

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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