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Venice Division Cheers Visit of Olympic Flame

- Venice Beach was starting point of Los Angeles relay on Wednesday.

By GAYLE ANDERSON
June 17, 2004 - Acting Transportation Manager Johnny Lindsey got the call around 6:30 a.m. at the Venice Division Wednesday morning from Bus Operations Control. The controller was announcing the arrival of the Olympic torch and asking divisions to make way for the relay as it traversed Los Angeles streets throughout the day.

"Although the relay stops traffic and draws onlookers, it takes just minutes to pass through," said Lindsey, "so it didn't cause any scheduling problems. What was really exciting was that the Olympic torch was going to pass right by the Venice Division."

Actor Sylvester Stallone kicked off the Olympic torch relay run at Venice Beach at 8 a.m., taking the flame from Mayor James Hahn. Stallone was the first of nearly 150 runners carrying the flame toward Dodger Stadium, each one using their torch to ignite one held by the next runner. The carriers included celebrities such as Ellen DeGeneres and Tom Cruise and Olympic stars like Janet Evans and Rafer Johnson.

Acting Transportation Manager Johnny Lindsey captured the sequence of events as the Olympic Torch Relay passed by Venice Division on the morning of June 16.





Lindsey didn't recognize the runner carrying the torch along this stretch of the relay route, but it was enough to see the flame and the pageantry that surrounds it.

He estimates about 30 employees saw the torch as it passed by Venice Division at 9:45 a.m.

"I grabbed my camera and we all ran out along with the rest of the community," said Lindsey. "We were waving and cheering. It was like a big parade, with music and announcements and flags. It was great!"



The relay that began in Venice passed through many Metro routes and Los Angeles communities, including Westwood, Beverly Hills, Hollywood, Koreatown and Boyle Heights, and ended at Dodger Stadium around 5:30 p.m. The flame departed for St. Louis later in the evening.

The Olympic Flame was ignited in Olympia on March 25, 2004 and began a 46,800-mile journey June 4. It passed through Africa and South America for the first time. The relay will make a final trip around Greece before arriving in Athens for the opening ceremony Aug. 13.