

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.

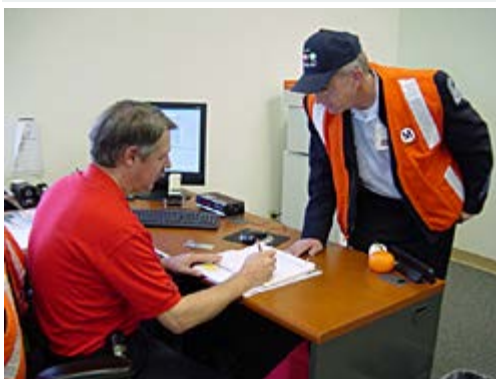
"Here at the Gold Line, everyone is in good spirits," he says.

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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