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9 New Operators Graduate from Metro Rail Training Class

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Metro Blue and Green Line graduates and their instructors are, back row from left, Arnold Johnson, John Cabanas, Ruben Flores, Jun Soliven, Teresa Haywood, Felipe Perez and Freddie Marlowe. Front row from left are Jeffery Fontanez, Michael Santillan, Rodney Smith and Pedro Ayala.

PHOTOS: DAVIDE PUGLISI



Metro Gold Line graduates and their instructors are, back row from left, Gerald Harper, Arnold Johnson, Thomas Adkins, Calvin Hayes, Charles Garyson and Freddie Marlowe. Front row from left are Hilgard Tatum, Glenda Murrell, Katy Bustamante and Aaron Beckett.

9 New Operators Graduate from Metro Rail Training Class

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Aug. 12, 2004) After 10 weeks of extensive training, Metro honored 16

new rail operators in two ceremonies.

The first, on July 30, recognized the Gold Line operators at Division 21. The second ceremony, held at Metro Blue Line Division 11, acknowledged the Metro Blue and Green Line operators.

The Gold line graduates are: Calvin Hayes, Aaron Beckett, Katy Bustamante, Glenda Murrell, Charles Grayson, Hilgard Tatum and Thomas Adkins, all of Division 21; and Teresa Haywood, Division 2.

The Blue Line graduates include: Pedro Ayala, Ruben Flores, Felipe Perez, Jun Soliven, all of Division 1; John Cabana, Division 6, Jeffery Fontanez and Rodney Smith, Division 18; and Michael Santillan, Division 2.

During the ceremony, the operators were given their keys, badges and certificates.

"They worked really hard to make it here," says Orleatha Smith, rail instructor and training coordinator. "It's a long road and they sacrificed a lot to make it."

The hiring process for the new rail operators began long before the official 10 weeks of training. Metro requires all rail applicants to have at least two years of experience as a bus operator.

After the employees applied to work as rail operators, a thorough screening process evaluated everything from their safety records to attendance. After making it through the screening process, they had to pass an agility test.

10 grueling weeks

Once the employees were qualified, they began 10 grueling weeks of study, testing and training. Their day began at 6 a.m. and ended at 2 p.m. Each day was important and every test was imperative. The trainee had to pass with a 90 percent average or be dropped from the class.

"It's like going back to school," says Byron England, rail integration and instruction manager. "They were really committed and many of them put their families on hold to complete this."

Traditionally, Metro retains 75 percent of a rail operator training class. This class represents Metro's goals of maintaining qualified candidates to complete the demanding training process.

"We have not only been able to keep all of them, but they are also the highest-scoring class," says Smith. "Some of them only missed two of over 200 questions."

"They are very special," says England. "We want them to know that we appreciate all their hard work."