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With the Santa Anita Racetrack as a backdrop, operators must swerve through the cones and maneuver quickly and precisely to keep the competitive edge in the Metro Bus Rodeo.



PHOTO BY FRANKLIN A. HOLMAN

Metro Bus Rodeo Set for July 31 at Santa Anita

- Safe Driving programs are new element
- Recognition for safe operators

(April 21, 2004) The 29th Annual Metro Bus Rodeo is scheduled Saturday, July 31, at the Santa Anita Gate 6 Parking lot in Arcadia.

This year's event includes a tough obstacle course for Metro Bus operators, a demanding set of mechanical challenges for division maintenance teams, a classic car show, new bus display, catered barbecue, information booths and family entertainment.

The deadline for registering for this year's Bus Rodeo is June 25. Four days of practice sessions are scheduled from July 15 to 18 at Santa Anita.

Operators also can schedule practice sessions on the OCI bus simulator by contacting Robert Ellison at 922-6774. The simulator's programs include a realistic obstacle course.

The preliminary competition is set for Wednesday, July 21 to Saturday, July 24 at Santa Anita. The 30 top-scoring operators will compete in the finals the following Saturday.

The winners of the operator and maintenance contests will represent Metro at a Southern California event, Sept. 18, in Hemet and at the American Public Transit Association international finals, Oct. 9, in Atlanta.

New: Safe Driving Program

A new element – the Safe Driving Programs – is being added, this year, to give recognition to operators who are safe drivers but who don't wish to compete in or may not meet all the qualifications for the Bus Roadeo.

Operators who meet certain eligibility requirements and have had no avoidable accidents in the previous 12 months can qualify as Safe Operators. Each will receive a Safe Driving pin to wear on his or her uniform.

Every operator who qualifies for the Bus Roadeo, whether they compete or not, also may participate in a "Knowledge Roadeo." By passing a 50-question exam on defensive driving, traffic rules and laws and Metro safe driving rules, an operator may qualify as a division's Most Knowledgeable Operator.

Safe Operators with no more than two years' service may apply for a division's Rookie of the Year award. Selections will be based on the best overall driving record.

There also are "Safest Operator" designations for each division and service sector. Selections will be based on best overall driving records.

In addition to the Safe Driving pins, other recognition includes a certificate and personal award for those named the Most Knowledgeable Operators and Rookie of the Year.

The safety quiz will be offered from May 16 to 29. The Safe Driving pins, certificates and other Safe Driving Program awards will be presented in mid-June.