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SF Valley's 'Phoenix Project' Bringing Management to the Streets

By ERIC RAPP

(July 16, 2004) Management and sector staff at Metro San Fernando Valley are hitting the road. No, nobody is leaving – it's all part of a new plan being implemented throughout the sector.

The program, named the "Phoenix Project" to symbolize a new beginning, is a commitment by sector management at all levels to frequently take time to ride San Fernando Valley bus lines, talking and listening to operators and customers.

Assistant Transportation Manager George Trudeau and Senior Safety Specialist Richard Long developed the program, working together to develop schedules and lines for sector staff to target.

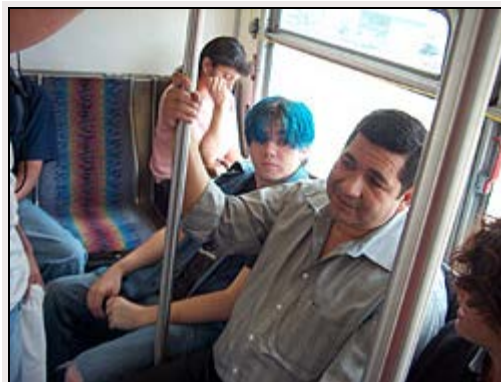
"There's only so much you can find out when you're sitting in an office," Trudeau says. "We realized that everybody in management should take some time to see how we're really doing, and to make sure that our employees out there on the front lines know that we understand what their jobs are like."

Every single person involved

That means every single person in the sector is involved in the Phoenix Project. Last week, nearly the entire management team, from administrative analysts to the sector general manager, fanned out on different San Fernando Valley bus lines, talking to operators and customers.

"I think we had a very productive day," says General Manager David Armijo, "and we'll keep making ourselves available to our employees and our customers. If we can solve problems and be visible, we'll have a very positive impact."

For one customer on the Ventura Rapid Bus, the presence of sector staff helped make his day a bit better.



General Manager David Armijo talks with patrons on the Ventura Metro Rapid Bus at the Universal City station. Below, Senior Safety Specialist Richard Long, in safety vest, hands out Metro information and schedules to customers waiting to board a bus at the Universal City station.



He'd had some concerns about the construction and operation of the Metro Orange Line. By the time he left the bus at Van Nuys Boulevard, his questions had been answered and he went away happier with Metro.

"Our core mission is to run a world-class transit system," says Armijo. "The Phoenix Project really lets us see what we're doing well and what we need to improve on to accomplish that mission."

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