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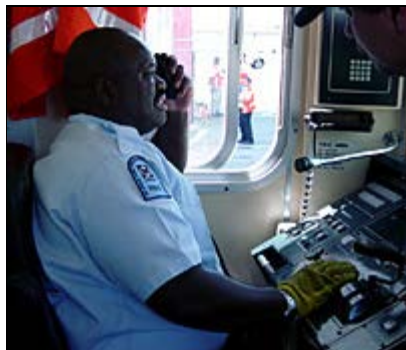
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Metro Rail Operator Russell Caddell checks with Yard Control before getting his train underway.

Rail Operator Russell Caddell's First Raildeo Competition

By LISA HUYNH

(May 4, 2004) Despite the warm weather at the 2004 Raildeo, Metro Rail Operator Russell Caddell managed to stay cool, calm and collected throughout the entire competition.

"Mr. Caddell is an ideal operator, in that he's very diligent, receptive, and retains information well," said Transit Operations Supervisor Gerald Harper, shortly before Caddell took his turn. "He excels in the classroom and I'm sure he'll do well in this competition."

It was an accurate prediction.

Caddell ranked tenth out of 19 competitors. Not bad, he believes, considering it was his first time competing. And, he has only been a rail operator for a little over a year.

Caddell, 45, started as a Metro Bus operator in 1997 and made the move to rail last year.

'Work on my skills'

"I decided to participate in this year's Raildeo because I thought this would help me work on my skills as an operator," said Caddell.

The toughest part of the competition was the obstacle course. The easiest was the uniform inspection.

"I did this competition for fun, experience and training," said Caddell. "I would love to participate again next year, as well as every year after that."

The only thing he would do differently next time is to work on executing smoother braking.

PHOTOS BY LISA HUYNH



Raildeo judge Davide Puglisi, right, evaluates Operator Russell Caddell's performance during his turn at the train controls.