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Katie Bennett of Flexcar Member Relations, right, shows MTA's Lynn Goldsmith how to use her membership SmartCard to activate the car's computer system and open the doors. Below, Goldsmith punches her membership pin number into the on-board computer system. Once she's recognized by the system, she's ready to drive away.



PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

## Flexcar an Option for Employees Who Commute to Work

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By BILL HEARD

(April 9, 2004) Angela Pina, a Metro Rail document control assistant, and Lynn Goldsmith, a transportation planning manager, are both members of Flexcar, the car-sharing service.

Pina commutes to her job at Metro Red Line Division 20 from the Inland Empire. She checks out one of Flexcar's Honda Civic gas/electric sedans about twice a month to drive to doctors' appointments in Redondo Beach and Westchester.

Goldsmith, who commutes to MTA Headquarters from Simi Valley, has never used the service.

So, earlier this week, Goldsmith went down to the P-1 level to have a look at the two Flexcar vehicles parked there for members' use. She wanted a refresher on how to check out and use the cars. For her effort, she received \$20 in "Flexbucks" for two free hours' use.

"I'd like Flexcar to be an option," says Goldsmith. "It could be used during lunch hours, because I don't have my car here."

### Reservations needed

Flexcar charges \$10 an hour – all gasoline, insurance and other expenses – are included in the hourly rate. The vehicles must be reserved ahead of time by phone or e-mail. The cars also can be kept overnight and members are not charged the hourly rate between 9 p.m. and 7 a.m.

"This is the best thing since pantyhose," says Pina, who spends about \$35 a month to use Flexcar. "I'll tell anyone, if you live out of the city and need to go somewhere during the day, just take Flexcar."

Since its introduction at MTA last July, 61 employees have joined Flexcar, says General Manager Ryan Grady. The company has begun a drive to bring more employees into the system, with enrollment sessions planned within the next few weeks at the Regional Rebuild Center and at Division 20.

"We're pleased that many of our employees see the benefit of car-sharing and how the Flexcar program can work for them," says Jami Carrington of Program Service and Development. "We encourage new and existing members to take advantage of the free time bonuses offered to learn how to use the cars."

#### **Flexcar Enrollment Deal**

Any eligible MTA employee who signs up for Flexcar membership can enroll for a one-time \$15 lifetime charge. Employees will not have to pay the annual \$25 membership fee. Employees who enroll by May 31 will receive \$20 in Flexbucks. For more information, contact Irma Rivera at 922-4683 or Flexcar Member Relations, Katie Bennett at 213.482.FLEX (3539). More information> Click here <http://www.flexcar.com/losangeles/> or go to Flexcar web site, select Los Angeles region, then "MTA employees" under Los Angeles Area Specials.

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