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Board Approves 'Limited Appeal' of Consent Decree Order

EDITOR'S NOTE: (Feb. 3, 2004) On Jan. 12, 2004, Special Master Donald Bliss, who oversees implementation of the federal Consent Decree, issued an order requiring MTA to buy the equivalent of 145 new 40-seat buses no later than December 2005.

The agency also was ordered to provide at least 370,185 additional annual in-service hours to meet Consent Decree obligations. The Special Master later lowered that figure to 290,000 service hours.

MTA estimated the cost to buy and operate the buses over a ten-year period at about \$400 million.

During a special meeting, Monday, the MTA Board voted to implement 290,000 hours of new service, but approved a limited appeal of the order requiring the purchase of 145 new buses. Following the meeting, the Board issued this statement:

MTA Board Statement

February 2, 2004

Today, the Board of Directors authorized a limited appeal to U.S. District Judge Terry Hatter of the January 12, 2004 Order of Special Master Donald Bliss.

The MTA will not appeal and will fully implement the units of additional bus service contained in the Special Master's Order. However, the MTA believes that through more efficient scheduling of its buses it can provide all such units of service with fewer than the 145 buses identified by the Special Master.

The MTA will ask Judge Hatter to modify the Special Master's Order to allow a more efficient use of its resources. In addition, the MTA will ask Judge Hatter to strike the portion of Special Master's Order which requires the purchase of new buses in addition to those needed to provide the additional service.

The MTA believes that such buses, which would be used as replacement for existing buses, are not needed since the MTA already has one of the youngest bus fleet of its size in the nation.

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Artist Helen Lessick, left, and gallery co-owner James Rojas install exhibit of Lessick's artwork – "The Human Condition" at Gallery 727 in downtown Los Angeles. The exhibit continues through March 6. A reception is scheduled at Gallery 727, at 727 Spring St., from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 5.



PHOTO BY ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

A Gallery Grows on Spring Street: Dream Comes True for MTA Planner

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Feb. 3, 2004) More than a year ago, MTA Transportation Planner James Rojas would peer through the dingy windows of a vacant storefront in his loft building with dreams of transforming it into an art gallery.

"The space showed great potential with its large floor areas, 20-feet high walls and location well served by public transit," recalls Rojas, project manager for Transportation Development and Implementation on the Central Area Team.

Four months later, in April 2003, the doors of Gallery 727 opened in downtown Los Angeles. The inception of the gallery – appropriately named for



PHOTO BY GAYLE ANDERSON

Opening night drew raves from an appreciative art crowd at Gallery 727, the latest addition to downtown's newest phenomenon, Gallery Row.

its location at 727 Spring St. – was marked by a conversation Rojas had with his landlord.

The landlord had considered creating a new function for the unused space, which had been used as a garment factory many years ago. When Rojas approached him with the gallery idea, he was eager to rent the space.

A promise given

"He told me, 'James, if you can put a gallery in here, I'll give it to you for half price,'" Rojas says with a smile.

Rojas collaborated with co-owners and longtime friends Adrian Rivas and Justin De Leon to open the newest addition to Gallery Row – an area of Spring Street near the Fashion District.

Now through March 6, the trio will be showing "The Human Condition," an exhibit of abstract artwork of MTA Art Collection Manager Helen Lessick. A reception is scheduled at Gallery 727 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 5.

Lessick's work features a variety of suspended torsos made of steel plumbers tape and clothing made from sheer fabric from a canopy bed.

'Doing something unusual'

"A lot of what my artwork is involves taking common material and doing something unusual with it," she says. Lessick, who earned degrees in fine art at Reed College in Portland and at the University of California in Irvine, has been involved in installation art for 25 years.

In addition to conveying a message about elements of human growth and interpersonal relationships, Lessick also pays homage to the seamstresses who worked in the space by hanging an assortment of outfits in the front windows.

"This installation was designed to reflect the people who once used that space," she says.

Lessick, whose artwork has been shown around the world, hopes the exhibit at Gallery 727 will provide the chance to meet a new group of artists and art enthusiasts.

"I'm glad I have the opportunity to show my artwork and partake in that energy that is revitalizing the downtown area," she says.


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Redesigned Metro Logo Leads the Way for Agency's New 'Voice'

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(Feb. 3, 2004) Can MTA, an agency with responsibilities that range from providing bus and rail service to regional transportation planning, learn to "speak with one voice"?

That was the challenge facing the

Communications Department, early last year, when it set out to redesign the agency's logo, its letterheads, bus exteriors, Internet web site, ads and brochures – everything right down to the lowly interoffice memo.

"This is a huge undertaking for this agency," Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond told a group gathered in the Board Room last week for a presentation on the designs.

"The crux of this whole initiative is to get everyone on one page," he added. "We need to speak with one voice and communicate in a friendly, customer-oriented, positive manner."

Two important elements of the initiative are the new logo and use of the term "Metro" in all external communications to describe the agency's myriad services and service-related functions.

The project, which really got rolling in early 2003, included interviews with employees and members of the public to gauge attitudes and gain ideas for a design direction.

No clear perception

In focus groups, some participants didn't know the scope of Metro's transportation responsibilities, said Creative Director Michael Lejeune. "We found that our image, especially as expressed through the logo, didn't present a clear perception of the agency."

Based on this research and a survey of the myriad administrative forms, project logos, promotional flyers, signs, maps and other materials the agency was using, the Design Studio focused on a new look that would give the agency a consistent "voice."

They settled on, and received Board approval of, a new logo created by the Design Studio that features a stylized M accompanied by the word, "Metro." They developed designs that would give all brochures a



Metro™

Metro Logo Rules:

No alterations to the logo.

No additions to the logo.

No use of department or program names with the logo.

[Click here](#) for examples of logo colors and presentations.

characteristic appearance and selected certain typefaces for use in printed materials.

The agency also established strict rules for use of the new logo aimed at achieving and maintaining the consistency of the Metro image. The rules prohibit alterations or additions to the logo. They also bar the addition of a department or program name to the logo.

"The public needs to gain greater recognition of Metro as one agency," Lejeune explained. That's one reason department and program names should not be used with, or added to, the new logo.

Link to new forms

Electronic versions of the new logo and standards for its use are available on the Intranet by clicking the Forms On-Line link on the Intranet home page at <http://intranet1/forms/default.htm>. Links to many of the redesigned forms also may be found at Forms On-Line.

The "Metro Business Tools" section has templates that can be downloaded for ordering the re-designed business cards, new letterheads, individual notepads and event flyer forms. Also available is the new Metro Style Guide with guidelines for use of the word, "Metro," the logo and other elements of the design "voice."

"We want to use the new logo as an anchor of the voice for this agency," said Raymond. "We need to focus on making everything consistent, clean, clear and concise."

At the same time, the communications chief recognizes that things can't change overnight.

"There is going to be a progression toward achieving a consistent voice and look," he said. "It will take time and there will be some confusion, but it will be very rewarding over time and, as a lot of these things come to life, we're going to build a lot of synergy."


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Eastside Rail Extension Given Federal Funding Priority

(Feb. 4, 2004) The U.S. Department of Transportation has recommended to Congress more than \$1.5 billion in funding for 34 local transit programs, including the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension in Los Angeles.

The \$898-million light-rail Eastside Extension, projected to open in 2009, is the MTA Board's highest priority construction project. Half the funding for the project will come from state and local funding already secured by MTA.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta said the Federal Transit Administration will ask Congress for an immediate \$80 million in funds to get the Metro Gold Line Eastside project going, as well as a commitment to provide a total of \$490.7 million in "new starts" funding for the project.

The Eastside Extension will be a 5.9-mile, eight-station light-rail line that will serve the heavily transit-dependent area from Union Station eastward to a terminus at Atlantic Boulevard. The line is expected to reach 23,000 average weekday boardings in 2020.

Pleased with recognition

"We are pleased that Secretary Mineta recognized the importance of this project to the citizens, not only of the Eastside and Boyle Heights, but to the whole region," said CEO Roger Snoble.

Prior to the U.S. DOT announcement, community leaders in East Los Angeles mounted a letter-writing campaign urging federal officials to fund the Metro Gold Line extension.

"People should be pleased to know that the President is committed in his budget to support the Eastside project," said Diego Cardoso, director of Regional Transportation Planning for the Central Area Team. "That should help us with the Full Funding Grant Agreement. It's a very good sign for us."

In addition to the Los Angeles transit project, U.S. DOT's funding recommendations include a 3.4-mile, three-station extension of the Mid-Coast Corridor light-rail line in San Diego; an 8.5-mile light-rail system serving central Orange County between Santa Ana and Irvine, the second phase of the San Francisco Muni's Third Street Corridor light-rail line, and a new 20-mile, light-rail system in Phoenix.

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MTA Investigating Automation Technologies for Metro Rapids

By DAVE SOTERO

(Feb. 4, 2004) Imagine riding a Metro Rapid bus that drives itself along a special lane of traffic while the bus operator monitors the high-tech control system and keeps an eye out for safety.

A magnetic guidance system installed on the bus and embedded in the road precisely steers it, allowing the bus to keep a constant, safe distance from other buses in the same lane.

The system automatically controls the bus's rate of speed and lane changes, and maneuvers the road nimbly until it reaches its destination. Once there, the bus docks at a platform, allowing those in wheelchairs to easily disembark.

All that's possible with electronic guidance systems now being developed by the California Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways (PATH), a research program from the University of California, Berkeley.

Bus Rapid Transit use

MTA is working with California PATH and others to introduce these technologies for Bus Rapid Transit applications in LA County in the coming years. Metro Rapid buses currently use sensors and transponders to coordinate with traffic signals and alert riders at bus stops of approaching buses.

Caltrans created the national PATH project to study ways to eliminate congestion on highways through an Intelligent Vehicle Highway System (IVHS).

The goal is to use existing highway capacity more effectively by "platooning" vehicles closer together, automating the driving process and designating special lanes for their operation.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATH



Automated Bus Rapid Transit has been successfully demonstrated in San Diego, showing that transit vehicles can operate close together in an electronically-coupled "virtual train".



Automated buses are equipped with technology that enables the operator to easily transfer back and forth between manual and automated driving, and to initiate automated maneuvers such as lane changing on the highway and precision docking at local bus stops.

Many more vehicles could operate on the same highways, essentially creating the benefits of a rail system without its capital costs and land requirements.

How the system works

Here's how the system works: Permanent magnets embedded in the center of a lane will accurately measure the position of a bus within a lane, as well as take note of upcoming roadway characteristics, including roadway curves, entrances, exits and mileposts.

Magnetic sensors mounted under the front and rear bumpers of the vehicle will measure the magnetic fields and an on-board computer will process the directional data. The computer will direct all steering control functions.

Together, these systems will allow buses to navigate roads with extreme accuracy while sustaining high operational speeds.

The technology also will help bus operators sustain higher speeds on arterial streets, but also drive on tight, narrow lanes where speeds must be reduced for safety. Operators would drive a bus under manual control while going to and from automated road sections.

"This technology and others hold promise for speeding service while not compromising safety," says Rex Gephart, MTA director of Regional Transit Planning. "We're always on the lookout for technologies like these that will help improve the transit experience for our customers."

A demonstration in San Diego showed how the technology could be used on the state's highway system. MTA, however, is interested in demonstrating how automated technologies can be used on LA County's arterial streets, where most congestion occurs.


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HAZMAT Crews Removing Contaminated Soils on Metro Orange Line

(Feb. 4, 2004) HAZMAT crews are working to clean up 20 spots along the 14-mile Metro Orange Line route that lab tests showed had been contaminated with arsenic and lead after nearly a century of railroad operation.

The first indication of the contamination came two weeks ago when excavation work was halted at two sites. Since then, 18 additional sites have been found where arsenic and lead levels exceeded state standards.

The crews are excavating the contaminated soil to a depth where arsenic and lead concentrations are below standards set by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), which has been monitoring the testing and cleanup work.

Air monitoring by DTSC has shown that the contaminants pose no health risks to the public.

Hauling away soils

The excavated soils will be hauled off to an appropriate landfill. The cleanup work should be completed by this weekend or early next week, according to Metro Construction Chief Rick Thorpe.

Remaining soils will either be paved over or landscaped. That should prevent the public from being exposed to the contaminated soils, says Environmental Specialist Chris Liban.

The remediation work is not expected to delay the 2005 completion of the dedicated busway, which will run between the North Hollywood Metro Rail station and Warner Center. The \$330 million construction project funds include \$10 million for such contingencies.


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New \$3 Metro Day Pass Popular with Operators, Customers

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 5, 2004) The new Metro Day Pass has been on the street for just over a month now as a key element of the fare restructuring that began Jan. 1. Sales are strong, with about 50,000 sold on weekdays.

The effect is felt at the street level where Metro Bus operators, who once had to cope with scores of complex transfers each shift, now sell only the \$3 Day Pass.

Central City Division 1 Operator Rosa Chavez usually sells 20 to 30 Day Passes a day, and more on Fridays, driving Line 18 between Montebello and downtown LA. "They're so much easier than the transfers and less hectic. As an operator, your day goes by smoother."

Operator Roberto Cortez, who works the extra board out of North Los Angeles Division 3, sold about 20 Day Passes Thursday morning, but often sells 30, depending on the line he's driving. "This is way more convenient and I don't have to collect transfers."

'A very easy transition'

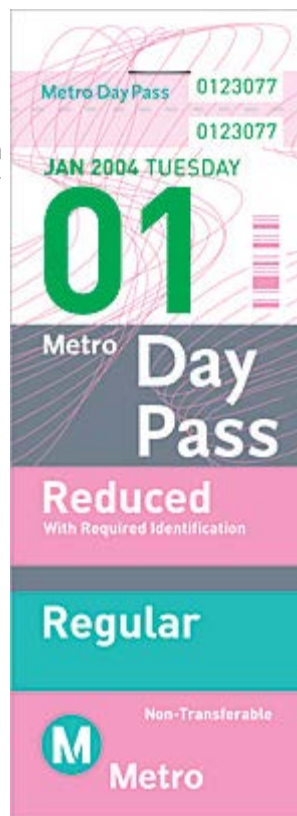
West Valley Division 8 Operator Terry McCrary, who's also vice chairman of UTU Local 1608, sells 40 to 50 Day Passes a day. Of the switch from transfers, he says, "It was a very easy transition, very easy. We've had good feedback from customers who say it's much more convenient."

April McKay, project manager for the fare restructuring program, isn't surprised by the way customers and operators have taken to the new Day Passes.

The Day Pass has reduced the number of transactions operators have to make during a shift. Customers can buy one \$3 pass -- \$1.50 for seniors and disabled patrons -- and ride Metro Buses or Metro Rail until 3 a.m. the next day.

The savings really kick in after the second ride. A study of Day Pass usage on 120 lines in early January indicated that the 50,000 passes sold each weekday were being used another 165,000 times after purchase, a total of just over four times each.

The Day Pass also has affected farebox revenues. Although Metro ridership has fallen off 9 percent since last year's strike and the cash



fare was lowered by 10 cents, net weekday farebox revenues are averaging about \$42,000 more than before.

Increase due to Day Pass

McKay attributes the revenue increase directly to sales of the Day Pass.

"Because of the Day Pass, our coins and tokens are down and our dollar bills are up," she says. The net \$42,000 doesn't include revenue from the sale of monthly passes.

McKay also believes use of the Day Pass is reducing fare evasion. "I think one reason our cash count is up is that there was a lot of transfer fraud."

The old transfers were complicated and difficult for an operator to read as customers boarded a bus. The new, simplified Day Passes are bigger, brightly colored, and are dated with large, bold numbers that can be read at a glance.

The only transfers left in the system are the 25-cent transfers needed to move from the Metro system to a municipal transit operator, and those used to transfer from a muni bus to the Metro system. Even those have been redesigned for better recognition.

For Operator Rosa Chavez, seeing an end to constant use of transfers is welcome news. "Now all I see is Day Passes and monthly bus passes."

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NBA ALL-STAR GAME is FEB. 15

Go Metro to 2004 NBA All-Star Game at Staples Center

- Pico/Chick Hearn Metro Blue Line Station, Eight Bus Lines Serve Staples Center

By DAVE SOTERO

Basketball fans can "Go Metro" to the 2004 NBA All-Star Game and avoid the hassles of driving to and parking at the Staples Center Feb. 15.

Fans using the Metro Rail system can connect to the Metro Blue Line and exit at Pico/Chick Hearn Station. From the Pico Metro station, fans should walk one block west on Pico Boulevard to Figueroa Street, turn right and walk north on Figueroa to 11th Street. Trains will run until 12:30 a.m. for return trips.

Several Metro Bus Lines also serve Staples Center and L.A. Convention Center: Line 81/381, 439, 442, 444-447 and 460. Buses will operate on their Sunday schedules.


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Foreign Correspondent to Address AAEA Luncheon

(Feb. 10, 2004) Ann Maria Simmons, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter who has covered Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East, will be guest speaker at noon, Thursday, during an African American Employees Association luncheon.

Simmon's talk is one of a series of events the AAEA has scheduled to celebrate Black History Month. The luncheon will be held in the 3rd floor Board Overflow Room at MTA Headquarters. All employees are invited to attend the luncheon.

Beginning her newspaper career in London in 1986, Simmons went on to work for *The Miami Herald* and as a foreign correspondent for *Time* magazine for seven years.

In the early 1990s, she worked in the Moscow bureau covering such historic events as the aborted coup against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and the takeover of the Russian Parliament by diehard communists.

Diplomatic correspondent

Following her Moscow assignment, Simmons was posted to *Time's* Washington bureau as a diplomatic correspondent reporting on the Middle East peace initiatives. Later, she covered the intervention of U.S. forces into Haiti in 1994. In December 1995, she was embedded with the U.S. Army during operations in Bosnia.

Joining the LA *Times* after seven years with *Time*, Simmons served as Nairobi bureau chief from 1997 to 2000 covering economic issues, civil conflicts, wars and the people of the African continent.

As Johannesburg bureau chief, she supervised coverage of the southern African nations and reported on land ownership disputes in Zimbabwe and the HIV/Aids controversy in South Africa.

Her current assignments in Los Angeles include issues relating to immigrant communities in Southern California, immigration policy and the impact of anti-terrorism legislation on legal and illegal immigrants.



Ann Maria Simmons

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Northern Lights players assemble on a Metro Green Line platform for a team photo. With them are (back row) Sheriff's deputies Daniel Dail and Victor Locklin and Rail TOS Ruben Ramirez.



PHOTO BY RICH MORALLO

Canadian Wheelchair B-Ball Team Finds Green Line a Winner

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 10, 2004) Cheap. Convenient. Good fit.

Those were the reasons seven Canadian wheelchair basketball players chose to travel on the Metro Green Line to their tournament in Norwalk, Friday, after flying into LAX.

"Usually we lease a van when we travel," said point guard Jordon McEachern of the Alberta Northern Lights. "But we thought we should try public transportation since a shuttle could take us from the airport to Metro, the fare is only 45 cents, and our wheel chairs fit through the coach doors."



The players, accompanied by two coaches, arrived at the Aviation Station by way of LAX Shuttle G, at about 3:30 p.m. They were escorted on their rail journey by Sheriff's deputies Daniel Dail and Victor Locklin and assisted by Rail TOS Ruben Ramirez.

Later, on the train, equipment manager Earl Nordell glanced at the system map overhead and observed, "This ride is smooth. The train has reached three stations already and I didn't even

A Northern Lights wheelchair basketball player purchases a ticket to ride the Metro Green Line.'

notice it."

Their 26-minute ride was just a little tight for the Canadians as the afternoon rush hour crowd boarded and left their train cars.

The players, ranked No. 1 in the 200-member National Wheelchair Basketball Association, had collapsed their extra wheelchairs and kept them close at hand.

"These are our game chairs," explained Jordon, adding that the customized chairs with inward bent wheels let them turn faster and keep better balance on the court.

All in all, the team's trip to Los Angeles turned out well.

The Northern Lights won all three games of their in the tournament, held at the Norwalk Arts and Sports Complex.

The team remains undefeated in the league – and impressed with LA public transit.

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By BILL HEARD, Editor

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Rogers has been named senior vice president for East Coast Operations at MV Transportation, Inc., a Fairfield, Calif., company that provides paratransit and fixed-route public transportation services in 17 states. He came to MTA from a position as vice president of Transportation Concepts of Irvine, Calif.

"Rich Rogers has had an outstanding career in both the private and public sectors," says Deputy CEO John Catoe. "He's been a real asset to Metro by taking the lead in establishing the Gateway Service Sector. I am saddened by his loss to Metro, but happy that it's a gain for national transportation."

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NTSI is implementing the Universal Fare System and the Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) – projects totaling more than \$200 million in capital funds.

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Division 18 Teamwork Aces Annual CHP Inspection

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 11, 2004) Taking care of business every day paid off for the transportation and maintenance staff at South Bay Division 18, Jan. 27, when they passed their annual CHP inspection.

"Our teamwork and support for each other, day after day and week after week, played a key role in passing (the) inspection," said South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey.

"We do our work every day, just continuous maintenance," said Assistant Maintenance Manager Tom Whitman.

Two CHP vehicle code enforcement officers inspected ten buses over a two-hour period that morning.

"They checked everything, from steering wheel operation and functioning emergency exits to air brakes and wheels," Whitman said, who has been through nine other annual inspections since 1985.

In the transportation building, Assistant Manager Curley Little pointed toward the many driver logs which were also examined.

'Documenting work factors'

"CHP typically looks at how we keep our daily part-timer logs to make sure we are documenting work factors such as total hours worked and the amount of time between work shifts," Curley explained.

For Transportation Operations Supervisor Joyce McKenzie, the no-notice CHP visit was just her third of the mandatory state inspections, but she had followed the same strategy in taking care of the training records,

PHOTOS BY RICH MORALLO



TOS Joyce McKenzie makes a daily check of operator transit reports.



Division 18 Assistant Maintenance Manager Tom Whitman tests latches on a bus window.



Division 18 Assistant Transportation Manager Curley Little reads through an operator log.

another inspection area.

"I have eight drawers of over 500 records which I tend to every day," she said.

McKenzie daily checks over a variety of administrative documents, including verification of transit training, current operator's licenses and medical cards.

"Joyce has done an excellent job in always keeping the files ready" said her supervisor, Assistant Manager Demetrius Jones. "Five years ago, she started a program to examine and get all the paperwork complete and accurate, and after that it was just the daily challenge of keeping everything current."

But McKenzie missed the compliment; she had already walked back to her file drawers to take care of more business.

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New IG Poster Campaign



PHOTO BY BILL HEARD

MTA's Office of the Inspector General is renewing its effort to reach employees with information on how to fight fraud, waste and abuse. Raymond Rivera (right) of the IG's office shows his colleagues, Jack Shigetomi and Mimi Strauss, one of the new posters now in circulation. The outreach campaign already is paying off, says Strauss. Information provided to the Inspector General is more complete with better details, documentation and leads that permit thorough investigations and audits. "The more information we have," says Shigetomi, "the better we can do our investigations." Large and small posters, and outreach materials can be obtained by calling the IG's office at 213-244-7300. The Inspector General's 2003 annual report also is available from MTA Records Management.


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Portrait of Arthur Winston: Photographer Kyung Kim captured the spirit and energy of Metro's most senior employee at Gateway Transit Center on Jan. 22 - the day Arthur Winston was commended by the MTA Board for 70 years of continuous employment at the Transportation Authority.



photo by Kyung Kim

Arthur Winston is Front-Page News in the LA Times

(Feb. 13, 2004) Arthur Winston made the front page today - big time.

Los Angeles *Times* reporter Kurt Streeter profiles MTA's oldest employee in a Column One story that includes several photos of the "iron man" of Division 5 - a facility named in his honor.

In the story, Winston shares some of the wisdom of his 97 years with *Times* readers.

"Stop in one place too long," he's quoted as saying, "and you freeze up. Freeze up, you're done for."

And retirement? "Folks retire, they end up on the front porch watching the street go by," he says. "Despair sets in, you're good as gone."

Winston, who just celebrated his 70th consecutive year on the job, will mark his 98th birthday on March 22.


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Transportation Project Funding on Committee's Agenda

- [Transportation Improvement Program](#)
- [Strike's Financial Impact](#)
- [Homeland Security Grant](#)
- [Operations Performance Report](#)
- [Bus Procurement Update](#)
- [Financial Reports](#)

(Feb. 13, 2004) The MTA Board's Planning and Programming Committee will focus on funding for the region's important transportation improvement programs during its Wednesday meeting. The item is one of many scheduled to be considered at February committee meetings.

Transportation Improvement Program, Item 6: The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion that would implement MTA's Short Range Transportation Plan.

The motion includes approval of \$1.79 billion in funding for various transportation-related projects, as well as reprogramming or approval of sales tax revenues for replacement projects.

Approval of the motion would establish the MTA Board's priorities for the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Projects and for other funds anticipated from MTA's 2003 Short Range Transportation Plan.

The Short Range Transportation Plan includes bus and rail car purchases, bus facility maintenance and support equipment, the Metro Orange Line and Bus Rapid Transit projects in the Wilshire and San Fernando Valley transit corridors.

Strike's Financial Impact, Item 9: The Executive Management and Audit Committee will receive a report indicating that MTA did not expend approximately \$7.4 million in sale tax funds during the 35-day transit strike last fall.

The Board has directed that all strike-related savings be used to benefit the customer. The staff recommends that the \$7.4 million be set aside until the financial impacts of the Special Master's recent Consent Decree ruling are determined.

Homeland Security Grant, Item 30: The Operations Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to accept a \$4,577,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The grant will fund

February Committee Meetings

- **Planning and Programming Committee**, 1 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 18
- **Executive Management and Audit Committee**, 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 19
- **Finance and Budget Committee**, 10:30 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 19
- **Construction Committee**, 11 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 19
- **Operations Committee**, 1 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 19

several important security upgrades over the next two years.

This will be the second federal grant MTA has received to improve security. In 2002, the agency received a \$50,000 Federal Transit Administration grant to support anti-terrorism exercises.

Operations Performance Report, Item 23: The Operations Committee will receive a monthly report for December 2003. The report shows that fewer customer complaints were recorded during December, although complaints were still above target. Metro Bus in-service, on-time performance improved in December. Metro Rail operations exceed its goal for mean miles between vehicle failures.

Bus Procurement Update, Item 25: A report to the Operations Committee notes that 15 40-foot CompoBuses have been shipped to MTA from the manufacturer, NABI. Thirteen have been accepted and are in operation at Divisions 2, 5 and 7.

Deliveries of 45-foot CompoBuses are to begin in May. MTA has ordered 100 of the vehicles from NABI. Delivery of the first 30 NABI-built, 60-foot articulated buses is to be completed by June 2005, with the remaining 170 vehicles arriving by June 2006. MTA also expects to start a formal procurement for up to five hybrid-electric, 60-foot articulated buses during the next quarter.

Financial Reports, Items 14 and 15: The Finance and Budget Committee will receive two reports – the FY 2003 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and the FY 2003 Financial Performance Report.

The Annual Financial Report includes an independent auditor's report, along with a management analysis of MTA's financial situation. The Financial Performance Report presents sales tax revenues, summaries of bus and rail operations and a summary of the capital projects fund.


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'Make Ends Meet' is 2004's Theme, CEO Snoble Tells Staff

- Non-contract pay increase planned
- Tight budget could mean staff layoffs

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 17, 2004) "Make ends meet," is the theme for 2004, CEO Roger Snoble told employees gathered in the Board Room, Tuesday, for his first all-staff meeting of the year.



The year will be one of major accomplishments, the CEO said, citing such goals as adding some 290,000 hours of bus service and more Metro Rapid lines, improving safety and Workers' Compensation rates, reaching final agreements with three labor unions, and advancing the UFS, Metro Orange Line and Eastside Extension projects.

Another goal: a pay increase for non-contract employees.

"Last year, I told you we would have one year of pain and then we would be back to having pay increases again," Snoble said. "That's my intention still."

Casting a shadow over the good news, however, are looming state deficits that have led the MTA Board to ask the staff for scenarios projecting how five, 10 and 15 percent cuts would affect the agency's budget.

Budget workshop, March 1

Board members will review staff estimates, March 1, during a budget workshop. The CEO hopes to reach an agreement with the Board that would lead to cuts "somewhere below the 10 percent level."

While severe budget cuts could result in staff layoffs, Snoble noted that the agency currently has a number of vacant positions and some, although not a lot, of attrition.

"Ultimately, we may have to have some layoffs," he said, "but we're going to try to make those very small and be very sensitive about how we do that."

Snoble concluded the staff meeting by thanking employees for their hard work in 2003 and congratulating them on the agency's successes for the year.

Among those, he mentioned the opening last July of the Metro Gold Line – "the smoothest opening I've ever seen" – implementation of the new fare structure and the Metro Day Pass, completion of the Metro Orange Line's LA River bridge on time and on budget, bus procurements and improvements in safety.

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The Division 15 team is proud of its safety accomplishments.



PHOTO BY ERIC RAPP

San Fernando Valley Divisions Setting the Standard for Safety

By ERIC RAPP

(Feb 17, 2004) Metro San Fernando Valley operating divisions 8 and 15 have made safety a priority, and the results are impressive. Both divisions continue to achieve safety goals.

The latest to make a milestone was Division 15 Transportation, whose employees had 34 consecutive days without lost time due to an injury.

Reaching a month without a single serious injury would be an accomplishment for any division, but as Assistant Transportation Manager Lorene Kelley points out, "we're one of the largest divisions at MTA, so this was an even bigger challenge for us."

To celebrate reaching 30 days, division management recently brought in a continental breakfast for the Transportation employees. The next time the safe days count reaches the 30-day mark, says Transportation Manager Grant Myers, "we're going to *cook* breakfast for the employees!"

Maintenance on a roll

Division 15 Maintenance is also on an impressive roll of safe days – recently passing 100 days without looking back, and currently standing at 116 days without a lost-time injury. At 180 days, Maintenance Manager John Roberts is planning to have a catered barbecue, as well as a drawing with prizes for the mechanics and service attendants.

"We're shooting for a year," says Roberts, "but first we have to break Division 8 Maintenance's record of 232 days."

General Manager David Armijo points out that all these barbecues and parties aren't just for fun. By working safely, employees are not only helping the agency, they're helping themselves.

"A safe work environment is one of our most important goals at Metro San Fernando Valley," says Armijo. "We're accomplishing that, and it shows."

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AAEA Plans Luncheon, Choir Presentation, Social Event

- Black History Month celebrations

(Feb. 18, 2004) An artist, an inventor and two poets will be featured speakers at noon, Thursday, during an African American Employees Association luncheon in the Gateway Conference Room.

The speakers are artist Arthur Dysart, whose works have been shown throughout the United States; inventor Joseph Jackson, whose six patents include electronic devices and fertility prediction devices for women; poet Dr. Billy Ingram, author of "The Legacy"; and poet Myra Gale, author of "Ride Rosa Ride."

The luncheon is scheduled from noon until 1 p.m.

On Thursday, Feb. 26, the AAEA Choir will present songs for the Black History Celebration on the Plaza in front of MTA Headquarters from noon until 1 p.m.

That evening, AAEA has scheduled its third annual Black History Month social event.

Honorees are Linda Wright, MTA deputy executive officer for Diversity & Economic Opportunity; and Metro Bus Operator Raven Sanders, who graduated with honors from USC as salutatorian and received a full scholarship to medical school.

The social event will be held at the Loft, located at 613 Imperial Street at the intersection of 6th and Imperial streets, just west of Santa Fe Avenue.

The \$20 tickets for the event may be obtained from Nery Watson at 21054, Yvette Nixon at 27174 or from Frank Willis at 22609.

AAEA Honorees



Linda Wright, MTA deputy executive officer for Diversity & Economic Opportunity, and, below, Metro Bus Operator Raven Sanders, who graduated with honors from USC as salutatorian and received a full scholarship to medical school, are honorees at the AAEA's Black History Month social event.



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Teamwork Prompts Changes to 'How You Doin'?' Awards

- Divisions 8, 3 and 9 are recent winners

By LISA HUYNH

(Feb. 18, 2003) In an effort to build morale and encourage teamwork between the transportation and maintenance teams at each operating division, a committee of division managers recently made revisions to the "How You Doin'?" awards program.

"It's nice to bring the two teams together so that they can celebrate their successes together," says General Manager Rich Rogers, who led the committee. "We're trying to build the idea that both transportation and maintenance collectively work together as a team."

The quarterly, annual and most improved annual awards now recognize the combined effort of transportation and maintenance, rather than separately as teams.

The quarterly

They're doin' great!



West Valley Division 8 won Best Division for the second quarter FY 2004. Eric Rapp photo.



West Valley Division also received Outstanding Maintenance Division for December 2003. Eric Rapp photo.



North Los Angeles Division 3 took home Outstanding Transportation Division for December 2003. Christopher Hernandez photo.

award for the most improved division was removed from the program, while the monthly division award remained the same.



San Gabriel Valley Division 9 also won Outstanding Transportation Division for December 2003. Christopher Hernandez photo.

A matter of balance

"We're trying to balance the ability to recognize the performers, but at the same time, bring the groups together so they can win individual awards on a monthly basis and combined awards quarterly and annually," says Rogers.

The category of on-time pullouts was dropped from the transportation performance indicators, while the weighted percentage increased in the categories of in-service on-time performance, accidents and complaints.

The accident category was raised 5 percent, while the percentage allotted for complaints doubled from 10 to 20 percent.

In the maintenance performance indicator, the category of on-time pullouts also was removed from the program, while bus cleanliness was added as an indicator to the monthly division award.

The bus cleanliness category jumped significantly from 25 to 35 percent, making it the highest weighted category in the overall scoring.

The Winners

West Valley Division 8 took home two "How You Doin'?" awards - Outstanding Maintenance Division for December 2003 and Best Division for the second quarter FY 2004.

"I'm proud of our employees," says General Manager David Armijo. "They work hard to be the best, and it shows. Our divisions are always at the top of the list."

Division 8 took home a trophy for Outstanding Maintenance Division and \$1,000 for winning Best Division.

North Los Angeles Division 3 and San Gabriel Valley Division 9 were tied for outstanding transportation division for December 2003.

Division 3 was best in on-time pullouts and was second lowest in new Worker Compensation claims. Division 9 significantly decreased its new Worker Compensation Claims and customer complaints.

Both received trophies for their winnings.


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New Rules Will Prohibit Cell Phone Use by Metro Bus Operators

- **Similar policy will apply to all employees**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 18, 2004) Beginning March 1, Metro Bus operators will be prohibited from using cell phones of all types while "operating equipment or walking in division yards." A policy banning use of hand-held wireless phones in agency vehicles soon will apply to all MTA employees.



Deputy CEO John Catoe says the new rule for bus operators is aimed at improving safety for employees and Metro patrons. "We're focusing on the operators, first, because they're driving vehicles with multiple passengers."

A policy prohibiting any employee from using a hand-held wireless phone while driving an MTA vehicle is currently being developed. The policy, however, would permit the use of a hands-free device if it can be used safely.

"Using a hand-held phone in an MTA vehicle will be a safety rule violation," says Catoe. "If you have an accident while using a hand-held phone, that will be taken into consideration of whether it's a chargeable accident."

Growing national trend

MTA's new cell phone use policies follow a growing national trend by many states and jurisdictions to outlaw the use of hand-held wireless phones while driving. The State of California and the City of Los Angeles both are considering such actions.

While the agencywide ban on hand-held phones is being developed, the more specific rule will go into effect March 1 prohibiting Metro Bus operators from using any type of wireless phone – including those with hands-free devices – while their bus is in operation.

"It's a safety issue," says Catoe. MTA and the United Transportation Union worked out an agreement to increase the seriousness of the offense. "We had numerous complaints about cell phone usage by operators."

A labor agreement "side letter," signed Jan. 22 by MTA and UTU General Chairman James Williams, escalates the "unauthorized use of cell phones while operating equipment or walking in division yards" from a minor safety infraction to a major violation subject to progressive disciplinary action.

'A dangerous thing'

"It's a dangerous thing," a UTU spokesman told the Los Angeles *Daily News*. "The union believes it is not safe for a driver to be on the cell phone when he's operating a bus unless it's an emergency."

Violating the cell phone rule is ranked in the MTA-UTU side letter as a major safety infraction along with playing radios and audio players, using ear phones and eating or drinking while driving revenue and non-revenue vehicles.

Any need bus operators may once have had to communicate with Bus Operations Control by cell phone is coming to a close. By the end of April, all 2,400 Metro Buses will have been refitted with a new, state-of-the-art radio system as part of the ATMS project.

"My hope is that no operator is seen using cell phones while driving," says Catoe. "The intent is to stop the behavior."

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Academy Awards to Affect 5 Bus Lines, Metro Red Line

By JOSE UBALDO

(Feb. 19, 2004) Metro will begin rerouting several Hollywood Boulevard bus lines on Monday, Feb. 23, to accommodate preparations for the Feb. 29 Academy Awards ceremony.

The detours will be in place near the Kodak Theater at Hollywood and Highland.

Beginning at 11 a.m., Monday, Hollywood Boulevard will be closed between Highland Avenue and Orange Drive for six days to allow for construction of press risers, fan bleachers and pre-show stages for the 76th Annual Academy Awards red carpet area.

The Metro Red Line station at Hollywood and Highland will be closed all day on Sunday, Feb. 29. Trains will continue to operate, bypassing the Hollywood/Highland station. No public access will be permitted at the station that day. Regular service at the station will resume on Monday, March 1.

No Hollywood Blvd. service

No Metro Bus service will run on Hollywood Boulevard between La Brea Avenue and Vine Street or on Highland Avenue between Santa Monica Boulevard and Odin Street on Sunday, Feb. 29.

All Metro Bus stops will be posted with instructions on where to board buses during the detours. Hollywood Boulevard will be reopened by noon on Monday, March 1.

The detours will affect Metro Bus lines 212, 217, 156, 210 and 163.

Lines 212 and 217 will not run on Hollywood Boulevard between La Brea Avenue and Highland beginning Tuesday, Feb. 24 through noon Monday, March 1.

Detour onto Sunset

On Sunday, Feb. 29, lines 212 and 217 will run on Sunset Boulevard between Vine Street and La Brea. Line 156 will detour on Vine Street between Santa Monica Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard.

Lines 210 and 163 will not run on Hollywood Boulevard between Highland Avenue and Vine Street beginning Thursday, Feb. 26 through Monday morning, March 1.

Line 163 will start service at Argyle Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard from Thursday through Monday. Line 210 will start at Vine Street and Hollywood Boulevard.

All detours are subject to change on Sunday prior to, during and after the awards ceremony due to additional unscheduled street closures as

ordered by LAPD.

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Employee Arrested, Charged with Insurance Fraud

- \$47,000 in fraudulent payments at issue

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 19, 2004) An MTA employee who has been off work on Workers' Compensation disability since January 2002 was arrested at her home in East Los Angeles, today, and charged with felony insurance fraud.

Gail Alcantar, 54, was booked into the Los Angeles County Jail where she was being held on \$10,000 bail. Arrested by agents of the State Department of Insurance, she is due to be arraigned, Friday, in Los Angeles Municipal Court.

Today's arrest was the second in less than two months of an MTA employee suspected of insurance fraud. Lolita A. Hicks Dolliole-Crowder, 50, of Palmdale was charged, Dec. 30, with 16 counts of insurance fraud. Her case is still pending.

Alcantar, who joined MTA in March 1984 and is assigned to North Los Angeles Division 3, filed a claim for an injury to her left foot in January 2002. Since then, according to MTA's Risk Management Special Investigations Unit, MTA has paid \$47,000 in Workers Comp benefits in response to her claim.

She had filed four previous claims for similar foot and leg injuries that totaled \$70,000, but has not been charged in connection with those claims.

Videotape of gardening

The investigation of Alcantar's most recent injury claim began in June 2002 when Special Investigations Unit agents videotaped her gardening at her home. For an hour, they watched as she lay sod and used a shovel to dig in her yard.

In a deposition taken in October 2002, she allegedly told MTA attorneys that her foot injuries prevented her from walking or standing for long periods, kneeling or applying heavy pressure with her feet.

MTA began a campaign to reduce Workers' Compensation costs in FY 2002. At that time, the agency was spending \$64.4 million annually on injury claims – nearly 10 percent of the hourly cost of operating a Metro bus.

MTA's Workers' Comp costs were six times more per employee than for Washington D.C.'s transit system and 10 times higher than those for New York City's transit agency.

In FY 2003, MTA's Worker's Comp costs fell to \$54.3 million, a 16 percent reduction from the previous fiscal year, according to Chief Financial Officer Dick Brumbaugh.

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Aida Asuncion Memorializes Daughter with UC Scholarship



"She was one good kid," says Aida Asuncion of daughter, Grace, pictured above, at right.

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Feb. 19, 2004) Twelve years ago, Aida Asuncion's 20-year-old daughter, Grace, died tragically – the victim of a homicide on the campus of UC Berkeley.

Today, Asuncion, director of Wayside Systems, continues to memorialize her daughter, a molecular cell biology student, through a college scholarship fund named in her honor.

Asuncion and her husband Edward, a retired industrial engineer, for years had considered starting a scholarship foundation in Grace's memory, but were unsure how to begin. When Asuncion was approached with the idea by one of Grace's college friends in 2000, the wheels were finally put into motion.

'It fit right in'

"The California Alumni Association at UC Berkeley called and asked if we wanted to set up a scholarship," Asuncion says. "They had the same thoughts that we had about setting up a memorial scholarship for her, so it fit right in."

On the 10th anniversary of Grace's death in February 1992, the Asuncions and California Alumni Association/Pilipino American Alumni Chapter launched the Grace Asuncion Memorial Scholarship at the northern California campus.

The Asuncions have worked with the group to advertise the scholarship and organize fundraising events. Together, they must raise \$25,000 before the endowment can become a permanent establishment and funds can be distributed to students.

Last December, they were \$8,000 away from their goal. Then, on Jan. 31, the Asuncions organized a very successful fundraising event called "Mardi Gras for Grace," which raised approximately \$10,000. That provided enough money to finally permit the foundation to start awarding scholarships, perhaps as early as this fall.

Meeting people's dreams

"This is all about helping people to meet their dreams and their goals," Asuncion says. "If the scholarship wasn't available, then some people would not be able to go to college."

Asuncion says helping UC Berkeley students finance their education has helped her to deal with her daughter's death.

"Doing this really gives me a lot," she said. "I'm accomplishing something for the good of someone else. This is a rewarding experience."

Grace is remembered among friends and family members as a good student and a responsible individual.

Musician and runner

A 1989 graduate of Agoura High School, she was involved in the Key Club, played the piano and the violin and won awards in the United States Academic Decathlon for her writing. As a senior, she was a runner for school's cross-country team, which won the California State Championship that year.

"She was very focused," Asuncion said. "She was one good kid."

Besides raising money for the scholarship, Asuncion is working to develop scholarship criteria that her daughter would want for fellow UC Berkeley students.

"This is all designed to what we thought Grace would want to have," she said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Aida and Edward Asuncion have three other children. John, 34, a graduate of UC San Diego, is a transportation planner; Mark, 33, who graduated from Berkeley, is a naval aviator serving in Italy; and Danielle, 23, a graduate of UC Irvine, is a biologist with a biotech company.

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Metro South Bay employees are enthusiastic about participating in DAC outreach events. From left are Brianna Wright, Dwight Graham, Beth Kranda, Rita White, Ruth Villalpando, Dennis Trapp, Steve Clay, Vicky Woods and Eric Smith.



PHOTOS BY RICH MORALLO

40 South Bay Employees Volunteer to Fight Vandalism

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 19, 2004) More than 40 Metro South Bay employees have decided to do something about graffiti and vandalism on the buses.

They signed up for a vandalism abatement program during the first week of a community outreach recruitment campaign.

Operator Quionne Benton answers questions from her colleagues about volunteering for DAC events.



"I'd like to help the agency deal with vandalism," said Metro Bus Operator Dwight Graham, who volunteered for the Division Ambassador Council, last week. He also completed a three-hour training class at Arthur Winston Division 5.

Once known as the Division Advisory Committee, the new DAC is undergoing restructuring, but its main feature of sending division staff out to talk to various audiences about helping keep Metro vehicles clean will remain.

Focus on respect, pride

The Council, whose members are operators, mechanics and service attendants working on their own time,

will focus on creating respect and pride for public transit, and personal ownership of public vehicles.

Involvement in DAC activities also will provide division staff a chance to use their creativity and energy to combat vandalism.

Many of the volunteers, such as Ruth Villapondo, another Division 5 operator, came forward out of loyalty to the agency. "I want to get more involved with my division and Metro. I want to become an asset to the agency."

Others look upon the DAC simply as a means to help.

'Time to volunteer'

"In my 19 years in this country, I have never volunteered, but when I heard about the DAC, I thought it was time to volunteer," said South Bay Division 18 Operator Morna Bishop.

Bishop believes she will enjoy communicating to families and residents. She once drove a bus to her son's career day at school and enjoyed talking to the students and giving them a tour of the vehicle.

Beth Kranda, an assistant Division 5 transportation manager, summed up the first week's drive to get division staff involved with DAC. "This is for people who know they can make a difference, even in very small ways, every day."

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A Rewarding Hour Mentoring High School Students

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 20, 2004) Members of MTA's staff spent their lunch hour, recently, helping high school students connect school to the workplace.

"I'm here at Franklin High School so I can show students what choices they have after graduation," said Angela Pina, a document control specialist and one of several Metro professionals who volunteered to be a TCAP (Transportation Careers Academy Program) mentor at the school.

TCAP, a three-year program in technology and transportation, provides course work that emphasizes teamwork, problem-solving and lifetime learning. In preparation for the workplace and a four-year university, academy students also meet with local professionals and experience various business environments.

Pina and four other Metro employees visited Franklin High to be matched up with students and to discuss careers, plans, ambitions and the students' future.

Transportation Planning Manager Jeff Boberg was paired with Oscar Montano, a junior. They spent an hour breaking the ice and chatting about sports, hobbies, grades, travel and families.

'Mentoring is very rewarding'

"This is a great program," said Boberg, who became a mentor three years ago after another Metro staff member recruited him. "Getting to know the students and mentoring them is very rewarding."

In the school's technology room, several other mentors, including Metro's Paula Carvajal, Jess Godinez and Yolanda Rosales, conversed with their partners.

Juniors Victor Figueroa and Sam Lopez already had an idea of what their futures held for them.

PHOTOS BY RICH MORALLO



MTA staffers Angela Pina and Jess Godinez at Franklin High School, just down the street from the Metro Gold Line tracks. Below, Franklin High students Victor Figueroa, left, and Sam Lopez are interested in careers in film.



"We're both interested in film," they said, describing how they once started producing a short film on why students should read "Catcher in the Rye."

Near them, Herlinda Tamayo, Pina's student partner, also shared her dream. "I'm taking nursing in college," she said.

The sound of mentoring resonated throughout the room as workforce professionals talked and students listened. Then, students talked while their mentors listened.

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South Bay Sets March Hearing on Proposed Bus Line Changes

By RICK JAGER

(Feb. 20, 2004) The South Bay Service Sector has scheduled a public hearing in March on proposed Metro Bus service changes planned on or after June 27.

The sector plans to provide new service on four bus lines, modify or cancel local bus service on five lines, modify or cancel service on two express bus routes and on four bus routes on the Harbor Freeway.

The public hearing is set for 6 p.m., Wednesday, March 10, at the City of Carson Community Center, 801 East Carson St., in Carson.

Under the proposal, new limited stop service is planned on Line 232, while shuttle service would be added for lines 607 in North Inglewood and 609 in Athens/Hawthorne. Line 681 in Huntington Park/Watts would be extended to the Metro Blue Line Slauson station.

The sector plans to cancel all service on express bus Line 442 and on local bus lines 107 and 124. Service on local bus lines 202, 209 and 215 would be cancelled or modified.

Modifications or cancellations are proposed for express bus route 439 and for Harbor Transitway routes 444, 445, 446/447 and 550.


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Westside/Central Plans Meetings, Hearing on Service Changes

By RICK JAGER

(Feb. 20, 2004) The Westside/Central Service Sector has scheduled two community meetings and a public hearing on proposed Metro Bus service changes.

Proposals call for service changes on eight bus lines, the opening of two new Metro Rapid Bus lines and the elimination of service on six lines. The changes would take effect on or after June 27.

Community meetings are scheduled at 1 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Unity Center, 944 West 53rd St., Los Angeles; and at 6 p.m., Wednesday, March 3, at the Westwood United Methodist Church, 10497 Wilshire Blvd., in Westwood.

A public hearing is set for 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 9, at the La Cienega Tennis Center, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., in Beverly Hills.

The sector proposal calls for establishing Metro Rapid Line 705 to serve Vernon Avenue/La Cienega Boulevard and Metro Rapid Line 751 to serve Soto Street.

Service adjustments are proposed for Metro Bus lines 10/11, 48, 20, 21, 76, 444 and 446/447 and Metro Rapid Lines 720.

Service would be eliminated on Metro Bus lines 107, 209, 350 (to be replaced by new Metro Rapid Line 751), 439, 442 and 550.

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Keith Green, Division 5 assistant maintenance manager, checks his maintenance records.

No Qualms: Division 5 Scores 100 Percent in CHP Inspection

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 24, 2004) "Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be," suggests the picture in Keith Green's office.

True to that statement, Green, assistant transportation manager at Arthur Winston Division 5, didn't have a qualm the past few weeks prior to the division's annual CHP inspection, Feb. 20.

" Our supervisors were constantly handling our transit paperwork - processing files when they first arrived, conducting periodic screening, and examining training cards during internal audits, but I never worried about not passing the annual CHP inspection," said Green, who has been through 12 of the state-mandated visits.

" I knew everything would be in order and the team would have everything in shape," he said.

100 percent compliance

And, apparently they were. After a two-hour visit to the Chesterfield Square division, last Friday morning, CHP officials declared the staff in 100 percent compliance.

Transportation Manager Patsy Goens, who oversees about 460 bus operators at the division, knew that Green would successfully coordinate preparations for the visit by the CHP inspectors.

"As soon as they arrived early Friday morning we invited them to talk to Keith," she said.

Maintenance fared just as well as the CHP motor carrier specialists

conducted a thorough examination of 10 coaches.

"None of our buses were taken out of service," said Maintenance Manager Alex DiNuzzo. He noted that the officers could hardly identify any maintenance issues.

The Arthur Winston Division is responsible for 15 bus routes ferrying passengers throughout the South Bay.

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Pupils 'Make History' in the Mud of Campo de Cahuenga

by ERIC RAPP

(Feb 24, 2004) A group of fourth graders from Lankershim Elementary School can always look back on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2004 and say, "That was the day I helped build something important."

Their help came in the form of genuine adobe bricks being made to build a reconstruction of Campo de Cahuenga, the historical building where the Treaty of Hidalgo was signed in February 1848, ceding much of what is currently the Southwestern United States from Mexico.

The site, located at the Universal City Metro Red Line station, is being reconstructed as a partnership between MTA and the Los Angeles City Department of Parks and Recreation.

Significant archaeological work, undertaken during construction of the Metro Red Line station, discovered not only the foundation of the original eighteenth century building, but construction materials as well.

Tiles were 'seconds'

As architect Gil Sanchez explained to the pupils, the tiles from the original building were "seconds," tiles that were deemed not fit for use in the more important constructions of the day – the Spanish Missions that were built up and down California.

Some of the bricks had paw prints from dogs that had stepped on them while drying.

Proving that some things never change, on Thursday morning construction employees discovered that a dog and a bird had walked on some of the bricks they had laid out for drying the night before, leaving their marks on the mud for future archaeologists to discover.

After a brief talk about the history and importance of the building, the kids got down to the real work – taking the mixture of dirt, clay, sand and straw that makes up adobe and putting it into forms to be dried



Top: LA City Councilman Tom LaBonge, an MTA Board member, dumps wet mud into forms to make adobe bricks.

Bottom: The pupils initial souvenir bricks that will be presented to them after they've dried in the sun.

into bricks.

Pupils made bricks

Each pupil also got to make a small brick and put his or her initials into it, which they will get to keep once the bricks are dried.

MTA Board member Tom LaBonge, A Los Angeles City councilman whose district contains the Campo de Cahuenga site, also stopped by to help make a few bricks.

“Some day, you’ll go by this building, and you can tell your kids and grandkids that you helped to build it,” he told the pupils. He encouraged the children to learn more about California’s history and architecture.

Even though the trip was for fun and education, the children can always look at the new Campo de Cahuenga with the satisfaction of a job well done.


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Transit Police Officer Exchange Program an Eye-Opener

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Feb. 24, 2004) The Sacramento Regional Transit Police Department may be small – only about 30 officers – but that doesn't mean a larger transit security force can't learn something from them.

That's what four members of MTA's Transit Services Bureau found out, recently, during an officer exchange program.

Sheriff's Sgt. Vince Moultrie, who supervises patrol officers, and deputies Kyle Hayden, David Hernandez and Michael Shaw of the Special Projects Unit spent four days in January with their Sacramento counterparts. Earlier this month, two Sacramento officers visited MTA for four days.

"The idea of an officer exchange program was born during a peer review of the Sacramento Transit Police Department last summer," says Capt. Dan Finkelstein, MTA Transit Police chief. "A fresh set of eyes, reviewing each other's practices, and suggestions on how things could be improved could only be of benefit."

Issues in common

Both transit police agencies have issues in common: graffiti and vandalism, transients, crime on board buses and trains and responding to the security needs of their transit agencies.

And they have differences. In Los Angeles, the Sheriff's Department is under contract to MTA. In Sacramento, the transit security force includes both sheriff's deputies and local police officers. The chief of the force is a police lieutenant.

Moultrie cites several valuable "lessons learned" during the deputies' visit to the state capitol. They included the importance of a constant flow of information about the transit agency's security needs.

"The information has to get to the officers on the street," says Moultrie. "The Sacramento officers have that relationship with their transit agency."

The LA deputies also learned that the floor plans and other information about the Sacramento transit agency's buildings are on computer. Having that information at their fingertips is a great help to the transit police during an evacuation or hostage situation.

Training scenarios

During their stay in capitol, the deputies trained with the Sacramento officers. The scenarios included dealing with an armed suspect on a bus and hostage and rescue situations.

"It was enlightening," says Moultrie.

When the Sacramento officers – a deputy sheriff and a police officer – were in LA, they visited the Rail Operations Center and the Bus Operations Center, the Sheriff's training academy and shooting range.

They were particularly interested in MTA's graffiti abatement program, how LASD deals with the homeless and the relationship between the Sheriff's Department and the LAPD.

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Photo Credit: Tony Precie

The movable scaffolding shown here alongside a rail car in the Metro Blue Line maintenance shop will be replaced with a safer, more serviceable catwalk.

New Metro Blue Line Catwalk Will Provide Protection, Flexibility

By ADRIENNE FIGUEROA

(Feb. 25, 2004) The Metro Blue Line will welcome the addition of a new catwalk to the Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance Shop later this year, giving workers the ability to safely move about train car tops for maintenance and repairs.

The new catwalk – to be installed in the Heavy Repair side of the shop – will stretch 100 feet long and stand 11 feet tall with guard rails. It will replace movable scaffolding that has been used for years to access the roofs of train cars.

The current scaffolding has proved to be cumbersome because it requires maintenance workers to hoist tools and hoses onto wheeled structures. Workers also must constantly reposition the scaffolding on both sides of the train car to ensure their safety.

“The need for the catwalk is to give us the flexibility to have full service under and above the car,” says Anthony Precie, assistant manager, Rail Fleet Services. “We’ve got to make sure our employees are protected from falls and have the equipment they are going to need right there with them.”

An overhead crane

The new Heavy Repair catwalk is specifically designed to work with an overhead crane and a lifting system that allows employees to work on the roof area and the articulation section that connects paired cars.

Similar in appearance to an accordion, the articulation periodically needs to be removed for repair, service or replacement.

"Because this section moves and flexes often, it requires service maintenance," Precie says. "The catwalk will have cutaways – like a drawbridge – to allow that to happen. This is something the old catwalk doesn't have."

Rail Fleet Services Manager George Kennedy looks forward to the completion of this installation – the second of its kind at the Metro Blue Line.

'A safety issue'

"This is a safety issue and it's going to benefit the employees and the MTA," he says.

The first catwalk was erected at in July 2003 in the Service and Inspection area. Electrical outlets, lighting and retractable hose reels for air and water will be added to that structure as the new Heavy Repair catwalk is assembled.

Construction of the \$300,000 project will begin next month, according to Construction Manager Tom Welch.

"They're ecstatic about it," Precie says of the Light Rail Vehicle Maintenance Shop personnel. "This is going to make their lives a little bit easier and allow them to focus more on their work."

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Former General Manager Rich Rogers is presented an award from fellow GMs, from left, Alex Clifford, Jim McElroy of Westside/Central, Dana Coffey of South Bay and David Armijo of San Fernando Valley.

Past, Present, Future Set Tone for New Gateway Cities Leadership

By KIM SIM

The 1950s vintage bus, the "Metro Experience" mobile theater and a lineup of new Metro Buses, weren't the only glimpses those who attended the Gateway Cities Sector open house, Feb. 20, got of MTA's past, present and future.

They also saw the past, present and future of the sector's leadership as – with a handshake – General Manager Rich Rogers turned over the reins to his successor, Alex Clifford. Clifford had been managing director of operations.

About 200 attended what had been planned as a celebration of the sector's one-year anniversary. Instead, the luncheon reception turned into a day to recognize the Gateway Cities sector's accomplishments and to mark its change in leadership, as Rogers worked his last day with MTA.

"Sort of ironic how it ends, on this being my last day," Rogers said.

Good-natured ribbing

Speaker after speaker good-naturedly ribbed Rogers about his decision to leave sunny Southern California for a job on the East Coast. Rogers has been named senior vice president of East Coast Operations at MV Transportation, Inc.

"I think the world of Rich



and I question his sanity to move to the East Coast in the middle of winter," said Don Knabe, Los Angeles County Supervisor and MTA Board member.

On hand for the change of leadership at the Gateway Cities sector were, from left, incoming GM Alex Clifford, MTA Board members Bea Proo and Don Knabe, Deputy CEO John Catoe and outgoing GM Rich Rogers.

Said Deputy CEO John Catoe: "Someone from the East Coast made him an offer he couldn't refuse — despite the snow."

Plans for the event, co-hosted by the Gateway Cities Service Sector and Non-Revenue Operations, were slightly changed, not only in content but also in location, when rain forced the reception indoors.

The celebration included a "transit fair" of MTA's past, present and future.

To symbolize the past, a light green 1958 MTA bus was brought into the sector's parking lot, as well as photographs of buses from the past. Vintage fare boxes and vintage advertisements for trolley trips were also on display at a booth staffed by MTA Library Assistant Jim Walker and Gateway Cities Governance Council member Wally Shidler.

Symbol of the future

The Metro Experience, an interactive 3-D theater that simulates an actual train ride, represented the present. Also on display were new Metro Rapid and Metro Local buses, the Universal Fare System and the HASTUS software program — the future of MTA.

Sector Community Relations staffers David Hershenson and Cathy Manzo, along with Harold Torres and Dora Vega of Non-Revenue Operators planned and coordinated the event.

The Gateway Cities sector's four primary objectives under Rogers' leadership were to improve transit services, improve safety, take care of its employees and enhance the image of the organization.

The sector established two new lines — 611 and 612 — and restructured another, Line 111. The sector also saw improved safety, with reductions in both accidents and workers' compensation claims.

The sector implemented an employee feedback survey and created an employee-based task force. As part of its community outreach program, the sector conducted quarterly town hall meetings.

Now, as Clifford put it, it is time to fill Rogers' "big shoes."

"It'll be a big challenge for me to take that baton and run with it," Clifford said, "but I'm ready for that."

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Governance Councils, SFV Sector Schedule March Meetings

By RICK JAGER

(Feb. 25, 2004) MTA's five service sector Governance Councils have scheduled their monthly meetings for March, while the San Fernando Valley sector has announced two public meetings to discuss transit issues.

The schedule for the sector Governance Council meetings is:

Metro Westside/Central, 7 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 26, La Cienega Tennis Center, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills.

Metro San Gabriel, 4 p.m., Tuesday, March 2, San Gabriel Adult Recreation Center Grapevine Room, 324 South Mission Drive, San Gabriel.

Metro San Fernando Valley, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 3, Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center Community Room, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys.

Metro Gateway Cities, 2 p.m., Thursday, March 11, The Gas Company, 9240 Firestone Blvd., Downey.

Metro South Bay, 9:30 a.m., Saturday, March 27, Arthur Winston Division 5, 5425 Van Ness Ave., South Los Angeles.

SF Valley Meetings

The San Fernando Valley Service Sector has scheduled two community meetings in March to update the public on Metro Bus service and other transportation issues.

The first meeting is scheduled from noon to 2 p.m., Thursday, March 4, at the Westfield Shopping Plaza Community Room, 6600 Topanga Canyon Blvd. in Canoga Park.

The second meeting is set for 5:30 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, March 10, at the Van Nuys State Building Auditorium, 6150 Van Nuys Blvd. in Van Nuys.

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Homecoming: Retirees Honored in Division 5 Ceremony

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 26, 2004) For a few hours they came home – home to their Metro bus division, home to the Chesterfield Square operating facility where they had spent half their lives transporting riders on the challenging streets of L.A.

Sixteen former members of Arthur Winston Division 5's transportation staff, some of them retired over a year now, returned to the division, Feb. 21, to receive a formal Metro sendoff.

"After 37 years of operating a bus, I'm still running a.m. and p.m. trippers," laughed retiree Walter Carmier, who said he now drives his two children to Saint Bernard High School.

Johnnie Abner, another retiree who returned for the noontime festivities, spends his time traveling and visiting his six children.

"I first came to Metro because I wanted a stable job," said Abner, who served the agency 24 years.

Plaques and scrolls

Abner and Carmier, along with 14 other operators and Transit Operations Supervisor Michael Ball, sat with family members in the party-decorated training room. Union representatives and transit managers presented them with plaques and scrolls, and thanked them for a job well done.

Transportation Manager Patsy Goens went one step further.

"I challenge you to use your bus pass and observe our services," she said. "I ask your help in giving us feedback on how we can continue to improve, so this division can become Number One in the agency, and Metro the Number One transit agency in the nation."

"I drive my kids to school, and I ride my three-



Photo Credit: Rich Morallo

Retiree Walter Carmier was Arthur Winston Division 5's most senior operator. He joined MTA in July 1966 and retired last October with 37 years' service.

Arthur Winston Division 5 retirees and their years of service:

Melvin Derden (23),
Chivala Walker (23),
Frazenia Hines (23),
Johnnie Abner (24),
Janice Coleman (12),
Minnie Williams (12),
Walter Carmier (37),
Dorothy Thomas (23),
Huletishe Wiley (23),
Peter Williams (23),
Cheryl Trezvant-
Tolliver (23), Wordrow
Williams (36), Yvette
King-Wilson (23),
Abidala Salimu (16),
Randolph Wallick (23)
and Michael Ball (30).
Not able to attend the

wheel trike to the park,"mused Carmier, following the ceremony. "I'm still in transportation."

ceremony were Verena Stewart (23) and Evelyn Davis (19).

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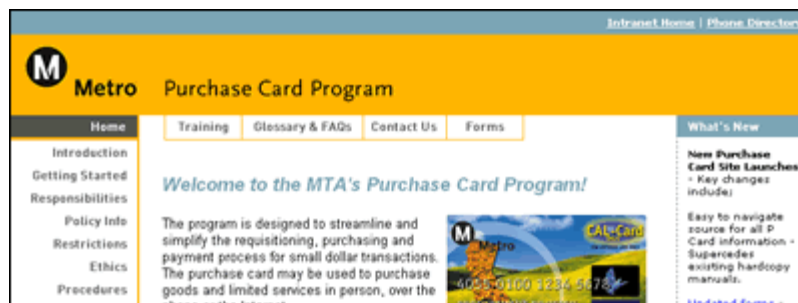
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Purchase Card Program Web Pages Join Employee Intranet

(Feb. 26, 2004) Do you have one of MTA's Purchase Cards? If so, myMetro.net is introducing a web site just for you...for the supervisor who approves your purchases...and for the person who coordinates your business unit's "P-Card" program.

The P-Card web pages are intended to be "the single point of reference" for those participating in the program, says David Vila, manager, Contract Administration, and the program coordinator.

The new "Purchase Card Program" web site can be found in the "Select a Department" drop-down menu on the Intranet home page. The Welcome page includes links to training, forms, a glossary of terms and frequently asked questions.

The "What's New" section is a bulletin board for P-Card program changes and is updated frequently for program participants use.

Rules and guidelines

The web site has information on how to sign up for a P-Card, program rules and ethics, along with guidelines for processing monthly statements. A list of business unit coordinators is linked from the "Contact Us" tab on the web site home page.

MTA analysts, maintenance supervisors and other employees use the P-Card to make almost 14,000 transactions annually. The purchases, which include tools, small parts and office supplies, average \$250 and amount to about \$3.5 million or more a year.

"If there had to be a purchase order for each of these 'micro-purchases,'" says Vila, "the cost would be phenomenal."

He notes that many public agencies now use P-Cards, rather than petty cash or check requests, to hold down administrative costs and streamline small purchases.

Control spending limits

With P-Cards – actually Visa credit cards – the agency can control the spending limits and the merchants employees can buy from. The issuing

bank provides a record of every transaction, so there's an audit trail for each purchase.

Department managers are expected to use the new Purchase Card Program web pages to keep abreast of information about the P-Card program. Department approving officials and business unit coordinators can use it as a management and accountability tool.

The web site also will help the individual P-Card holder process monthly statements, and will provide information about program rules and procedures.

"All the things we can do in the program," says Vila, "we've tried to address on the web site."

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NBC Today Show Films Interview with Arthur Winston

(Feb. 26, 2004) A TV crew from the NBC Today Show interviewed MTA's Arthur Winston, Wednesday, drawn by his remarkable record as one of the nation's oldest and longest-working employees.

The interview is expected to be shown sometime during this Saturday morning's Today Show. The show airs between 5 and 7 a.m. on KNBC-TV, Channel 4.

Winston recently marked his 70th consecutive year of employment at MTA, a record that began in 1934. He will celebrate his 98th birthday on March 22 – and has no current plans for retirement.



Photo Credit: Rich Morallo

Arthur Winston's career spans
70 consecutive years


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Board Sets Transportation Priorities During February Meeting

- [Requests study of UFS clearinghouse](#)
- [Accepts \\$4.6 million security grant](#)
- [Adopts job position policy](#)
- [Approves two new executive positions](#)

(Feb. 27, 2004) The MTA Board approved motions, Thursday, setting priorities for transportation projects and directing the MTA staff to analyze the cost to implement a regional Universal Fare System clearinghouse.

In other actions, the Board, accepted a \$4.6 million Homeland Security grant, approved a policy for MTA job positions and compensation and authorized two new executive positions.

Transportation Improvement Program, Item 6: The Board voted to implement MTA's Short Range Transportation Plan, approving an amendment by Chairman Zev Yaroslavsky emphasizing that the Exposition Light Rail Line is MTA's "next highest priority fixed guideway project" after the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

The Board's action includes approval of \$1.79 billion in funding for various transportation-related projects, as well as reprogramming or approval of sales tax revenues for replacement projects.

The vote established the Board's priorities for the 2004 State Transportation Improvement Projects and for other funds anticipated from MTA's 2003 Short Range Transportation Plan.

The Short Range Transportation Plan includes bus and rail car purchases, bus facility maintenance and support equipment, the Metro Orange Line and Bus Rapid Transit projects in the Wilshire and San Fernando Valley transit corridors.

Universal Fare Clearinghouse, Item 42: The Board approved a motion by Director John Fasana calling for an analysis of the cost to implement, operate and maintain a regional clearinghouse for the Universal Fare System.

MTA and the participating municipal operators would use the clearinghouse – an electronic service center – to settle and distribute the farebox revenues paid by riders using the UFS "smart card." Requests for proposals to develop the UFS clearinghouse are expected to be issued in March.

Homeland Security Grant, Item 30: The Board approved a motion authorizing the CEO to accept a \$4,577,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The grant will fund several important security upgrades over the next two years.

This will be the second federal grant MTA has received to improve security. In 2002, the agency received a \$50,000 Federal Transit Administration grant to support anti-terrorism exercises.

New Compensation Policy, Item 39: The Board adopted a policy regarding MTA job positions and classifications, salaries, benefits and special benefit arrangements.

Following a philosophy adopted in 1994, the Board's action ensures "that the MTA's non-represented compensation program maintains internal equity, external competitiveness, alignment with organizational values...flexibility...affordability and compliance with all federal and state employment laws."

The Board each year must approve the number of contract and non-contract positions in the budget, along with the estimated cost of salaries and benefits for each classification. It also must approve the salary schedules for non-represented employees.

The Board must approve any increase in the number of positions that exceed budgeted authority, along with position classifications and reclassifications during the fiscal year. It also must approve any special benefit arrangements "for hires that deviate from existing policies."

Job Classification Changes, Item 45: The Board approved a motion to reclassify the position of executive officer, Rail Construction, to that of Chief Capital Management Officer. The action was taken to "ensure the ability of the MTA to successfully execute the design/build concepts...(of) ...large-scale capital projects."

In the same action, the Board approved creation of the post of director, Federal Advocacy. Slated to be located in Washington, D.C., the director would provide "advanced-level representation of, and advocacy for, the MTA's policies, projects and programs before federal legislative bodies and regulatory agencies."

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at 2-4357[E-Mail Webmaster](#)**A Metro Romance:****D-18 and Number 3 Meet, Fall in Love, Marry**

By RICH MORALLO

(Feb. 27, 2004) For the past 15 years, transportation operations supervisors Deborah Vanderploeg and Larry Blair worked for MTA, helping Los Angeles residents get where they needed to go on the Metro Bus system.

And for most of that time, Larry, a 33-year veteran who was for many years assigned to Bus Operations Control, and Debbie, a 15-year employee assigned to South Bay Division 18, were strangers.

Metro is not a small agency, about 9,200 people and more than a dozen operating locations. So, it's understandable that the two had never met.

For years, Debbie had talked to Larry, first as a dispatcher for Division 18, and later from the field as "D-18," a vehicle operation supervisor.

Radio communications

Debbie would get on the car radio to contact BOC on such transit matters as coordinating a replacement for a bus operator who was sick. Larry – Number 3 – would typically handle the radio call as a BOC dispatcher.

When they both worked the night shifts, they had more radio and phone contact on Metro business.

"Then about two years ago 'D-18' called me on the radio to request that a message be passed to another dispatcher," recalls Larry. "A small voice told me I needed to call this lady."

When a few minutes later D-18 called again on more business, Larry says he heard the little voice again. "You really need to talk to her," it said.

She was worried

Debbie also remembers the incident. "That night, Number 3 from Bus Operations Control contacted me and requested a 10-18," a conversation by phone. She was worried. A BOC dispatcher was



Photo Credit: Courtesy of Larry Blair

Division 18 TOS Deborah Vanderploeg and Division 10 Vehicle Operations Supervisor Larry Blair are now united in marriage.

probably going to tell her she had done something wrong.

When Debbie called Larry later that day, her first question was, "What did I do wrong?"

Nothing, said Larry. He just wanted to get to know her, and had asked her to call on the phone, since the radio was reserved for official business.

And that's how D-18 and Number 3 set up their first date at a local restaurant. Debbie actually missed that initial date - she had to go into the hospital for a week, but that's another story.

Debbie and Larry, now a vehicle operations supervisor at Gateway Division 10, did finally meet, got to know each other, and exchanged vows this past Feb. 15.

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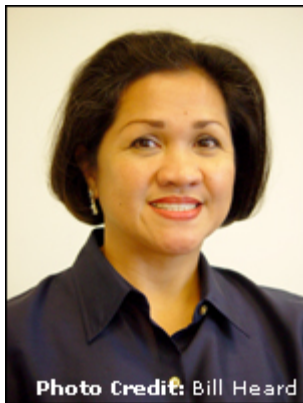
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Photo Credit: Bill Heard
MTA Controller Josie Nicasio

Featured Speaker -- MTA Controller Josie Nicasio was a featured speaker, earlier this month, at an Institute of Management and Administration conference in New Orleans. In her talk, she described the system technology upgrades MTA has made in its accounts payable procedures. In FY 2000, only 58 percent of invoices were paid within 30 days. Currently, 85 percent of invoices are paid within a month – a 27 percent improvement – and more improvement is expected. Nicasio attributes the progress to the increased attention given accounts payable and cooperation by other departments in meeting the CEO's mandate for improvement. (2/27/04)

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Photo Credit: Bill Heard

Construction has begun at the Wilshire/Vermont Metro Rail station on an apartment and retail development. LAUSD will build a middle school nearby.

Board Approves Sale of Land for LAUSD Middle School

By RICK JAGER

(Feb. 27, 2004) The MTA Board approved a deal, Thursday, that allows the Los Angeles Unified School District to purchase MTA-owned land above the Wilshire/Vermont Metro Red Line Station for construction of a middle school.

Under the agreement, MTA will sell to LAUSD a 2.59-acre parcel of land at the subway station. The cost of the land is estimated at \$5,207,000 million, plus accrued interest. It may take up to 28 months to close escrow on the deal.

MTA owns two pieces of property totaling 6.85 acres over and near the Wilshire/Vermont station.

A 5.83-acre parcel surrounds the station portal and is bounded by Wilshire Boulevard, Vermont Avenue, Sixth Street, and Shatto Place. A separate 1.02-acre site is located at Wilshire and Shatto Place.

Commercial development

A 3.24-acre portion of the larger parcel is currently undergoing commercial development by Wilshire Vermont Housing Partners LLC (WVHP).

When completed, the commercial development will provide approximately 448 apartments, 35,000 square feet of retail space and a large street-level public plaza fronting the subway portal.

The Board also approved an agreement with WVHP that will cover the cost of reconstructing a new bus layover area on the Wilshire/Shatto parcel.

The new layover area will have six standard bus bays and five spaces for 60-foot articulated buses. The site's existing bus plaza will be eliminated to make room for the proposed middle school and the commercial development.

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