

Metro Gold Line's 'Ride to the Roses' Thrills Revelers, Parade-goers and Rose Bowl Fans

PHOTOS BY GAYLE ANDERSON



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- **Metro volunteers lined the route to Pasadena with safety, courteous assistance and a lasting good impression.**

By GAYLE ANDERSON

January 7, 2004 - It didn't rain on the Rose Parade and the USC Trojans mercilessly trampled the visiting Michigan Wolverines. But it was the Metro Gold Line that scored the most points with parade-goers, Rose Bowl fans and float reviewers attending New Year's Day festivities in Pasadena.

Estimates from volunteer counts and observations at key stations indicate "upwards of 30,000" above and beyond the normal daily ridership during the crucial 24-hour period that began with the start of revelry on New Year's Eve and concluded with the departure of Rose Bowl fans on New Year's night.

"We couldn't provide such an excellent level of service without the tremendous support of all Metro employees involved in this event, especially those who volunteered their time" said Bruce Shelburne, Rail Scheduling Manager who coordinated the Gold Line rides to the Roses.

The Volunteers were tasked with providing platform safety to assisting customers with directions and information to sorting out confusion with TVM machines and the fare changes.

Some 90 volunteers were used to staff the various posts at Union Station and five Pasadena Metro Gold Line

Metro Faces in the Crowd



stations from 8 p.m. on New Year's Eve to 8 p.m. on New Year's Day. Nearly 30 volunteers lined up on Friday and Saturday to assist visitors to the float exhibit in Victory Park, a shuttle hop away from the Sierra Madre Villa Station.

From standing vigil at Union Station to crowd control as riders emerged from Del Mar and Memorial Park stations to braving the elements in the middle of the freeway at Lake, Allen and Sierra Madre Villa stations, the volunteers did it all.

"Volunteers were very important for this event," said Shelburne. "They made a positive and lasting impression on the customers who may have been using the Metro Gold Line for the very first time."

The Metro Gold Line's first New Year's experience was a collage of headways, events, fans, riders and a surreal time warp that brought a new situation with every changing hour:

Thinking ahead - Anticipating some cold weather chills and middle-of-the-night blues, the Community Relations Department crafted a goodie bag of Metro cheer that was presented to each volunteer at a pre-event information session. Each bag was a self-contained support system of cough drops, wool caps, gloves, handi-wipes, and energy bars.

8 p.m. - Party-goers and late night revelers began to arrive on the Metro Red Line at Union Station and many other stations on the rail system, anxious to ring in the New Year on Colorado Boulevard.

1 a.m. - The last of the campers, toting sleeping bags and pillows, compete for the last bit of pavement along the parade route.

2 a.m. - People are still going home from the Colorado Boulevard celebration. Quite an interesting crowd: It was not unusual to see customers decked out in everything from formal attire to pajamas. The trains are still very lively, and decorated with confetti, streamers and silly string.

4 a.m. - The trains have been cleaned and parade-goers throng to Pasadena on the Gold Line from the Metro Red Line and Metrolink trains with wide-eyed anticipation. To many, it appears, the Gold Line is a direct route through roadblocks of all-night camping, impossible parking and prohibitive grandstand seating that stopped all intentions of attending the parade in previous years.

8 a.m. - Everyone is at the parade by now. Volunteers at Metro Gold Line stations take a coffee break.

10 a.m. - Surprise! Here come the Rose Bowl fans in Michigan sweatshirts and USC cardinal and gold Trojan-wear, coolers and pennants in hand. Thousands get off

Venice Division Mechanic "A" Leader Narendra Desai greets Planning Mgr. Art Henry at Memorial Park Station. Below, Copy Services' Donain Martinez and RRC Mechanic "A" Julio Molina.



Rita Malone and Gwen Noyes direct arrivals at Union Station. Below, Sylvia Pantoja helps a patron select fare at the TVM.



Carl Velasquez, above, and Teresa Robbins at Del Mar Station.

trains at Memorial Park and Del Mar and walk the short distance over to the bus shuttles waiting at Pasadena Ave. and Union St. to transport fans to the Rose Bowl Stadium.

10:30 a.m to noon - The parade ends, everybody wants to go home or to the game or to Victory Park to see the floats. Metro buses are used to supplement the trains leaving Memorial Park and Del Mar. The volunteers at Sierra Madre Villa station, who have been standing in the middle of the freeway since before dawn, are ready with smiles, "this way" signs, and directions. Meanwhile, the Rose Bowl fans continue to arrive.

The rest of the day –Visitors and day-trippers take the Metro Gold Line back and forth to home, Colorado Boulevard and Victory Park.

2 p.m. – The football game starts. The prospect of thousands of returning Rose Bowl fans creates significant concern. Metro Rail, Bus and Sheriff personnel huddle to discuss crowd control strategy.

5 p.m. –It's all hands on deck at Memorial Park Station for the watchful LASD deputies, command center chieftains armed with cell phones and clipboards, and a massive contingent of volunteers. As the shuttles return from the Rose Bowl, Sheriff deputies quickly close off Holly Street to help direct anticipated long lines of both cheering USC fans and disappointed Wolverine supporters.

8 p.m. – Not to worry. Train after train of 300 plus passengers, each tucked into 8-minute departures by caring volunteers, safely escorted everyone back to home, hotels and all points north and south. "It was a very well-behaved and exhausted crowd," said Shelburne.

There's much more that can be said about the Metro Gold Line performance on its special day but the final score says it all:

**Metro Gold Line - 30,000 and counting
Problems – Zero.**

Safety's First



From left, Raul Narajo, Maria Tapia, Carlos Rea and Brian Takamiyashiro at Sierra Madre Station. Below, service attendants Irv Golden, Barbara Davis and Virginia Middleton keep the sparkle going



Above and below, Victor Carlucci and Peishan Wang point the way to the Rose Parade at Allen Station.

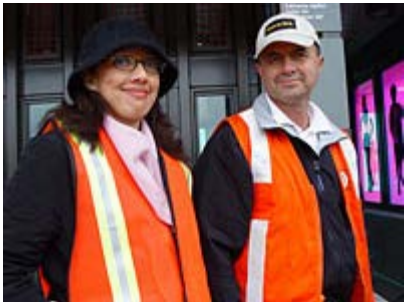
Art Henry, Bruce Shelburne, Tom Jasmin, and Bill Moore confer to fine tune headways. Below LASD Lt. Mike Parker regroups troops at Memorial Park Station



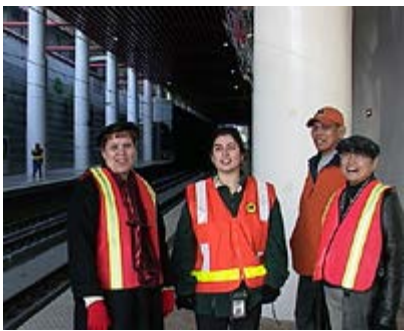
Bruce Shelburne and Byron Lee join forces with Sheriff 's deputies moments before the Rose Bowl crowd converges upon Memorial Park Station.



LASD mounted patrol were natural barricades for orderly crowds. Below, fare inspectors help direct safety as trains depart Memorial Park Station with capacity loads.



Above and below, Betty Velazquez and Roger Serrano manage inquiries at Lake Station



Mary Lou Algallar, Monique Ramos and Cora Arellano, joined by husband Armando, help northbound passengers depart to Sierra Madre Villa Station.



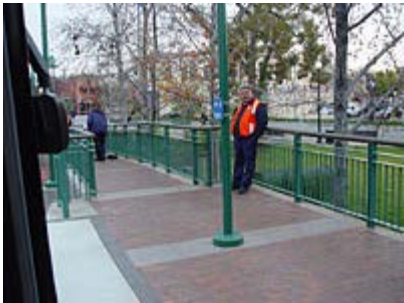
Bill Moore, Yolando Rosales, Helen Ortiz, Stephanie Kaping and Duane



Metro Transit Security Mgr. Dan Cowden patrols entrance to Gold Line at Union Station.

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Martin team up at Memorial Park Station. Below, Yolanda Rosales orients arriving passengers.



Volunteer at the Mission Station maintains lonely vigil. Below, Benny and Miya Lorenzo await Rose Bowl game surge of departures at Memorial Park Station.



Art Henry stands out in the crowd as passengers arrive from the Rose bowl shuttle buses.



Trimisha Wilson answers questions about fare at Union Station.



Have a good trip -
See you next year!