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[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom](#) (web)

[CEO Hotline](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/
Library](#)
[Metro Cafe](#) (pdf)

[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Retirement
Round-up](#)

Metro Info

[Strategic Plan](#) (pdf)

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Metro's Sector Approach Still Evolving, Says GM David Armijo

- [Orange Line on the horizon](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(March 18, 2004) Metro's service sector approach is still evolving, as David Armijo sees it. It began in 2001 as a concept, became reality in 2002 and in 2004 will begin to show benefits from the effort invested in it.

Armijo, general manager for the San Fernando Valley sector, says his first fiscal year's work was to eliminate duplication, improve efficiency and performance. That year, the sector realized a \$3 million savings.

The second year was focused on improving productivity, improving on-time performance, reducing customer complaints, accidents and Workers' Compensation claims.

Armijo compares the development of the service sectors to a fruit tree. "You don't get fruit the first year, it takes time to nurture and grow. We're in a transitional period now."

Hitting the numbers

But he believes that in the fiscal year ahead the San Fernando Valley sector, along with the four others, will begin hitting the numbers and putting more programs into place.

"We're going to be more creative," he says. "There are a lot of ideas among the general managers."

One of the things Armijo wants to accomplish in the Valley is to improve conditions aboard Metro Buses, including reducing graffiti, by developing better relations with the community and the schools.

The opening of a new Sheriff's station



GM David Armijo

Commitment to the Community

(March 18, 2004) As if General Manager David Armijo's service sector job didn't keep him busy enough, he also has made a major commitment to the San Fernando Valley community.

For the past two years, he has served on the board of the Valley Girl Scout Council. As an executive committee member, he helped revise the by-laws, adjust the organization's business practices and evaluate the senior staff.

He also is serving this year on the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) Leadership Institute. The group has studied criminal justice in the Valley, human resources and needs among the area's needy families and the arts.

At a recent luncheon, Armijo introduced the new Metro Connections hub and spoke concept to the VICA transportation committee. He'll now serve on a subcommittee where his expertise will be a resource in developing transportation solutions for the community.

Finally, Armijo – who holds a masters degree in public administration from Cal State Long Beach – continues his commitment to education by teaching

adjacent to the sector office in Chatsworth later this month is an important element of the plan, but it also will allow closer cooperation between the field supervisors and vehicle operations supervisors on his staff and the Sheriff's deputies.

Orange Line on the horizon

The biggest thing on the Valley sector's horizon, however, is the opening in mid-2005 of the Metro Orange Line – the bus transitway connecting North Hollywood and Warner Center. And Armijo already is looking ahead to the elements of a service plan.

The cross-Valley express line, which will see 60-foot articulated buses serving 13 bus stations along the 14-mile restricted roadway, will be keyed to the Metro Red Line schedule and will foster a significant number of local route changes.

These might include "circulator" shuttle buses which would feed passengers into the Warner Center hub beginning in FY 2006. The shuttle could employ 30-foot buses as the most appropriate vehicles for that type of service.

Noting that the area is expecting sizeable population growth in the near future, Armijo says, "A circulator will encourage more people to begin relying on public transportation."

A prestigious assignment

The Metro Orange Line is expected to be a prestigious assignment for the bus operators, including extra-board drivers, who will be headquartered at West Valley Division 8.

Operators, who may bid into the assignment under the current contract agreement, will be specially trained to handle the big coaches.

Training also will cover the unique requirements of the transitway, including signal preemption, schedules, line connections and safety, station stops and customer service.

"We really want this to be a successful service," says Armijo. "We want the operators to be ambassadors and to be as proud of operating the line as we are of providing it. We want to be sure they have what they need to make it a success."

a professional-level course on leadership at CSULB.

In May, the university's College of Health and Human Resources will present Armijo the Distinguished Alumnus Award for 2004. The award honors career achievement and community involvement.

About his community work, Armijo says, "From my standpoint, it's an opportunity to tell the Metro story and to network with other business leaders, the public and non-profit organizations. People are always amazed about how much there is to the MTA."