

[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)

[Org Chart](#) (pdf)

[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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Procurement's Materials Management unit held a double celebration at the RRC, Monday. The cake on the left honors 15 employees who have been accident-free for five years or more. The "Welcome Back" cake on the right is held by Truck Driver/Clerk Willie Ruiz, who just returned from a year on active duty. From left are Joe Lopez, Joaquin Vasquez, Terry Edwards, Jose Borrego, Kris Karbowski, Frank Gatdula, Mike Quick, Marshall Griffin, Ruiz and Ed Marshall.



PHOTOS BY BILL HEARD

## 15 Materials Management Employees Honored for Safety Records

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 26, 2004) Marshall Griffin hasn't had a job-related accident or injury since he joined Metro in June 1984. Frank Gatdula has been injury-free since he was hired in August 1986.

Griffin and Gatdula, both clerks in the Materials Management Department, also have worked in other jobs where strains, slips, trips and falls are common hazards.

The men were among 15 Materials Management employees who were honored for their long-term safety records during a luncheon at the Regional Rebuild Center, Monday. All have been accident-free for five years or more.

Their achievements are a reflection of the 150-member unit's overall



Combining 37 years of accident-free service are Frank Gatdula, left, who hasn't had a lost-time accident since he was hired in August 1986 and Marshall Griffin, who has not been injured on the job since he was hired in June 1984.

safety record.

"We've had no lost-time injuries for 366 days now," said Dieter Hemsing, director, Inventory Management and department safety officer. "We want to honor the people who have high-risk jobs. They are our heroes when it comes to safety because they've led by example."

Honored at Monday's ceremony in addition to Griffin and Gatdula were Jose Borrego, accident free since May 1990; Santos Carillo, March 1999; Dante Dorsey, August 1998; Eddie Edgeston, September 1986; Terry Edwards, May 1996; Kristopher Karboski, January 1994; Jose Lopez, January 1999; Edward Marshall; September 1986; Michael Quick, April 1991; Joaquin Rosas, July 1990; and Bryan Wielandt, October 1989. Materials Manager Bill Kovach also has not had a lost-time accident since he was hired in November 1971.

"My job was tough and I'm glad to be back," Willie Ruiz told his co-workers in a brief speech during the Monday's safety celebration. Army Reserve Sgt. Ruiz led a squad of truck drivers based in Kuwait who made numerous logistics runs into neighboring Iraq. After a year's service, he returned to work May 24.



### **Accidents fell dramatically**

For many years, Materials Management averaged between seven and 15 lost-time injuries a year. But once the Safety's First program began, Hemsing said, the accident rate fell dramatically. The last Materials Management employee to be hurt on the job suffered a shoulder injury on May 23, 2003.

"This has been a team effort," said Ted Montoya, deputy executive officer and department head. Montoya, who began as a bus operator and has worked 28 years accident-free, noted that safety information is posted and discussed regularly and that unit supervisors stay involved in the program.

Procurement and Material Management Executive Officer Lonnie Mitchell stressed the importance of leadership to the success of the program. "You need to take care of your people, and part of taking care of them is minimizing their exposure to injury in the workplace."

Marshall Griffin has his own formula for safety: "Whenever I walk through the warehouse, I'm always aware of what's around me."

Staying off the injured list is important to Griffin. During the basketball season, he's on the court almost every night refereeing high school games.

"I try not to get hurt refereeing basketball so I can work here," he said, "and I try not to get hurt here so I can work there."

