trust Fund, along with increased contributions to the Fund by MTA.

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MTA Transportation Supervisors Convoy Firefighters to Southland Wildfires

By FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

(Nov. 5, 2003) It wasn't an ordinary drive from one familiar place to another. This drive had a mission – to take firefighters to the California wildfires.

And on the journey to the wild blazes – in places that included Devore, Hisperia, Porter Ranch and San Diego – a volunteer group of MTA transportation operations supervisors would witness scenes like nothing they had ever seen before.

"It was eerie looking, unbelievable," said TOS Marty Brower, who was assigned to the Lake Arrowhead fire. "It looked like a volcano."

"It was black as far as you could see in both directions," said TOS Tom Lapatka, describing the fires burning in the mountains east of San Diego.

Volunteering to drive the buses in addition to Brower and Lapatka were TOSs Robert Nedelcoff, Devinder Pal Singh and Frank Cecere from the San Gabriel Valley Sector office, along with TOSs David Castillo, Collis Harrison and Anthony Salcido of West Hollywood Division 7.

'A little nervous'

"We were anxious to go, a little nervous, because some of us don't drive on a regular basis, so we had to be extra careful," said TOS Nedelcoff. "We are all qualified and capable, but you get nervous when you do something you haven't done for while."

The news broadcasts from the

Into the Flames

Photos by LASD Deputy Eric Jaime



Fire line leaps across mountain road ...



... as MTA convoy transporting firefighters, below, negotiates approach to hot spots in the San Bernardino mountains.



TOS David Castillo and Field Equipment Technician Sean Dunning, above, at base camp

devastated communities didn't discourage the supervisors from their mission of driving the firefighters to the hot spots.

"I was glad I was able to do something, because I saw what was going on – that the fires were getting worse," said Brower. "I was pleased to support the firefighters."

"Everybody was willing. Even though they had the day off, they wanted to go and do what they could to help and assist," said Yvonne Brewer-Smith, San Gabriel Valley Sector assistant transportation manager. "They were willing to put their lives in danger in order to help."

for the San Bernardino fire areas, below.



The convoy to Lake Arrowhead included an MTA bus, cars driven by Sheriff's deputies and sometimes a fire truck. When the vehicles reached Highway 15, they found the road blocked to normal traffic, but police waved them through.

"Where the 15 and 215 merged, I was in awe about how much flame I was seeing and how much burn I had just seen," said Brower. "Everything was burned up to that point."

Swirling ash and smoke

Meanwhile in San Diego County, swirling ash and smoke from the raging fires were making driving challenging for the TOSs as they negotiated the winding mountain roads. Some were as close as 50 yards from the flames.

"The smoke looked like mushroom clouds in the sky," Lapatka said. "It was incredible how much ash was falling down."

Overhead, helicopters shuttled between a lake and the fire, bombing the flames with water. "It was an exciting drive," Lapatka said. "Sometimes the spray would get on the windshield."

As they neared the scene of the fire, tension rose among the firefighters.

"The firefighters were ready to take off, to get goin'," said Lapatka. "You could see the fires burning and all the guys were paying attention. They knew they had their work cut out for them."

Once they had delivered the fresh crews to the Lake Arrowhead and San Diego fires, and had shared a meal with the firefighters, the MTA supervisors had to complete their journeys by driving busloads of worn-out crews back home.

"The firefighters were dead tired," said Brower. "They were falling asleep on the bus. One guy set his gear across the seat and used it as a bed, and he was out."

"As the fire fighters got off the bus they thanked us, but I said, 'I'm the one sending you into harms way, so thank you.'" Lapatka said.

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Working Safely is Important – Even During the Strike

By JOHN CATOE, Deputy CEO

- In this report: '[Comfort tips for computer users.](#)'

This is a difficult time for MTA employees. Many of our normal duties have been interrupted for the sake of maintaining the business during the strike. Whether or not you are engaged in strike-related duties or are carrying out your regular duties, it is important for you to know that I am proud of you all for your professionalism and diligence. Keep up the good work!

Many of you are serving as volunteers to make the buses and trains ready for service when the strike ends. Make sure you use appropriate protection when applying or spraying solvents and cleaners on seats and surfaces. Make sure the windows and at least one door are open for ventilation. Wear the safety glasses and use the gloves provided. Be careful while in the yard, and stay in defined crosswalks.

For those of you working in Telephone Information, please remember that you are working at a new desk and should follow the attached "comfort tips" when setting up the desk for the first time. We often forget to organize our workspace ergonomically so that working is more comfortable and strains are minimized. For example, just making sure that the top of the screen is at eye level should help reduce neck discomfort.

Managers and supervisors should continue to practice field observation and feedback skills. Just because we are on strike does not relieve us of the responsibility to observe and correct safety problems as they arise. Remember that our volunteers are working outside of their normal range of activities; we must keep them safe and show the operating community that we can do it without accident or injury!

Keep working safely.... we need you back tomorrow.

Comfort Tips for Computer Users

Stress and fatigue symptoms from working at computer terminals can be avoided with good posture, good work habits, and adjustments to the equipment on which you work. The following tips should help minimize these symptoms and maximize your personal comfort.

Posture

- All body angles - hips, knees, and elbows - should be at or around 90 degrees.
- Sit up with chair tilted back slightly.
- Your head should be upright, facing forward.

- The backs of your knees should not be in contact with the chair seat with thighs approximately parallel to the floor.
- Your shoulders should be relaxed.
- Your feet should be flat on the floor, or on a footrest.
- Your back should be firmly supported.
- Your arms should rest lightly on the armrests of the chair.
- Your wrists should be straight and flat, not bent backwards.

Equipment

- Your keyboard angle should be adjusted as flat as possible or slightly downhill and the keyboard should be at elbow height.
- Your mouse or other input device should be on at elbow height, next to your keyboard.
- The top of your monitor should be slightly below eye level.
- Adjust your chair and the height of your keyboard so you can follow the above posture guidelines.
- Use a wrist rest if you find it difficult or tiring to hold your wrists level. Never plant your wrists on the wrist rest while you key. Use it to support your palms between keying activities.
- Adjust your monitor so the contrast is high, the brightness low. You may need to adjust it several times during the day, as room light changes.
- Adjust the angle of your monitor to reduce glare or reflection. Try to have your monitor at right angles to windows or long banks of light.
- Keep the screen free of dust and fingerprints.
- If the display is blurry or jittery, report it to your supervisor.

Work Habits

- Use a lighter touch on the keyboard to reduce shock to your wrists.
- Use a document holder if you often type material from other sources. Task lighting may be necessary to read the material.

- Periodically focus your eyes on something at least 20 feet away.
- Take a minute every so often to stretch and vary your routine.
- Periodically change your posture throughout the day.
- Build dynamic work into your day. You should perform 15 min. of non-keying activity for every 2 hours of keying.
- Do not cradle the telephone between your shoulder and neck while keying.

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MTA Library Selected for National Network of Transportation Libraries

By VERONICA TORREJÓN

(Nov. 5, 2003) Recognized as one of the nation's best, MTA's Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library is one of just 15 libraries recently selected to participate in a resource-sharing network.

"It's quite an honor for us and says a lot about the quality of our collection," says Library Administrator Matt Barrett. The network will debut in less than two years.

Known as the Transportation Libraries Union Catalog, the network was developed by the National Transportation Library and will link resources at MTA, UC Berkeley, Northwestern University, the University of Michigan, the Minnesota Department of Transportation and 10 others.

"We are in prestigious company," says Barrett.

Set for unveiling in March 2005, the network will allow users to access one combined on-line catalog for all selected transportation libraries. An existing system of cooperative interlibrary loan privileges would then facilitate the exchange of materials between agencies free of charge.

Lending the collection

The existing system has allowed the MTA to lend its collection to, and to borrow from, other transit agencies, universities, law firms and government agencies in the U.S. and for more than 25 years, Barrett said.

He said the MTA library's size and scope were among the reasons it was selected by the National Transportation Library to participate in the online network.

Currently, MTA has the only transportation library in Southern California. The collection, which Barrett describes as unique, includes approximately 250,000 items including 45,000 books, reports, studies, conference proceedings, plans, maps, and drawings.

Also included in the collection are 10,000 to 20,000 historic photographs from MTA and its predecessor agencies back to 1873. These include horse-drawn trolley cars, the first propane-powered buses from the mid-1950's, and snapshots of buses used in old

PHOTOS: BILL HEARD



Library Administrator Matt Barrett shows an item from the SCRTD collection to Intern Daisy Corona, left, and Monica del Toro, assistant administrative analyst. Barrett displays the Library's most recent book acquisitions for easy reference by employees.



movies.

Last year, the library was expanded to make room for a collection that included almost 3,000 new items. Since then among other things, a new library card system was implemented along with new software and additional DVD and video availability.

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MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE

Thursday, November 6, 2003

Day 24

**SEIU, County Reach Tentative Contract Agreement;
ATU Prepares to Vote on MTA Contract Offer**

With striking mechanics poised to vote, Friday, on MTA's last, best and final contract offer, news reports indicate that negotiators for 53,000 workers represented by Local 660 of the Service Employees International Union have reached a tentative contract agreement with the County of Los Angeles.

The tentative agreement, which must be ratified by SEIU members, is similar in some respects to the contract MTA has offered to the ATU. The tentative agreement calls for no pay increase in the first year of the contract, but includes 2.5 percent wage hikes in the second and third years. The County will increase its health benefits contribution to SEIU in each of the three years.

MTA's contract offer to the ATU includes wage increases totaling 5 percent over three years, an immediate cash infusion of \$4.7 million to the ATU Health & Welfare Trust Fund, along with increased contributions to the Fund by MTA. MTA has urged ATU members to accept its offer by ratifying the contract during Friday's union balloting.

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MTA staff members who plan to attend Mobility 21 must have their supervisor's approval and must complete a registration form, noting their department's budget account code. Forms must be turned in to Jennifer Salamanca, Mail Stop 99-19-3, by Monday, Nov. 10.



- Mobility 21 Summit is Monday, Nov. 17, 2003
- Westin Bonaventure Hotel, 404 South Figueroa St.
- 8:30 a.m. > Opening keynote speakers
- 9:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. > Concurrent breakout sessions
- 11:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. > Lunch and legislative panel
- 1:45 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. > Breakout sessions/closing remarks

MTA, Chamber, Auto Club to Call for United Effort to Secure Transportation Funding

By CLAUDIA KEITH

(Nov. 6, 2003) Traffic congestion and transportation funding will be the focus of the day, Nov. 17, when MTA and the LA Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California, host the second annual Mobility 21 transportation summit.

The summit is aimed at bringing together leaders in the public and private sectors to develop solutions to the region's traffic woes. More than 500 attended the 2002 Mobility 21 summit, approving resolutions on land use, public transit, streets and highways, transportation financing and other topics.

Elected officials, transportation providers, business and labor leaders, as well as academic and community representatives, will gather at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel for *Mobility 21: LA County Moving Together*.

"The need to work together to tackle our very challenging traffic problems has never been greater," said MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky.

He noted that a recent study by the Texas Transportation Institute showed Los Angeles has the worst traffic congestion of any area in the nation – for the sixteenth year in a row.

"Traffic congestion affects our economy, our environment and ultimately our quality of life," said Yaroslavsky. "We need adequate funding from the federal government and Sacramento, and we need to explore local funding sources if we are to build the public transit and highway system needed to address these problems."

Discussion topics

A wide range of topics will be discussed in breakout sessions. These include NIMBYs (Not In My Backyard) and building support for projects, creative local funding ideas, cutting red tape for faster projects, balancing growth and development, building transit through partnerships, getting to and from the airport, and goods movement.

"We face some big challenges ahead that will impact the future of our transportation system," said CEO Roger Snoble. "There will be stiff competition for funding of projects and the coalition will need to show that we are united in achieving a shared vision for Los Angeles County."

Keynote speaker for the opening session will be Jim Parker, vice chairman and CEO of Southwest Airlines, one of the country's leading customer-oriented airlines. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon), a strong proponent of liveable communities and a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, will keynote the afternoon session.

A legislative panel of Los Angeles County Congressional, Senate and Assembly representatives and local city council members will address the session during lunch.

"Transportation and the ability to get to work and move goods is at the heart of our economy," said Chamber President and CEO Rusty Hammer. "We realize the importance of continuing the work we started last year to bring the transportation dollars from Washington and Sacramento that the Los Angeles area is due."

Organizations participating in Mobility 21 will include the Federal Highway Administration, Caltrans, Bay Area Rapid Transit District, Community Redevelopment Agency, USC Annenberg School of Journalism and Loyola Marymount.

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MTA helps employers establish vanpools. Dominic Menton, MTA Employer Programs representative, left, and VPSI representative Sandy Boyle, at right, welcome new vanpool program participants, Boeing's Erna Brooks and Raytheon's Rose Farooq. Vans are leased from VPSI and Enterprise.



PHOTO BY DAVID SUTTON

MTA to Provide 100% Subsidy in Employer Vanpool Lease Program

By DAVE SOTERO

(Nov. 6, 2003) MTA will subsidize the vehicle lease cost for new employer vanpools to help employees get to and from work during the transit strike and beyond.

For a limited time, MTA will pay 100 percent of an 8- to 15-passenger van lease for at least 30 days from the time a new vanpool group begins. Riders will be responsible for their fuel costs unless their employer makes other provisions.

"MTA understands that the current work stoppage has affected many workers' ability to get to and from work," said CEO Roger Snoble. "We apologize for this inconvenience, and are committed to working with employers to make vanpooling a viable transportation solution."

In October, MTA launched "Metro School Pool," a program aimed at helping families form carpools to get their children to school safely and on time. MTA is working with school districts, public, private and charter schools to establish an exclusive database of families interested in forming carpools at specific elementary and secondary school campuses in LA County.

Van lease subsidy

To be eligible for the employer van lease subsidy, worksites must be in LA County and be pre-qualified by MTA. Employers may apply for eligibility as a collective group or as a representative of an industrial complex or multi-tenant building.

Vans must be open to the public and be 60 percent full to receive the vanpool subsidy. Employees must be LA County residents or commute at least 15 miles within the county.

MTA is contacting employers throughout the county about the program. Boeing Satellite Systems of El Segundo is among the program's early participants.

Working with MTA, the company has established a vanpool to transport 10 employees who normally take public transportation between its office and the Metro Green Line Station in Norwalk.

All employer vanpools will be registered on www.ridematch.info, the regional rideshare web database. The web site provides carpool and vanpool match lists, maps and other resources needed for commuters to initiate rideshare relationships.

More than 300,000 rideshare registrants are in the database, with more added every day.

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MTA to Re-Enforce Safety Along Rail Lines When Strike Ends

By VERONICA TORREJÓN

(Nov. 7, 2003) Poised to hit the streets the moment a contract agreement is reached, MTA employees are ready with an outreach blitz aimed at re-enforcing rail safety precautions that may have fallen by the wayside in the wake of the nearly month-long strike.

"The Gold Line wasn't running that long and now that it's not running, people have forgotten about safe behavior on or near the tracks," said Barbara Burns who is heading the Rail Safety Outreach Team coordinating the campaign.

Before the Metro Gold Line was opened, July 26, tracks were virtually train-free and people were accustomed to not paying attention, she said.

In an effort to refresh memories, a campaign similar to one launched last January during testing of the new line will target school-age children and residents within a two-mile radius of both the Metro Blue and Gold Lines.

Door-to-door effort

A team will go door-to-door along the rail lines re-enforcing safety principles and handing out pamphlets.

Educational materials including posters, flyers and placemats featuring safety figures to illustrate key points, will be distributed at all local schools. A video titled, "Look, Listen and Stay Alive" also will be given to middle and high schools.

The existing Rail Safety, Education and Outreach Program, in effect for more than five years, has emphasized safety precautions on and around the train tracks. The program offers tours to schools and community members, complete with a safety presentation and tour of the Metro Red and Gold Lines.

Additional program features include the award-winning "Metro Experience" mobile theater, which features a 3-D simulated train ride.

No Gold Line mishaps

Since the opening of the Metro Gold Line, there have been no reported safety mishaps, something Burns largely credits to the January safety campaign that trained more than 57,000 children and community members.

In the 12 years the Metro Blue Line has operated, 65 people have died in safety-related accidents or suicides, Burns said. Most

PHOTO BY VERONICA TORREJÓN



'Outreach Blitz' - Community Relations interns Christina Granados, left, and Jennifer Mendoza fill boxes with safety education materials, including videos, posters and placemats for schools near the Metro Blue and Gold Lines.

accidents resulted from unsafe behavior primarily by adults, who either tried to beat the trains by circumventing crossing gates or by walking on the tracks. Both violations carry heavy fines.

With trains running approximately every eight minutes, Burns says it is crucial that people stay a safe distance from the tracks.

"You have approximately 45 seconds to be alive or dead," said Burns, referring to the amount of time it takes for a two-car train to pass a stationary landmark. "If someone is on the tracks, there is no time to get out of the way."

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MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE

Friday, November 7, 2003

Day 25

UPDATE: Current Situation, Day 25

With less than half their members in attendance, ATU mechanics voted, Friday, to reject MTA's last, best and final contract offer. The final vote was 1,267 no, 87 yes.

Citing a contract offer that includes wage hikes and increases to benefits, MTA urged the mechanics to reconsider their decision. MTA said the on-going strike is causing tremendous harm to hundreds of thousands of LA County residents, as well as to the families of ATU members who already have lost thousands of dollars in wages.

MTA's contract offer to the ATU includes wage increases totaling more than 5 percent, an immediate cash infusion of \$4.7 million to the ATU Health & Welfare Trust Fund, along with increased contributions to the Fund. MTA repeated that it will not agree to the union's demand for binding arbitration.

ATU Members Voting, Today, on MTA Contract Offer

Striking MTA mechanics are voting, today, on MTA's last, best and final contract offer. The results of the balloting are expected to be released, later today, by ATU leaders.

MTA's contract offer to the ATU includes wage increases totaling more than 5 percent, an immediate cash infusion of \$4.7 million to the ATU Health & Welfare Trust Fund, along with increased contributions to the Fund by MTA. MTA has urged ATU members to accept its offer by ratifying the contract.

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MTA's Response to ATU members' contract vote

Statement by MTA CEO Roger Snoble

November 7, 2003

The MTA is disappointed by the decision of the mechanic's union to reject our last, best and final offer.

The MTA's wages and benefits offer to the mechanics, amounting to more than \$30 million over the contract period, is more than fair, given the economic challenges facing state and local governments.

Our proposal includes:

- more than a 5% wage increase.
- an immediate \$4.7 million to help the union's failing Health and Welfare Trust Fund, with additional contributions of 14%, 15%, and 15% for active employees each of the next three years.
- contributions for retirees under age 65 remain at \$533 and over age 65 remain at \$142 per month.

The MTA will hold the line. There are no additional funds to be put on the table. Further concessions would result in service cuts, fare increases and job losses.

The MTA will not agree to the union's demand for binding arbitration. The Board of Directors cannot abdicate its fiduciary duty to set policy and protect public resources to an unelected, unaccountable arbitrator.

We value our employees and want them back to work.

The MTA urges the union members to reconsider their decision in light of the tremendous harm their strike is inflicting to hundreds of thousands of County residents and to the members and their families who have already lost thousands of dollars in wages.

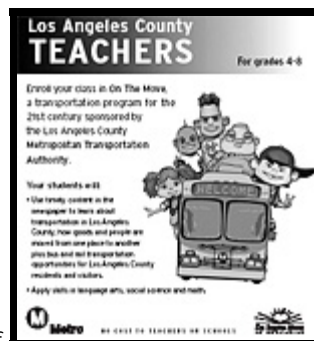
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Hundreds of Schools Enroll in MTA, LA Times "On The Move" Program

BY DAVE SOTERO

(Nov. 7, 2003) Hundreds of LA-area schools with thousands of students have signed up to participate in "On the Move," a transportation curriculum sponsored by MTA and the Los Angeles *Times*.

Since the program launched Oct. 8, a total of 351 schools have registered for the "Times in Education" program. More than 587 teachers – and counting – have enrolled, representing 880 classrooms and 39,000 students.



Program flyers were faxed to every school in LA County

The program's goal is to reach approximately 1,300 teachers and 78,100 students in grades 4 through 8. That goal should be met by January, according to the *Times*.

"We are informed by the 'Times in Education' manager that this is an extraordinary response to a first-year program," says Marta Maestas Mack, project manager and community relations manager for Metro San Fernando Valley. "We look forward to working closely with the enrolled schools to make this valuable education tool a great success for all."

Direct mail campaign

To promote the program, the *Times* faxed program flyers to every school in LA County. It also is conducting a direct mail campaign, and has run half-page ads in the newspaper.

The program was developed to provide an innovative way for MTA to promote its transportation, anti-graffiti and safety education programs while helping students improve their reading, writing and social studies skills.

Students use newspaper articles to learn about the county's transportation system, how goods and people are moved from place to place and about Metro Bus and Rail transportation opportunities.

The program also will include an art and essay contest, with winners selected by MTA judges. Winning students will be honored at an awards luncheon sponsored by the Los Angeles *Times* early next spring. The program runs through March 5, 2004.

MTA plans to introduce a similar pilot program for high school students interested in transportation careers. The program will soon be unveiled at five Transportation Careers Academy Programs throughout the county.

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[More!](#) See Ted Corcoran's Top Ten Tips for Public Speaking



MTA Toastmasters president Sangeeta Patel presents guest speaker Ted Corcoran, right, president of Toastmasters International and safety manager for Irish Railways.

Toastmaster's International President Ted Corcoran Visits MTA

By ADRIENNE S. BLYTHE

(Nov. 7, 2003) Ted Corcoran – president of Toastmasters International – spoke eloquently with his soft Irish accent to MTA employees, Thursday afternoon, and shared some advice on how to be an effective public speaker.

Using humor and personal stories, the Dublin resident discussed his top ten tips for public speaking – the focus of Toastmaster's International. He has been an active member of Toastmasters for

more than 18 years.

Corcoran was introduced by Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis and Andrea Burnside, managing director of operations.

Community Relations Officer Joanne Longsdon gave a presentation about the MTA's rail safety educational and outreach program, one of the best in the country.

Before his speech, Corcoran toured the MTA Headquarters building with Gary Spivack, deputy executive officer for safety. As safety manager for the Irish Railway system, he took great interest in MTA's safety standards and practices.

Members of MTA's Toastmasters chapter were excited to have their international president visit the agency.

"We are very honored to have him here," says Frank Clarke, former MTA chapter president. "There was a much larger turnout than expected, which is great."

Corcoran stressed how important good communication skills are for everyone. "When it comes to rail safety," he stated, "It can be a matter of life or death."

Ted Corcoran's Top Ten Tips for Public Speaking

- Know your audience
- Decide on a theme
- Decide on a purpose
- Select supporting arguments
- Include stories
- Include an opening, a body, and a conclusion
- Practice, practice, practice
- Know the room that you are speaking in

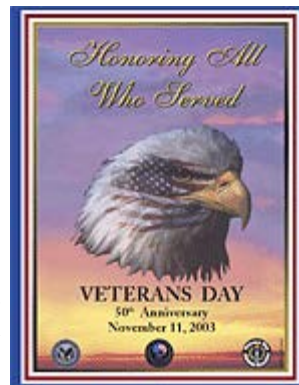
- Use voice and gestures to illustrate your message
- Be brief, be seated, and be done

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MTA to Observe Veterans' Day on Tuesday, Nov. 11

(Nov. 7, 2003) Veterans' Day – Tuesday, Nov. 11 – will be observed as a holiday for all MTA non-contract employees.

Members of MTA unions who plan to work on Tuesday, Nov. 11, should check with their department management for job assignments. Any questions should be addressed to Barbara Lorenzo, 922-4958, or to Rudy Lipscomb, 922-4614, in the Labor Relations Department.



Veterans' Day was originally observed as Armistice Day. It marked the end of World War I on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918. The holiday was renamed Veterans' Day in 1954 to honor veterans of all U.S. wars. At 11 a.m., Nov. 11, many Americans will observe a moment of silence to remember those who fought for peace.

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ACCOLADES

metro.net welcomes reports on achievement, honors and recognition of MTA employees from community, volunteer and professional organizations. Click here to send information to [ACCOLADES](#).



The University of Phoenix Commencement Ceremony, Nov. 8, is just the beginning for graduates Sarah Brown, and Rose Ann Sanchez, who capped their four-year study session with bachelor of science degrees in business this October. Both Brown, a contract administration secretary, and Sanchez, a senior secretary in ITS customer service, began their studies in the fall semester of 1999. What's next for the two hard-working grads? Brown's degree in information systems and Sanchez' degree in e-business means business.

< University of Phoenix grads Sarah Brown, left, and Rose Ann Sanchez at the Forum, where commencement ceremonies were held Nov. 8.

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- [Want to volunteer](#) to help get Metro Buses, Trains and Red Line stations ready for when the strike ends?
[Click here for details.](#)

The Great Train Clean-up

- Volunteers wipe down Metro Red Line Stations, subway trains.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Nov. 10, 2003) - It's a big transit system, but somebody has got to clean it.

It was donuts all around, and a safety talk, before some 15 volunteer mopper/waxers and 10 supervisors lined up at 8 a.m., Saturday, to receive their Personal Protective Equipment – gloves, eyeglasses, and a mask – on the way out of Rail Division 20 offices and into the heart of heavy rail operation. Their mission: Remove gum, trash, food from subway trains and stations. Clean, scrap, sweep, disinfect, polish.

General Services Supervisor Joe Holguin teamed up with Chris Limon, Wayside Systems assistant manager, for pressure washer detail at the Civic Center Station - their first stop for the day.

The pressure washer, mounted on a truck, is a cleaning machine that commands respect. "With the pressure and the heat, it will tear a hole in your shoe," said Holguin.

A garden hose it isn't. The truck carries 250 to 300 gallons of water. A high pressure washing unit that looks and works like a



Above, Joe Holguin, left, and Chris Limon pressure wash Civic Center Station.



Supervisor Steve Mendoza, center, with subway sweepers, from left, Soledad Garcia, Monica del Toro, Daisy Corona, a masked marvel, and Lynn Montano.



Monica del Toro on the TVM keys, above, and Lynn Montano, below, on the trash drums.

high-powered rifle, it has a PSI of about 3,500. "The temp on water gauge gets up to 230; we use it at 190," said Holguin.

"A lot of the stations are accumulating dust, dirt; we have to disinfect and clean the stations. People still come around the stations and eat, and whatever.

"One thing, it gives you a real workout. After 30 minutes, your arms get real tired and you have to hang on to that gun for dear life," he said.

In ordinary times, Holguin explained, all the stations on the Metro Red, Blue Line and Green Line are pressure washed at least once a week. Some stations with especially heavy traffic are pressure washed twice a week.

Residues from the wildfires added to the grime, said Mose Houston, an MOW General Services Supervisor, who along with Steve Mendoza, also a MOW Supervisor, were organizing a work crew of five in the platform and mezzanine areas of the Civic Center Station.

After putting a shine back on the Civic Center Station, the crew headed to Pershing Square Station. "We did the same things," said volunteer Monica del Toro. "We swept, polished escalator rails, cleaned the TVMs – but Pershing Square was twice as dirty. You could eat off the floor of Civic Center Station compared to that one."



Benny Lorenzo, sr. budget analyst, above, and, below, Prabal Sanyal, Diversity and Economic Opportunity rep.



More than half done

In the meantime, 10 other volunteers were continuing the great train clean-up.

The blue-gloved hands of volunteers like auditor Albert Santos and Rail administrative analyst Mercedes Meneses whittled down the stacks of heavy-duty wipes, only to reappear in a swirling motion on soon-to-be-sparkling subway windows.

With over half of the Metro Red Line's 104 cars scrubbed clean, Santos is looking forward to another round. "Our goal is to clean all of them," he said.

The crew of ten polished off six cars on Saturday.

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MTA Seeks Comment on North County Transportation Improvements

By ED SCANNELL

(Nov. 10, 2003) The MTA will host an open house meeting in the Antelope Valley, Thursday, Nov. 13, to solicit public comment regarding transportation improvements for the State Route 138 corridor.

Identified in a Locally Preferred Strategy, the improvements include upgrading the route from I-5 to San Bernardino County and developing a new east-west route to link Antelope Valley with San Bernardino County.

The open house is the latest in a series of meetings that have been held as part of MTA's North County Combined Highway Corridor Study.

Mta wants to develop feasible, cost-effective solutions for alleviating traffic congestion and improving the safety of North County's transportation system.

During the open house, MTA will present several recommendations, including the addition of lanes and conversion of SR-138 into a divided expressway from I-5 to SR-14.

Other recommendations involve completion of improvements to SR-138 between Pearblossom Highway and the San Bernardino County line, and addition of new express bus routes along SR-138 connecting Antelope Valley to Victor Valley and truck climbing lanes to SR-138 in San Bernardino County.

The North County Combined Highway Corridor Study is key to maintaining and promoting the economic vitality of the region, which continues to experience tremendous growth in both population and traffic.

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MTA Open House

Thursday, Nov. 13
5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Fire Station #129
42110 6th Street West
in Lancaster

PHOTO: DAVE SOTERO



CEO Roger Snoble

Snoble Gives Update on Status of Transit Strike

BY DAVE SOTERO

(November 12, 2003) MTA CEO Roger Snoble said this morning that there will be no quick resolution to the 30-day mechanics union strike, and said MTA will "stay the course" in standing by its last, best and final offer to the ATU, the union representing the mechanics.

"We have a ways to go before this gets resolved," Snoble said at this morning's all-hands staff meeting. "There's no short-term

hope for ending the strike."

The transit strike began Oct. 14, stopping most Metro transit service throughout the county. MTA has contracted with municipal bus operators to provide only lifeline bus and shuttle service along county north/south and east-west corridors.

Snoble thanked employees for their stepped up efforts to fill in for striking employees, and urged diligence during this difficult time. He acknowledged that tensions were high and that transit customers have suffered by not having substantial transit service in L.A. County.

"We have to stay the course," Snoble said. "Agreeing to more than the agency can afford will wipe out any service improvements the agency could make in the future."

"There is no more money without hurting our customers," he said.

Snoble said that MTA has asked the unions to give the agency their last offers. MTA has already offered a total of \$92 million to its employees over the next three-year contract period. Snoble said MTA and the UTU -- the bus operator's union with whom MTA is simultaneously negotiating -- were currently \$10-20 million apart in their contract proposals. MTA and the ATU were \$100 million apart in their contract proposals, a differential Snoble described as "pretty preposterous."

Snoble also said the agency could not afford to provide additional benefits for retirees past age 65, when social security normally kicks in. He said mechanics can currently retire after just 23 years of service with full health coverage.

Asked whether binding arbitration would help end the impasse, Snoble said the MTA Board does not support binding arbitration, even with a super majority of the MTA board able to overturn an arbitrator's final decision. He said the ATU could also request that it establish its own super majority vote to also overturn a decision it didn't like, which could again lead to impasse.

Snoble acknowledged that the addition of three new board members previously prohibited from entering into union discussions due to prior union campaign contributions are now pushing for arbitration to resolve the contract dispute.

Snoble said the quickest way to end the strike was for the ATU to accept MTA's last, best and final offer currently on the table and resume work.

A closed-door Board meeting is scheduled this afternoon in downtown Los Angeles to discuss the strike.

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MTA LABOR NEWS UPDATE

Thursday, November 13, 2003

Day 31

MTA Board Proposes Non-Binding Mediation/Arbitration for Health Benefits

The MTA Board of Directors met for several hours in closed session yesterday afternoon regarding the labor strike. MTA's Board Chairman afterwards held a news briefing with reporters and told them that the Board has proposed in concept the idea of submitting its health benefits dispute with striking mechanics to non-binding mediation/arbitration as a way to end the strike.

MTA Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky told reporters that the three-person mediation/arbitration panel could consist of one representative from the mechanic's union, one from MTA plus a health-care expert elected by the other two referees.

In return for the creation of this three-person panel, the MTA would want striking mechanics to return to work. ATU president Neil Silver through the news media said he would need time to study the MTA's proposal.

The MTA Board of Director's next meeting is scheduled for this Friday afternoon at the Hall of Administration.

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MTA Introduces Additional Lifeline Bus Service

- New Metro Rapid Line 754 Emulator contracted service now operating

By DAVE SOTERO

(November 13, 2003) MTA announces the availability of additional contracted lifeline bus service for Los Angeles County commuters during the transit strike.

New bus service, operated by Moore & Associates, will emulate Metro Rapid Bus Line 754 along Vermont Avenue in Los Angeles. Buses will run between Sunset Boulevard and 120th Street, stopping at all Metro Rapid Bus stops.

Fifteen buses will operate from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday. The buses will run at 9-10 minute intervals. The buses connect to the Metro Red Line Special buses (Route A) at the Wilshire/Vermont Metro Red Line Station, Hollywood destinations and hospital facilities at the Vermont/Sunset Metro Red Line Station.

MTA has worked with municipal bus operators and others to provide lifeline North/South and East/West service since the strike began Oct. 14. For a complete listing of lifeline bus services in Los Angeles County, visit MTA's web site at www.mta.net and click on "Transit Service Update" link.

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"We owe it to our customers to get out as much service as we possibly can and that's what we're trying to do." -- CEO Roger Snoble



MTA CEO Roger Snoble, at podium, announces expanded service at media briefing on Friday. Television stations 2/9, 4, 5, 7, 11, 34 and 44, KNX and KFWB Radio, the Daily News, Copley News and City News Service covered today's news conference during which CEO Roger Snoble and DCEO John Catoe discussed plans to introduce additional lifeline bus service on heavily traveled streets. Also pictured, front row, from left, Mark Maloney, Director of Transportation Contract Services, and Deputy CEO John Catoe.

MTA Announces Plans to Place 60 Additional Buses into Service in November

- Newest lifeline service will begin operation Monday, Nov. 17 and will run East/West between LAX and Huntington Park

By DAVE SOTERO

(November 14, 2003) MTA today announced that it plans to expand free "Lifeline" bus services within Los Angeles County in the next two weeks to aid commuters stranded by the transit strike. The agency plans to place 60 additional contract buses in service, eventually bringing the total number of Metro Buses running throughout the county to 390.

"While we are working to resolve the strike as soon as possible, we must continue to provide service to our customers, who continue to suffer tremendous hardships getting to school, work, hospitals and other important destinations," said MTA CEO Roger Snoble. "MTA's core function is to provide transportation services. We have an obligation to serve our customers as much as we possibly can while this work stoppage is in progress."

The newest lifeline service will operate along Florence Boulevard between Los Angeles International Airport and Huntington Park starting Monday, Nov. 17.

As with MTA's existing lifeline bus services, commuters will be able to ride buses free of charge.

Primetime, a private bus operator, will provide 15 shuttle buses capable of carrying 25 passengers each on the route, which

emulates Metro Rapid Bus Line 711. Buses will run every 8-10 minutes from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The new service is designed to make connections with currently operating municipal bus lines and provide new east to west links through the city. Bus service will run through the cities of Los Angeles, Culver City, Inglewood, and Huntington Park.

Three additional contracted bus lines will go into operation within the next two weeks: Line 21 on Wilshire Boulevard from UCLA to Alvarado operating every six minutes; Line 180/181 from Pasadena to Hollywood via Fair Oaks/Colorado to Vermont/Sunset, operating every 15 minutes; and Line 761 on Van Nuys Boulevard from Foothill to the Federal Building in Westwood operating every 10 minutes. All three new lines listed above will operate from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday - Friday and from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the weekends.

A network of lifeline bus lines are currently in the planning stages for implementation should the strike continue that will involve the deployment of 600 contracted buses expected to carry more than 250,000 riders.

Since the strike began Oct. 14, MTA has increased municipal bus services, added point-to-point shuttles, created a free emergency vanpool program for employers, created an exclusive carpool program for schools, and implemented online ridematching via the regionwide www.ridematch.info web site.

For a complete listing of lifeline bus services in Los Angeles County, visit MTA's web site at www.mta.net and click on "Transit Service Update" link.

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By CLAUDIA KEITH

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A wide range of topics will be discussed in breakout sessions. These include NIMBYs (Not In My Backyard) and building support for projects, creative local funding ideas, cutting red tape for faster projects, balancing growth and development, building transit through partnerships, getting to and from the airport, and goods movement.

"We face some big challenges ahead that will impact the future of our transportation system," said CEO Roger Snoble. "There will be stiff competition for funding of projects and the coalition will need to show that we are united in achieving a shared vision for Los Angeles County."

Keynote speaker for the opening session will be Jim Parker, vice chairman and CEO of Southwest Airlines, one of the country's leading customer-oriented airlines. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Oregon), a strong proponent of liveable communities and a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, will keynote the afternoon session.

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CEO Roger Snoble addresses all-staff meeting.



CEO Welcomes End of Strike During All-Staff Meeting

(Nov. 18, 2003) "We're back in operation, thank God!" CEO Roger Snoble told a hastily called all-staff meeting, Tuesday morning. "We're delighted that the strike is over – that we're back to work. It's a new day!"

As Snoble spoke, many union employees were back on the job and buses were completing their runs on city streets. The Metro Red and Blue Lines also were back in partial service – with more rail service planned as the week wears on.



"Our challenge is to get the service back up, serve our customers and make it as smooth as possible and find ways to improve our service," he said.

The CEO asked employees to welcome back returning union workers.

"They are an important part of our family and we need to treat them with respect and dignity as they come back," he said. "We need to work with them and go forward to serve our customers."

The tentative contract agreement with ATU, Snoble said is "one I think we can live with." He gave few details of the settlement, but noted that work still must be done to resolve the Health and Welfare Trust Fund issue.

UTU, TCU agreements

Final agreements have yet to be reached with the UTU, representing bus and train operators, and the TCU, representing clerks and custodians.

Snoble thanked MTA's negotiating team for their months of effort at the bargaining table. He also had praise for the Transit Operations staff.

Deputy CEO John Catoe voiced appreciation for the volunteers who cleaned buses and rail cars, and even Metro Rail stations, over several weekends during the 35-day strike.

Looking ahead, Snoble anticipated "modest growth" at MTA. Among upcoming events are the addition of 45-foot buses, 60-foot articulated buses and more rail cars. He also expects to implement the "hub and spoke" network of bus lines.

"Our future is bright," he said. "We're in one of the few regions of the country where there is economic growth."

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Mobility 21 participants applauded word from Board Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky, during a noontime speech, that MTA and ATU had reached a tentative contract agreement that would bring an end to the 35-day-old transit strike.



PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

Mobility 21 Targets State, Federal Governments for LA's Fair Share of Transportation Funding

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Nov. 18, 2003) Almost 500 local officials, community leaders, businesspeople and others gathered Monday for Mobility 21, an annual transportation summit aimed at bringing more state and federal funding to bear on the increasing congestion of the region's transportation network – highways, airports, railways and seaports.

CEO Roger Snoble challenged Mobility 21 participants to help secure transportation funds for the region.



PHOTO BY DAVE SOTERO

With the State of California deep in a budget crisis and federal transportation funds becoming ever more scarce, speakers at a series of seven seminars looked for creative ways to finance, plan, build public support for and deliver transportation projects.

The second annual Mobility 21 was co-sponsored by MTA, the LA-Area Chamber of Commerce and the Automobile Club of Southern California.

In opening remarks, CEO Roger Snoble noted the gap between LA County taxpayers' contributions to the federal and state governments and what the county receives in transportation funding.

"Unfortunately, that inequity is only growing," he said. "Businesses and residents of Los Angeles County pay \$1.4 billion annually, yet get back less than \$1.2 billion."

'Heart of this struggle'

Federal funding for local transportation projects is drying up and state dollars are uncertain, Snoble said. "Whether this region will be able to turn transportation

blueprints and plans into reality is at the heart of this struggle."

The CEO pointed out successes that had been achieved since last year's summit. Among those were state approval to seek a half-cent sales tax for specific transportation projects and an amendment to the state transportation program that allows construction of the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway and the Eastside Light Rail Project.



Six elementary, middle and high school students were honored during Mobility 21 for their artworks or essays entitled, "What Will LA County Look Like in the Future?" The youngsters were from Ritter and Selby Grove elementary schools, New Vista Middle School, and Franklin and Wilson high schools.

In remarks delivered at the summit's closing session, Snoble laid out three immediate goals for summit participants:

- Ensure that state transportation funds are not used for loans that will never be paid back.
- Work to garner support for voter approval of the half-cent sales tax to fund crucial transportation projects.
- Ensure that Los Angeles County is not left out of transportation appropriations.

"We need to continue the momentum we have achieved here," he said, "by keeping up the pressure in Sacramento and Washington to protect and preserve transportation funding."

Renee Berlin, director of MTA's Southbay Area Team, makes opening remarks at a seminar titled, "Improving Ground Access to LA County Airports."



PHOTO BY DAVE SOTERO

Urging members of the business community to become involved in projects

that “will have tremendous economic benefit” for the region, Snoble said, “Mobility 21 is about harnessing the power of a group interested in the creation of a transportation system that can sustain our quality of life.”

Mobility 21 Staff: Danielle Boutier, Jennifer Salamanca, Rafi Hamparian, Michael Turner, Kimberly Yu, Wilbur Babb, Manjari Patel, Suzanne Handler, Christian Valtierra, Art Henry, Marisa Perez, Kevin Michel, Susan Gilmore, Sally Singleton, David Yale, Mona Jones, Mary Lou Williams, Cindy Shavers, David Mieger, Ray Maekawa, Tim Papandreou, Andrea Karabenick, Doug Kim, Diego Cardoso, Warren Whiteaker, Manuella Abrahamian, Rex Gephart, Larry Torres, Martha Butler, Julianne Fowler, Renee Berlin, Al Patashnick, Kathleen McCune, Holly Balderas, Robert Calix, Luke Cheng, Claudia Keith, Shahrzad Amiri, Marion Colston. Lynda Bybee, Don Ott, Eric Carlson, Jeff Ringsrud and Volker Durre.

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Returning Union Employees Restart Metro Bus and Rail Service

PHOTOS: BILL HEARD

- 80 percent of bus service in operation

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Nov. 18, 2003) Media reports flashing news that the 35-day-old transit strike had ended sent relieved union employees flooding back to their divisions, Monday evening.

Soon the first Metro Buses were back on the streets providing limited service.

Deputy CEO John Catoe estimated, Tuesday afternoon, that 80 percent of bus service was in operation throughout the county. Contracted lifeline bus service will continue until it is replaced by regular Metro Bus service on each line.

Division 10 Operator Pablo Meza, driving a Line 21 bus on Wilshire was glad to be back behind the wheel. What were his passengers saying? "Nothing but good things. Welcome back!"

Metro Rail also resumed partial service between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m.

'Good to see our passengers'

"The sweep trains went out at 4 this morning and we got the stations open," said Melvin Clark, director of Rail Operations. "Operators, supervisors, controllers all were out making sure our employees were welcomed back. It was good to see their faces and to see our passengers."

The Metro Red Line began service on 15-minute headways at 7 a.m. between Union Station and North Hollywood.

The Metro Blue Line started operating at 7 a.m. between Willow Station and 7th and Metro, on 15-minute headways. Test trains will be scheduled, today, on the Metro Green and Gold Lines and Catoe said service probably would be restored on those lines Thursday.

'Waiting to come back'

"I'm very happy!" Metro Blue Line Operator Reyna White enthused as she completed a run at 7th and Metro. "I've been waiting to



Above, passengers board Metro Bus on Wilshire Blvd. Below, Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, left, and Director of Rail Operations Melvin Clark stand among Metro Red Line passengers at Union Station.





Assistant Rail Division
Transportation Manager Douglas
Jackson gives Metro Blue Line
Operator Reyna White a big
"Welcome back!" hug.

come back to work – every day."

Assistant Rail Division Transportation Manager Douglas Jackson noted that early morning Metro Blue Line patronage had been light. "I don't think a lot of people know the system is up and running yet, but by this afternoon, we'll probably be jam-packed."

Meanwhile, subway service seemed to be getting back to normal, with ridership at Union Station approaching normal weekday levels.

"It made me feel good watching the Metrolink crowd coming down to ride the subway," said Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis. "It made our passengers happy to have service again."

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First Day Back

Div. 10 Operators Greeted with Many Smiles, but Few Patrons

- **Mechanics happy to be back, but have a lot of work to do**
- [‘Good to be back,’ Metro Rail Operator Says](#)

By ADRIENNE S. BLYTHE and
VERONICA TORREJON

(Nov. 19, 2003) MTA bus operators returned to work, Tuesday, and most of them could not have been happier. Coming back to work after 35 days was made a little easier by the fact that most of their passengers were happy to see them.

"There has been a positive response. The passengers are glad we are back and they are letting us know it," said Lamont Hopes, who has been a bus operator for three years. "I am glad to be back because a lot of people depend on us."

"There have not been any negative comments," said Operator Theodore Brooks. "But, there is some confusion about how long the free fare will last. I think, right now, the free fare is a good gesture and a lot of passengers agree."

Operator Jason Brown, who co-workers refer to as a rookie, had just a handful of passengers waiting for him on his first early morning stop. "This morning there were just six people waiting for the bus. Usually there is a whole bus load."

Brown has confidence that, as soon as more people realize that bus services are back, his bus will be full again. "One of my passengers was extremely happy because he works in Malibu and had been struggling to get to work." Many bus operators had similar stories.

Mechanics must play catch-up

Division 10 mechanics returned to find extra work ahead of them, but they preferred that to being back on the picket line. For many of them, the biggest concern over the past 35 days was the financial burden.



Operators Denise Johnson and Demonte Mills are happy to be back at work. "I missed my bus," Johnson says.



Taking a lunch break are Operators Francine Sanchez and Frank Escareno.



Operators Frank Escareno and Bernie Carrasco relax following their early morning runs.

‘Good to be back,’ Metro Rail Operator Says

(Nov. 19, 2003) "It's good to be back," Metro Rail Operator Tish Rivera said Wednesday as she stood on the platform at Union Station. "I missed work."

Rivera said all her customers had been positive, which made her return that much better.

Rail Transit Operations Supervisor Cris Medina agreed with Rivera that the customers are happy, even though service is limited until Friday.

"We must begin the team-

"The majority of us love our jobs and we missed it," said Mechanic "A" Jim Shirley, who has been with MTA for six and a half years. "We are very happy to be back at work, especially during the holidays."

Shirley admits that the holidays would have been hard if the strike had not ended. "One more week and I would have been in trouble. I even came close to having to tell my eight-year-old daughter that there would be no Christmas this year."

Anthony Johnson, a mechanic "A" leader, agreed with Shirley that the holidays would have been hard, but he was elated to be back to work. "It will be a few days until things are back to normal out there. We are still sorting through the mess."

The bus operators and the mechanics concur that it was hard to survive during the strike, but none had have any complaints about returning to work.

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building process again," said Medina. "Even through the strike had an effect on our operations, we are still on our way to reaching General Manager Gerald Francis' goal of becoming a world class rail system!"

Award-winning poster by artist Walter Askins celebrates activities in his hometown of Pasadena. The poster was designed for Metro Art's "Neighborhood Posters" series.



Metro Art Poster Design Wins Silver Medal Award

By ADRIENNE S. BLYTHE

(Nov. 19, 2003) A poster designed for Metro Art's "Neighborhood Posters" series was awarded the Silver Medal, recently, at the Los Angeles Society of Illustrators annual awards.

Walter Askins, a native of Pasadena and a highly acclaimed artist, created a watercolor depicting some well-known festivities in his hometown of Pasadena.

The poster, which has been placed in Metro buses and trains, shows a procession of playful characters marching down the street. It is meant to pay homage to the Rose Bowl Parade and the Doo-Dah Parade, both of which are special to those who live in Pasadena.

"I thoroughly enjoyed working with the MTA," says Askins. "Every artist wants to be visible and reach out to new audiences. What better way to do this than to have your art displayed on public transportation."



A version of the poster has been placed in Metro buses and trains.

Askins' poster was one of five in the "Neighborhood Posters" series that Metro Art started this year.

'Different destinations'

"The goal of the project is to celebrate different destinations in the LA area," says Susan Gray, senior public arts officer. "Each artist was allowed to choose their own destination and it worked out well that we got a nice range all over the county."

After Metro Art announced the competition, 99 artists applied by submitting resumes, cover letters and ten slides of their artwork. A committee of three MTA employees narrowed it down to ten artists to develop their proposals.

Lynda Bybee, deputy executive officer, Community Relations, Elizabeth Bain, graphic designer, and Jorge Pardo, transportation planning manager, selected five designs to be displayed in MTA buses and rail cars.

"The project has been a great success, so we plan to continue it next year and we will aim to cover different parts of LA," says Gray. "We have received many calls from the public and other agencies inquiring about the art work, which is a good sign."

A copy of Askins' award-winning poster will be on display at the Burbank Creative Arts Center beginning in January. The original artwork of all five designs is now a part of Metro Art's portable collection and will be displayed at MTA Headquarters.

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35 Procurement Staffers Celebrate Completion of UCLA Courses



35 Procurement Staffers Celebrate Completion of UCLA Courses

By LISA HUYNH

(Nov. 19, 2003) Thirty-five members of MTA's Procurement staff participated in formal graduation ceremonies, Nov. 14, marking completion of a two-year certification program sponsored by UCLA.

Graduates received certificates of completion in either the Purchasing and Materiel Management Program or the Government Contract Management Program. Both programs were conducted on-site at MTA from August 2001 to September 2003.

"The caliber of the individuals in the program that I was involved with, had the highest level of professionalism and integrity that I've ever experienced," UCLA Instructor Robert New told the graduates. "This was a huge commitment on behalf of MTA and the graduates. I was honored to be part of this program."

Ted Montoya, deputy executive officer, Material Management, and a graduate of both programs, was master of ceremonies at a luncheon celebrating the graduates' hard work and dedication.

Ed Velasquez, a vice president of the National Contract Management Association, presented a letter of recognition to the graduates from NCMA National President Gary Zura. Graduation speakers included Lonnie Mitchell, executive officer, Procurement.

In addition to Montoya, Buyer Frank Clarke of Purchasing also completed both UCLA programs. Graduates committed themselves to participate in weekly classes, completing eight 12-week courses over the two-year period.

Senior Contract Administrator Vimol Katkaphan, who was one of 35 graduates, coordinated the graduation ceremony.

"I think it's an excellent program," said Katkaphan. "It's a great opportunity to grow with the company. What better way to develop your career than here at MTA?"

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MTA TRANSIT SERVICE UPDATE

Wednesday, November 19, 2003

- **ATU members ratify contract**
- **All Metro Bus lines are in full operation**
- **Rail service will resume on the Metro Green and Gold Lines at 4 a.m., Thursday. More service is being added on the Metro Red Line subway and the Metro Blue Line.**
- **Regular operation on all Metro Rail lines begins Saturday.**

News reports indicate that ATU members today ratified the contract agreement with MTA. The MTA Board is scheduled to vote on the agreement at a Dec. 4 meeting. It calls for mediation and arbitration on the still-unresolved Health and Welfare Trust Fund issue.

As of Wednesday morning, all Metro Bus lines were in operation throughout the county. MTA estimates that nearly 100 percent of its buses are now back in service.

Service on the Metro Green and Gold Lines will begin at 4 a.m., Thursday, and will continue until 9 p.m. Green Line trains will run at 15-minute intervals during peak periods. Gold Line trains will run at 20-minute intervals all day.

Service on the Metro Red Line subway and on the Metro Blue Line between the Long Beach Transit Mall and downtown Los Angeles will start at 4:30 a.m., Thursday, and continue until 9 p.m.

Blue Line trains will operate at 12-minute intervals during peak periods.

Red Line trains will operate at 8-minute intervals between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont during peak periods. Service to Wilshire/Western and to North Hollywood will operate at 16-minute intervals.

Fares

Rides on all Metro buses and trains will be free through Saturday, Nov. 22. October and November transit passes – except weekly or semi-monthly passes that expired on or before Oct. 15 – will be honored on all Metro buses and trains through Dec. 31. Beginning Nov. 24, those customers who do not have an October or November pass may buy a November pass for use in December.

Patrons who purchased semi-monthly passes dated Oct. 16 – 31, weekly passes dated Oct. 12 – 18 or October EZ Transit Passes for MTA travel only are eligible for an even exchange or refund.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Field Equipment Technician George Perez prepared this article about his colleagues in the Fleet Maintenance and Support Department.

"These guys have been working 12-plus hours a day, seven days a week during the strike to keep the buses ready when the strike ends. I'm very proud of these guys and the work they do." --Pat Astredo, Assistant Manager, Fleet Maintenance and Support

Field Techs and Sector Staff Jump into Action During Strike

By **GEORGE PEREZ**

(Nov. 20, 2003) Days before the job action by the mechanics union, MTA Field Equipment Technicians were placed on alert and notified of a special mandatory meeting. Plans were drawn up to provide technical and operational support to all the sectors.

As in past strikes, the Field Techs have provided critical support to keep the fleet ready for rollout when an agreement is reached. Thirteen Field Techs were assigned to all the Bus divisions to assist in making the buses ready for the end of the strike.



The origin of the Field Techs goes back a long way. Prior to 1976, the Metropolitan Transit Authority had a group of exceptional mechanics assigned to do nothing but repair bus breakdowns on the road. These union men were given the name of Mechanical Road Supervisors.

Field Techs Sean Dunning, pictured above, and Manny Zaragosa were called upon to escort several buses full of firefighters to San Diego and to Hesperia during the fires that plagued California. Below, Zaragosa in rig leads convoy from the Fire Academy staging area.

By 1983, the Field Techs had become non-contract employees, the name was changed to Field



Equipment Technicians and more had been added to the department. Since then, they have been called upon to do keep our bus fleet in motion by doing quick troubleshooting and repair on the road.

Water up to their calves

During the "Great El Nino" year, the Field Techs worked in water up to their calves at times while replacing wiper blades or trying to fix a defroster or perhaps a water leak.

Some have been commandeered by law enforcement agencies in time of a social emergency. Two of our units

assisted the Southgate and Bell police departments during the civil unrest after the World Cup soccer match was played in the U.S. On another occasion one of our units escorted the National Guard back to San Diego during the Rodney King episode.

Field Techs also provided support for the Democratic National Convention and conducted training for Sheriff's deputies and LAPD SWAT units on methods of disabling a bus.

Today, Field Techs are being called upon to keep the fleet ready by doing what they do best. Just recently Field Techs Manny Zaragosa and Sean Dunning were called upon to escort several buses full of firefighters to San Diego and to Hesperia during the terrible fires that plagued California.

'Doing what we have to do'

As Field Tech Steve Mendoza put it, "We're doing what we have to do in order to have a safe and reliable bus for our drivers and the public when it's all over."

The sector staff at Division 9, and all the sectors have done a great job working as a team during these trying times. Many employees from Gateway also stepped up to the challenge by working on weekends with sector personnel to clean the interior of the buses.

The ash from the fires really did a job on the buses, but our volunteers did a beautiful job in getting our fleet clean again.

Now that the strike is over, we can look back and feel pride in how everyone responded to keep the ship afloat till we made land.

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MTA Playwright's Work Produced by Los Angeles Theater

By ADRIENNE S. BLYTHE

(Nov. 20, 2003) David Lee Lindsey, MTA Senior Program Analyst, recently scored a big hit on the small stage. *Haints, Conjurmen, and Leaving*, a play written by Lindsey, just wrapped up a six-week-long production by the Towne Street Theatre.



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE BLYTHE

MTA's David Lee Lindsey has created four theater works, and is hoping to write more.

The title leaves many wondering what the play is about. "The play is about African-Americans in Mississippi in the 1940s. It is very spiritual and mythical," explained Lindsey. "It is more lyrical than any of the other plays that I have written."

All of the words in the title of the play are derived from the era in which it is set. *Haints* are ghosts, *conjurmen* are spiritual and herbal healers, and *leaving* refers to the migration of millions of African-Americans from the South to the North and West

"The story was inspired by my family who moved to California from Mississippi when I was five," said Lindsey. "I was immersed in the history of this culture my whole life because everyone around me was from the south."

Although this play has some definite links to his family and their experiences, most of his plays end up far from anything related to him. "I tend to start my plays with a life experience, but by the time I am done, I am the only one who can see the relationship," said Lindsey.

Inspired by writing class

Lindsey started writing when he was inspired by a high school writing class. The next summer he decided that he would write a 300 page novel. "At the end of the summer," said Lindsey, "I had a whole page and a half."

But he started writing again in college at Cal State Long Beach. He discovered that his real talent was with dialogue, so he decided to focus on plays.

Besides writing plays, Lindsey also writes poetry. "Writing poetry helps you gain control on your words and it helps you develop your style," explained Lindsey.

Although he enjoys writing poetry, his focus remains on his plays. He would like to try a screenplay in the future. He would also like to produce one of his own plays, but he is not interested in casting or directing.

One of the things that keeps Lindsey writing plays is the shortage that he sees when it comes to entertainment for African-Americans. "There really is a drought, unless you are talking about music or the occasional film that comes out," said Lindsey. "There is a great market for other forms of entertainment in LA and I would like to

see this audience grow.”

This is the second time that *Haints, Conjuremen, and Leaving* has been produced. Lindsey has also had two other plays produced: *A Zombie Tale* and *Avenging Angel*. His favorite play, *A Dream Gone Wild*, has not been produced yet.

“You never know when another play is in the works,” Lindsey said.

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MTA SERVICE UPDATE

Thursday, November 20, 2003

**Metro Bus Service Back to Pre-Strike Levels;
Metro Rail Reopens Service on Green, Gold Lines**

(Nov. 20, 2003) Only one day after members of the ATU voted to ratify a new labor agreement, Metro Bus service is operating under normal conditions. All Metro Rail lines will operate Thursday, Nov. 20, and Friday, Nov. 21, from their normal start of service to 9 p.m. only.

Metro Green Line

The Metro Green Line will operate at 15-minute intervals between Norwalk and El Segundo until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

Metro Gold Line

The Metro Gold Line will operate at 12-minute intervals between Union Station and the Sierra Madre station until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

Metro Red Line

The Metro Red Line will operate at 8-minute intervals between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 10-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time. The subway will operate at 16-minute intervals on the Wilshire/Western and North Hollywood branch lines until approximately 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

Metro Blue Line

The Metro Blue Line will operate at 12-minute intervals between the 7th/Metro station in downtown LA and the Long Beach Transit Mall until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

Fares

MTA and participating municipal transit operators will continue to honor October and November EZ Transit Passes through the end of this month. December EZ Transit Passes go on sale Nov. 25. Municipal operators will not honor MTA October or November monthly, semi-monthly or weekly passes after midnight Saturday, Nov. 22.

MTA will continue to honor its October and November passes – except weekly or semi-monthly passes that expired on or before Oct. 15 – through Dec. 31, 2003. Beginning Nov. 24, those customers who do not have an October or November pass may buy a November pass for use in December. Patrons who purchased semi-monthly passes dated Oct. 16 – 31 or weekly passes dated Oct. 12 – 18 are eligible for an even exchange or a refund.

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Employer Programs team members honored by Metrolink are, front row from left, Valerie Rader, Teresa Milliken, Aileen Laudau and Sarah Zadok. Back row, Al Rangel, left, and Robert Lew, right, are joined by Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond and Employee Programs Manager David Sutton.



PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON

MTA Team Honored for Increasing Metrolink's Corporate Sales

By VERONICA TORREJÓN

(Nov. 20, 2003) A team of MTA Employer Programs account executives was honored, today, for their role in significantly increasing corporate sales of Metrolink passes this year.

A partnership between MTA's Employer Programs -- which is primarily geared toward promoting ridesharing programs like carpools and vanpools -- and Metrolink has expanded to include about 48 new companies that have signed up to make Metrolink passes available at their work sites.

But for some MTA honorees, the real reward is the overall benefit to commuters and the environment.

"The more people we have riding transit, the less air pollution we have," Accounts Supervisor Sarah Zadok said. "It also means less stress for employees who can arrive to work on time."

Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond agreed. "In the end we all win, the customers, the businesses, employees. I think it's really an example of what good can come from a partnership between two agencies."

\$100,000-plus increase

With an additional 60 Metrolink passes sold through the MTA team's effort this month, the total increase in revenue this year is well over \$100,000 and expected to increase significantly next month, Zadok said.

"This partnership is indicative of the types of programs MTA looks for to help alleviate traffic congestion and air pollution," said David

Sutton, Employer Programs manager.

In the last eight months, company participation in the program has increased 25 percent, said Metrolink Corporate Relations Administrator Edward Hargrave.

"It's phenomenal," he said, " We didn't expect this successful of a partnership, this great a growth, this great enthusiasm and support."

To mark the success of the program, Metrolink executives honored Zadok and her team of five account executives, today, at an appreciation luncheon at Ciao Italian Restaurant.

"We have done really well to promote Metrolink," she said. "I feel very proud of my staff and lucky to supervise a crew of individuals who have such a passion for our community and regional transportation goals."

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CEO Roger Snoble, Chief of Staff Maria Guerra, front row, and Deputy CEO John Catoe, back row, right, sign up for MTA Holiday Gift Giving. The Gift Giving Task Force, coordinated by Bessie Rush-Johnson, at left, includes 30 MTA employees who have volunteered to collect and distribute gifts to Skid Row kids this holiday season. PHOTO: LISA HUYNH



The Gift that Keeps on Giving

By LISA HUYNH

(Nov. 21, 2003) The Task Force for the 8th annual Fred Jordan Missions holiday Gift Giving Drive is working on a new goal this holiday season – to collect 9,000 gifts for needy families.

The Task Force, which includes about 30 volunteers from MTA, seeks donations of new, unwrapped gifts that can include blankets, toy cars and dolls, stuffed animals, games, back packs and canned goods.

Bessie Rush-Johnson has been coordinating the toy drive for eight years.

"MTA has been real supportive of me doing this each year," says Bessie Rush-Johnson. "I love doing this. Just knowing that I've helped someone is enough for me. It's the joy of giving back to the community that keeps me going."

Employees who have not picked up their holiday gift tags can do so by visiting the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department on the 13th floor of the Gateway building. Employees can drop off the gifts to the coordinators by Thursday, Dec. 11 at 12:30 p.m.

Gift Drive coordinators will visit MTA operating divisions that don't conduct their own toy drives beginning Nov. 24 to distribute gift tags. The gifts must be attached to the unwrapped gift.



Mark your calendar:

Employees can sign up now and pick up a holiday gift tag in the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department on the 13th floor of the Gateway building. Employees have until 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11, to drop off gifts to the coordinators.

The gifts will be delivered to the Fred Jordan Mission in downtown Los Angeles on Friday, Dec.12, at 10 a.m.

The Task Force is seeking volunteers to distribute gifts on Sunday, Dec. 21, and work crowd control at the mission. The shifts are from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. For those who are interested, please contact Bessie Rush-Johnson at (213) 922-2629.

"The toy drive is a real fun thing that we do every year, says CEO Roger Snoble. "It's rewarding to give back. This event is real special for us and we're very happy to be a part of it."

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Composite of two photos provided by LASD Lt. Mike Parker shows position of broadsided limousine after collision with Gold Line train on Thursday afternoon.



Train vs. Limo

Passengers Unharmd in Metro Gold Line's First Accident

By Lt. Mike Parker

Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau Report

(Nov. 21, 2003) Nearly 12 hours after service on the Metro Gold Line service had resumed following the transit strike, a collision involving a limousine and a slow-moving train occurred at Avenue 52 and Marmion Way in Highland Park. It was the first accident since the Metro Gold line opened on July 26.

The limousine occupied only by the driver drove through a red traffic signal, Thursday afternoon at 4:09 p.m., causing a collision with a westbound Metro Gold Line train.

The Gold Line train was traveling less than 20 mph towards Union Station when the limousine attempted to pass in front of the slow moving train.

Metro Gold Line Sheriff's Deputy Jose Belmares, who was a block away at Avenue 52 and Figueroa when the collision occurred, arrived within seconds. Numerous deputies arrived shortly thereafter, as did MTA Rail Manager Duane Martin and Sheriff's Lt. Pat Jordan.

There were no injuries on board the train. The approximately 40 passengers were transferred to another train and left the scene within 30 minutes. Single tracking rail service resumed within 30 minutes of the collision and full service resumed in about an hour.

The driver of the limousine complained of pain to his chest and back and suffered burns on his right leg from hot coffee.

Broadsided by the train, the limousine sustained major damage. The damage to the train coupler was listed as moderate.

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MTA SERVICE UPDATE

Friday, November 21, 2003

Metro Rail Resumes Normal Operating Hours, Saturday

(Nov. 21, 2003) The Metro Rail system will resume normal hours of operation effective Saturday, Nov. 22. The Metro Red, Blue, Green and Gold Lines will be in service through the standard end of operating day, which varies by line.

All Metro Bus lines are operating normal schedules.

Metro Red Line

The Metro Red Line is operating at 8-minute intervals between Union Station and Wilshire/Vermont until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 10-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time. The subway is operating at 16-minute intervals on the Wilshire/Western and North Hollywood branch lines until approximately 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

Metro Blue Line

The Metro Blue Line is operating at 12-minute intervals between the 7th/Metro station in downtown LA and the Long Beach Transit Mall until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

Metro Green Line

The Metro Green Line is operating at 15-minute intervals between Norwalk and El Segundo until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

Metro Gold Line

The Metro Gold Line is operating at 12-minute intervals between Union Station and the Sierra Madre station until 6:30 p.m., today, and at 20-minute intervals until the 9 p.m. closing time.

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North
Los
Angeles
Division
3 fleet
was
ready
for
rollout.



Riders Applaud MTA's Return to Regular Service

By LISA HUYNH

(Nov. 25, 2003) Many passengers, relieved to see Metro service rolling again, welcomed operators back with open arms – and even some applause.

Central City Division 1's Juan Herrera, who has been an operator for more than three years, said his passengers were happy and thankful to see him.

Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens said the operators received good reactions from the riders.

"I went out to some of the bus stops Monday night and didn't hear anything negative," said Owens. "One operator said his passengers started clapping when they saw him. So, it's been good."

Crossroads Division 2's Jose Ramos, who was the first operator to report back to work at his division, said the passenger turnout has decreased significantly. "Before the strike, I had bus loads of people."

99 percent rollout

North Los Angeles Division 3 had a 99 percent rollout on the second day back from the strike and a 100 percent rollout on Thursday.

"The strike was longer than anyone anticipated it would be, but morale is high," said Transportation Manager Dan Frawley. "Operators say most of our customers are happy to see the buses out there again. It's great to be back in business."

Meanwhile mechanics and service attendance had plenty of catch-up work to do.

"There's a lot more work to be done because these buses have been sitting idle for long time, said Division 1 Mechanic Gilbert Hernandez. "These CNG buses are real particular. They have to be maintained properly."

Crossroads Division 2 was only able to run 72 percent of its service on Tuesday.

"We have a lot of buses that aren't working right now, said Maintenance Manager Donell Harris. "It'll probably take two to three weeks to get caught up in inspections and regular repairs."

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Twenty employee volunteers handed some 7,500 coupons and booklets to riders at 12 Metro Bus and Metro Rail locations throughout the city.



PHOTO BY JUAN OCAMPO

A Sweet 'Welcome Back' for Metro System Patrons

(Nov. 25, 2003) MTA welcomed many of its patrons back, Monday, with a sweet treat – coupons for a dozen free Krispy Kreme doughnuts – and a booklet of dining, travel and entertainment coupons.

Twenty employee volunteers handed some 7,500 coupons and booklets to riders at 12 Metro Bus and Metro Rail locations throughout the city.

"Everybody liked the coupons," said Martin Buford, senior account executive, Employer Programs. "They said things like, 'I'm glad the strike is over. It makes life easier for me now.'"

The Krispy Kreme coupons provide transit customers with a free dozen doughnuts for every dozen they purchase. The booklets include coupons for the Catalina Express, AMF bowling and dozens of restaurants throughout the region.

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Returning Employees Put Metro Rail Lines Back On Track

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Nov. 26, 2003) Resuming their jobs last week after 35 days on the picket line, Metro rail personnel found that hard work, dedication and cooperation were key elements in getting the wheels rolling once again.

Rail Activation Schedules Manager Bruce Shelburne welcomed his two rail schedulers back last week. Together, the three worked to create a timetable for the start-up of train service.

"We were making decisions on scheduling the day before the trains ran," he says.

Although the limited number of available operators and train cars initially posed a challenge in scheduling, a sense of normalcy has since been regained.

"Everybody's chipping in and we're getting the trains down the track," Shelburne says.

Busy as before

Life on the Metro Gold Line appears to be as busy as it was before the strike began. However, the first few days back could have been a lot more hectic if operators and maintenance specialists hadn't tied up a few loose ends before leaving work several weeks ago.

Because of their decision to complete inspections and open work orders before joining the picket line, the group transitioned smoothly into coming back to work.

"It was almost as if they came back and there was no real break," says Metro Gold Line Rail Fleet Services Manager Tom Lingenfield. "Everyone came back with such a great attitude, it was almost as if it didn't really happen."

Metro Gold Line Maintenance Specialist Ernie Campos returned to work on Wednesday and immediately began preparing cars for full operation. He has noticed a general feeling of relief among co-workers that the days of the strike are behind them.

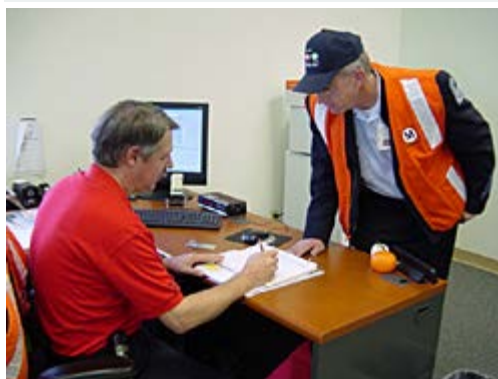
"Here at the Gold Line, everyone is in good spirits," he says.

At the Metro Blue Line, Rail Fleet Services Manager George Kennedy

PHOTOS: ADRIENNE FIGUEROA



Metro Gold Line Maintenance Specialist Bruce Fitzgerald performs a car inspection on the second day of his return to work. Below, Rail TOS Thomas Medlock and Metro Gold Line Operator Dave Wilson discuss the results of the daily report sheet. "I'm glad to be back," Wilson says. "The job is much better than being on the outside."



and Rail Fleet Services Assistant Manager Tony Precie teamed up with returning employees to bring the car inspections up to date and work on the line's vandal shields.

'Working in concert'

"We have been working in concert to get the service running," Kennedy says. "All of our employees are enthusiastic and glad to be back and we're happy to have them back."

On the Metro Green Line, operators and managers ran several test trains on the main line, last week, in preparation for regular service.

"I told every operator I saw that I was extremely happy that they're back," says Metro Green Line Transportation Manager Hector Guerrero.

After spending some time on the Metro Red Line platforms last Tuesday, Guerrero found that he was not the only one who missed his employees.

He met customers who told stories of nightmarish traffic scenarios since the strike began and expressed their gratitude for the recovery of the rail system

"They're very receptive to us coming back," Guerrero says. "They've been waiting for this for awhile."

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Safety 'Blitz' Targets Residents Along Light-Rail Lines

By VERONICA TORREJÓN

(Nov. 26, 2003) MTA safety ambassadors took to the streets again, last week, in an outreach blitz that targeted almost a quarter of a million children and residents along the Metro Blue and Gold Lines.

The goal of the campaign was to reacquaint residents with safety precautions that may have been forgotten over the course of the five-week strike, said Barbara Burns who is heading the Rail Safety Outreach Team.

When the strike ended Nov. 17, Burns and her staff along with eight safety ambassadors sprang into action. They distributed literature to some 175,000 students at almost 180 schools within a half-mile radius of the light-rail lines.

"We wanted to raise awareness of how to be safe in areas near the Metro Blue and Gold Lines," said Burns. "It was especially important during the strike, when the trains were not running. Now that the strike is over we plan to continue the outreach program."

The need for safety outreach programs was underscored only 12 hours after service was restored when a limousine drove through a red traffic light and collided with a Metro Gold Line train in South Pasadena.

The overall campaign is part of a Rail Safety, Education and Outreach Program in existence for more than five years. The program features public service announcements, safety presentations and tours designed to emphasize safety precautions on and around the train tracks.

" We've made a commitment to innovations in this area in order to be successful in our safety programs," said Deputy Executive Officer of Community Relations Lynda Bybee who is responsible the safety outreach program and other community relations teams.

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Valley Residents View Landscaping Plans for Metro Rapidway

By NED RACINE

(Nov. 26, 2003) Filling meeting rooms with landscape renderings and live plants, an MTA Community Relations team held its first two meetings, last week, to gather public feedback on proposed landscape plans for the San Fernando Valley Metro Rapidway.

Construction of the Metro Rapidway, a dedicated busway that will carry passengers between Warner Center and the North Hollywood Metro Rail station, began in September 2003.

The Metro Rapidway team met with Van Nuys and Lake Balboa residents, Nov. 17, to solicit comments on landscaping plans for stations, corridors, the bikeway and pedestrian way along the 14-mile project.

Attendees viewed some 30 renderings and many completed a comment form. A five-foot by ten-foot arrangement highlighted plants representative of the preliminary landscape designs.

Residents' comments will be compiled to guide the Metro Rapidway's Landscape Advisory Committee in making recommendations for the final design. City Council members whose districts fall along the Metro Rapidway's route selected the Committee members.

At the Nov. 20 meeting at Pierce College, residents from Encino, Reseda, Tarzana, and Woodland Hills viewed architectural renderings and aerial photographs of the busway, bike path, and pedestrian path and discussed the project with the landscape architect, project management team, and planning manager.

The next two meetings will be held Dec. 3 and Dec. 6.

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Devon Brown, of MTA's Community Relations Team, describes the plants contained in a representative patch of landscaping along one section of the Metro Rapidway. Below, Panorama City resident Steven Hernandez talks with Kathleen Sanchez of MTA's San Fernando Valley/North County Area Team about the plant palette from which the preliminary landscape plans were taken. The live plants behind them were brought to the meeting to help residents visualize the scale of the plantings.

