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Metro San Gabriel Valley Monitors Service with Innovative 'Ride Along' Program

By Liz Armijo-Holbrook

(Jan. 29, 2004) The "Staff Ride Along Program," an innovative hands-on service monitoring system started in November by Metro San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig, has sector staff and division managers riding a Metro bus at least twice a month to report on what they observe.

On the ride-along, staff members write a report on the various aspects of the ride, including the condition of the bus. The purpose of the program, says Gabig, is to give staff members a first-hand experience of the daily Metro ride experienced by patrons and to improve service by providing feedback to the sector.

"It is not the intention of this program to report on operator rule violations," says Emma Nogales, sector senior administrative analyst and project coordinator. "The intention is really to enhance the sector staff's ability to focus on continuously improving customer service, which is one of the MTA's strategic plan goals."

Staff members are encouraged to introduce themselves to the operator at the beginning of the ride and let the operator know that they will be observing, says Nogales.

Since implementing the program in December, Nogales has received reports of graffiti on seats, etched window ledges and messy bus stops. Most sector staff members have reported smooth rides with courteous drivers, she says.

"The new Ride Along Program will provide more support to our Bus Operators, scheduling staff and maintenance team in our effort to improve the quality of service to our customers," says Gabig. "With over 25 staff members participating, Metro SGV service now has a new quality assurance team without adding a single position."

PHOTO BY DAN RAMIREZ



Clipboard in hand, Metro San Gabriel Valley GM Jack Gabig greets Division 9 Operator Pete Perez as he boards a Metro Bus for a "Staff Ride Along."

