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Division 5's
Kenny Howard
still looks the
part of a USC
football
player.

Former Trojan Kenny Howard Knows Metro Bus Parts, But Can He Predict Weekend's USC-UCLA Game?

By RICH MORALLO

(Dec. 2, 2004) Kenny Howard is the man to know if you need a bus part - from a 75-pound alternator to a small glass fuse.

As a maintenance material specialist at Arthur Winston Division 5, Howard can provide 2,000 different equipment supplies from the storeroom to help keep the bus fleet on the road.

"Anything you need to put a bus together, see me," says Howard.

Howard is also the man to know if you are a Trojan fan anticipating this weekend's annual rivalry match with the UCLA Bruins. For three years, Howard played defense on the football team of the University of Southern California and he can tell you all about the Trojans.

'End, tackle, nose guard'

"I played where they needed me - end, tackle, nose guard," recalls Howard, who stands 6-feet, 4 1/2-inches and weighs 360 pounds.

Howard was an offensive tackle on the 1983 All-Central City All-Star Team from Manual Arts High School when he was recruited by USC .

"I was at USC through 1985 and majored in Public Administration with a minor in Public Relations since I could speak Slavic, French and Spanish," Howard said.

Howard's highlight as a Trojan football player came at the Rosebowl in January 1985, when the Trojans played the Ohio State Buckeyes. "I was playing nose guard and when their quarterback hiked the ball, I jammed the center and tackled their running back."



A photo of the 1984 USC defensive linemen shows Number 98 Kenny Howard at far right.

Went for the pros

In 1989, Howard tried out for the NFL Cleveland Browns, but eventually returned to Metro where he had first worked the year before.

"My dad and uncle were also with Metro; they were both maintenance supervisors," said Howard, who now has almost 15 years with the agency.

Last week, Howard predicted a 42-17 Trojan win over Notre Dame. He was close - the final score was 41-10.

"This weekend, I believe the score will be USC - 56 and UCLA - 0," said Howard, who just might have been showing some favoritism to his alma mater.

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Division 9 is 1st Quarter FY 2005 'How You Doin'?' Winner



PHOTO BY LIZ ARMijo-HOLBROOK

San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Maintenance and Transportation employees celebrate winning the "How You Doin'?" award for Best Division for the first quarter of FY 2005. Division 9 Transportation tied with Central City Division 1 for Outstanding Transportation Division for September 2004.


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A Perfect Year For Division 8: No Lost-Time Injuries

By ERIC RAPP

(Dec. 3, 2004) Metro was a different place on Nov. 22, 2003.

A 32-day strike had just ended. The Metro Orange Line had only just begun major construction. The East Side Extension of the Gold Line was just a twinkle in Metro's eye.

A year later, many changes have taken place, but one thing has remained constant: The ironclad commitment of West Valley Division 8 Maintenance's to safety.

One full year

On Nov. 22, 2004, Division 8's Maintenance team reached one full year without a single lost-time injury.

"This is an amazing milestone to reach, and an incredible achievement," says Maintenance Manager Pat Orr. "For a division this large to go that long without lost-time injuries takes real dedication and a commitment to working safely."

For employees, the milestone is especially sweet. The team almost achieved a perfect year in 2003, falling just short at what was then a division record of 282 days.

There are plans in the works to hold a large, three-shift party, perhaps combined with a holiday party. Whatever form the celebration takes, employees will certainly be having a good time.

"This definitely deserves a celebration," says Orr.

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Traction
Power
Inspectors
Tobe
Cowden and
Frank
Hernandez
work to
repair the
downed
catenary
wire on the
Metro Green
Line east of
the Aviation
station.

Wayside Systems' 36-Hour Effort Restores Green Line Service

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 3, 2004) Metro Green Line service is back to normal, today, following a 36-hour effort by Light Rail Wayside Systems employees who repaired damage caused by a train that ripped out a 450-foot section of electrical wire.

The incident happened at 5:30 p.m., Nov. 30, when the train's pantograph, a metal rod that draws power from the overhead catenary wire, somehow became entangled in the wire as the westbound train approached the Aviation station.

The electrical wire, under 8,000 pounds tension, snapped, but the train – hurtling along at 50 to 55 mph – continued forward carrying the wire with it and tearing steel arms off six or more catenary poles. No one was hurt in the incident.

A bus bridge transported passengers to LAX and other destinations for a short while, until the Rail Operations Center set up single-tracking on the eastbound track around the Aviation station.

Worked long shifts

"Our managers and crews were working 12- and 14-hour shifts to repair the damage," says Rob Chappell, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations.

Working in bone-chilling overnight temperatures, Metro Rail crews de-energized the catenary wire, cut it and spliced it and replaced all the damaged hardware on the poles. They then re-strung the wire to the original 8,000 pounds tension. After testing, the repaired stretch was again deemed safe for operation.

The 25-member Traction Power group bore the main responsibility for repairs. Supporting the 'round-the-clock effort were the 20 members of the Track Department and the Signal Department's 20 employees.

Difficult circumstances

"Everyone did an excellent job under difficult circumstances," says Chappell. "They all had a can-do attitude and made sure everyone worked safe on the job."

Regular Metro Green Line service resumed at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Dec. 2.

"The goal of Rail Operations is to move people and we have to do whatever it takes to make that happen," says Chappell. "We're the people who work behind the scenes to get things done and get them done right."

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TBAC Chairman Robert Weir, center, takes helm of small business advocacy group at recognition reception held Thursday. In attendance and networking are, clockwise from center left, Diana Ho, Los Angeles Community College District; Kellie Irving, Metro; Jin Chon, Business Resource Group; Joe Hernandez, DEOD Manager; Tashia Smith, Contract Compliance Manager, and Sharon Evans, Business Resource Group.



PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

Small Business Network Installs New Officers

- The Transportation Business Advisory Council is a group of business organizations that advocate on behalf of greater participation of small business in the Metro contract process.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 3, 2004) The Transportation Business Advisory Council (TBAC) installed a new board of executive officers at a reception hosted by Metro's Small Business Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department (DEOD) on Thursday.

Dedicated to strengthening the network of small business organizations who advocate for contracting opportunities at Metro and other public agencies, the officers will serve a two-year term in 2005 and 2006.

The new officers represent a powerhouse of diversity in the small business community.



Oath of Office: Assistant MTA Board Secretary Sharon Sterling, at right, swears in new TBAC officers, from left, Lucia Tam, Bill Yang, Gladys Hurtado, Barbara Sullivan, and Chairman Robert Weir. PHOTO: SLAWOMIR KORTAS

Businessman Robert Weir, elected chairman, is an officer of the American Indian Chamber of Commerce. Other officers are Vice-chairwoman Barbara Sullivan, a representative of the National Association of Women Business Owners; Secretary Lucia Tam, the Chinese-American Construction Professionals; Parliamentarian Gladys Hurtado, the Latin Business Association, and financial officer William Yang, the Asian-American Architects and Engineers.

Welcoming remarks were delivered by the department's contract compliance officer Tashai Smith, who voiced the department's commitment to Metro's working partner relationship with small business.

Smith saluted the efforts of the outgoing officers, chaired by Marsha Brown of the Women's Transportation Coalition. "Their outstanding leadership inspired many of the advances made in public contracting," she said.

During their tenure, TBAC members authored the White Paper, which provided recommendations to Metro on how to assist the certified small business community.

On behalf of DEOD's Deputy Executive Officer Linda Wright, Smith acknowledged: "TBAC's strong network has provided a contracting 'safety net' that increases opportunities for certified small businesses to secure contracts at Metro and other public contracting agencies. They have brought many new and fresh ideas to the table for remedy of legitimate concerns that have impeded contracting success in the past."



Outgoing executive board members receive resolutions of commendation from Metro staff. From left, holding resolutions, are 2002-2004 officers Robert Weir, Maria Molina-Solano, Lucia Tam, outgoing Chairwoman Marsha Brown and Bill Yang. Metro staff, background from left, are Lucille Coleman, Joe Hernandez, Tashai Smith, Administration Executive Officer Don Ott and Kellie Irving.

PHOTO: SLAWOMIR KORTAS

The TBAC council is a group of business organizations that advocate on behalf of greater participation of small business in the Metro contract process. The TBAC organization also helps Metro meet or exceed participation goals for MTA contracts, said Smith.

Currently, 14 organizations, including the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Southern California, Filipino American Society of Architects and Engineers, Latin Business Association and the National Association of Women Business Owners, head a large membership of small businesses and entrepreneurs.


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Mayor Hahn Appoints Councilman Ed Reyes to Board Vacancy

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Dec 7, 2004) Mayor James Hahn has appointed Los Angeles City Councilman Ed Reyes to fill a spot left vacant on the Board of Directors by the resignation of Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa.

Reyes follows Council members Tom LaBonge and Martin Ludlow as Hahn's appointees to the Board.

"I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve as one of the Mayor's appointees to the MTA Board," Reyes said of the Dec. 3 appointment.

"Moreover, I look forward to working with my fellow Board members to help create safe, affordable and efficient methods of transportation for many diverse communities of the County of Los Angeles."

Reyes, a native of Los Angeles, grew up in the Lincoln Heights and Cypress Park neighborhoods. He attended UCLA where he earned a Bachelors Degree in English and a Masters Degree in Architecture and Urban Planning.

"I am pleased to welcome Councilmember Reyes to the MTA Board," said Hahn. "Ed shares my goal of providing efficient, affordable and effective mass transit to the residents of Los Angeles. He understands that no big city can truly offer economic opportunity to its residents without also providing a great public transportation network."

Reyes lives in the Mount Washington neighborhood with his wife, Martha, and children, Natalie, Eddie Jr., Adan and Angel.



Los Angeles City
Councilman Ed Reyes


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Metro Sets Family Picnic for April at Universal Studios Hollywood

- Picnic replaces Holiday Magic dinner dance
- Other holiday parties, breakfasts are scheduled

(Dec. 7, 2004) Metro will start a new tradition next spring: an employee picnic with food and fun for the whole family.

The Saturday, April 16, event at Universal Studios Hollywood will replace the annual Holiday Magic formal dinner and dance.

The Metro family picnic will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Universal Amphitheater Concourse. In addition to a buffet lunch, there will be games and prizes, balloon artists and face painters, celebrity look-alikes, cartoon characters and a disc jockey.

Tickets, priced at \$25 each, will admit employees and their families to both the picnic and to the theme park, generally open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The tickets will go on sale in February at the Metro Store. Store employees will visit the operating divisions in the spring to sell picnic tickets. Ticket sales are limited to five per employee.

"Employees told us they wanted a more casual event they could enjoy with their whole family and that would be easier on the pocketbook," says Danielle Boutier, executive manager, Communications Services. "Having a dinner dance was hard because it conflicted with so many other holiday activities and family occasions."

Meanwhile, however, the operating divisions have scheduled their traditional holiday parties and breakfasts. The Christmas Eve breakfast at the Gateway Building has been set for Thursday, Dec. 23 since Friday, Dec. 24 is a holiday for non-contract employees.


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Metro Adding 250,000 Bus Revenue Service Hours Dec. 19

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 7, 2004) Metro is increasing annual bus revenue service by 250,000 hours on Sunday, Dec. 19, adding scores of buses to 60 bus lines, implementing two new Metro Rapid bus lines and creating three new local bus routes.

The two new Metro Rapid lines are Line 740 via Hawthorne, Crenshaw and Martin Luther King boulevards, Broadway and Aliso/Arcadia streets and Metro Rapid Line 780 between Hollywood and Vine and Pasadena City College. Metro Rapid service begins on Monday, Dec. 20.

Metro also will implement new weekend service on Line 265 between the Lakewood Mall and Pico Rivera and start new limited stop service on Line 317 along Fairfax Avenue and Line 378 from Arcadia to downtown Los Angeles via Las Tunas and Huntington.

More service on 60 lines

In addition, Metro will add service on 60 lines to improve service in heavily used corridors and comply with the federal Consent Decree that calls for the addition of 145 buses to the Metro system by December 2004. Metro added 43 buses earlier in June and will place 102 more buses in service Dec. 19.

Four line cancellations are planned to improve efficiencies and avoid duplication of service. They are Line 340 (replaced with new Metro Rapid Line 740), Line 380 (replaced with new Metro Rapid Line 780) Line 491, (replaced with Metro line 487 –LA/El Monte/Sierra Madre) and Line 576.

Line 576 (South Los Angeles/Pacific Palisade Express) is being cancelled due to low ridership, but there is ample alternative service that currently duplicates the line. The savings generated will be re-invested in the Gateway Cities Service Sector to support other bus service.


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Automated Voice System Being Installed in Metro Buses

- Finish 90 percent of fleet by March 2005
- System is passenger-friendly, improves safety

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 8, 2004) By the end of March 2005, some 98 percent of the Metro Bus fleet will feature a computer program capable of recognizing and announcing the 18,500 bus stops and transfer points on the 189 routes in Metro's 1,433 square mile service area.

A vehicle equipped with the Automated Voice Annunciator (AVA) system will announce bus line destinations to patrons waiting at curbside and will automatically provide passengers with on-board verbal and visual announcements of all stops and transfer points along the route.

The Automated Voice Annunciator system was recently installed and is now operational on 78 buses at Venice Division 6. West Hollywood Division 7 is next in line for AVA installation, followed by Gateway Division 10 before the end of December.

Once the Westside/Central sector buses have been converted to AVA, consultants will install the system on buses in the Gateway sector and then in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valley sectors. South Bay sector buses should be converted by the end of March.

Nation's largest fleet

When the AVA system is activated and operational in all of the 2,400-bus fleet, Metro will have the nation's largest fleet of AVA-equipped buses.

A bus equipped with the AVA system "recognizes" every bus stop, cross street and transfer point along its route. Assigned to another bus line, it is easily re-programmed when the operator signs on with a "smart card" ID badge.

AVA is an element of the Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS). ATMS includes a voice and data radio system, automatic passenger counter and computer-aided communications dispatch equipment in the Bus Operations Center (BOC).

ATMS also links the BOC with road supervisor vehicles, Metro tow trucks and vault trucks, as well as with field equipment technician vehicles.

'Most visible aspect'

"AVA is the most visible aspect of the ATMS project to the public," says Tom Jasmin, director of Operations Control. "Because it calls all

stops automatically, it allows the operator to concentrate more on the safe operation of the bus."

AVA also makes passenger loading and off-loading more efficient, Jasmin says. The curbside announcement helps prevent passengers from boarding the wrong bus, while the on-board announcements give riders time to gather their belongings and prepare to get off.

The verbal announcements also assist the visually impaired, says Joe Vicente, assistant director of Operations New Technology Support. Next-stop information, which is displayed visually on a variable message board above the operator's head, is helpful to the hearing impaired.

'Safer and more convenient'

"The AVA system helps project the image that Metro is really taking care of its customers," says Vicente. "It makes riding the buses safer and more convenient."

The AVA project took shape last June, when Motorola consultants began preparing digital files for all bus stops, cross streets and transfer points, says ATMS Project Manager Tom Pope. The verbal announcements then were professionally recorded in a studio in Texas.

Thousands of information bits were downloaded into Division 6 buses, which then were driven over the various routes to test the system's accuracy.

"With more than 18,000 bus stops," says Pope, "and to get every stop programmed accurately was technically very challenging."


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Disciplinary Action on Operator Seat Belt Use Postponed

(Dec. 8, 2004) The new policy requiring operators to wear seat belts when driving a Metro Bus went into effect, Nov. 1, but a plan to make failure to wear the safety device a major safety rule infraction subject to disciplinary action has been postponed.

"The seat belt policy is still in effect," says Deputy CEO John Catoe, "and we want to encourage all employees to use them."

Noting that the safety infraction rule was to have been effective, Jan. 1, 2005, Catoe said enforcement of operator disciplinary action has been delayed until an arbitrator can rule on the matter. A hearing has been scheduled for March 10.

Metro made a non-binding agreement with the UTU, after the union sought an injunction in Superior Court to stop enforcement of any disciplinary action for operators' failure to use seat belts.

Coaches retrofitted with new belts

Metro Operations has retrofitted every coach in the fleet with 72-inch seat belts. The retractable belts, with a quick-release button, will fit operators of every size and shape.

Metro Bus operators currently are being trained in the proper use of the retractable seat belts. Seat belt training will be included in every operator's annual Verification of Transit Training (VTT) refresher course.

Metro safety officials have cited studies showing that between Dec. 1, 2002 and Dec. 1, 2003, a total of 453 bus operators were injured in traffic collisions.

Officials point to three cases this year – two in February and one in March – in which Metro Bus operators fell out of the driver's seat and lost control of the bus. All three incidents resulted in injuries and damages.

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Metro Bus operators Rosalia Medina, Daniel Batlle and Juan Augspurger braved the rain to provide a bus for the holiday parade.

PHOTO: ELIZABETH ARMIJO-HOLBROOK



San Gabriel Valley Employees Spread Holiday Cheer in Parade

By ELIZABETH ARMIJO-HOLBROOK

(Dec. 8, 2004) A little rain wasn't enough to dampen the spirits of San Gabriel Valley Division Advisory Committee (DAC) members who participated in the 60th Annual Northeast Los Angeles Holiday Parade on Sunday, Dec. 5.

Despite the wet weather, many enthusiastic spectators lined the street as North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Daniel Batlle drove a festive Metro Bus slowly down Figueroa Boulevard.

Joining Batlle on the bus, was San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Operator Juan Augspurger, his friend Gloria, and Division 3 Operator Rosalia Medina, whose children pitched in to get the bus ready on time.

Medina and Mechanic Louis Peralta coordinated the decorations with help from Service Attendant Marlon Garcia and Mechanic Frank Espinosa, who provided his artistic talents to create the holiday scenes painted on the bus.

Parade's a tradition

The parade has become a tradition for San Gabriel Valley DAC members, who enjoy the holiday cheer expressed by the crowds.

In addition to the traditional parade entries, this year's participants included a Santa on stilts, a pink elephant float by the Trash Band as well as other offbeat characters.

Asked what motivates him to volunteer for the parade every year, Augspurger answered, "It's fun to see so many happy people."

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Actor Corbin Bernsen Seeks Metro's Help with Carpool Movie

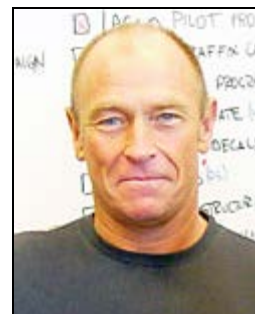
By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 9, 2004) The thought first came to film and TV star Corbin Bernsen while he and a business partner were traveling in the HOV lane and zooming past stalled traffic on the San Diego Freeway.

Later, he noticed a Metro poster of four female bowlers in a red convertible with the tag line: Friends don't let friends drive alone.

An idea was born: Why not a movie about a guy who carools?

And, that's what brought Bernsen to Metro Headquarters on Wednesday. He and producer Tim Gray met with Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond and members of his staff to seek Metro's help.



Actor Corbin Bernsen

PHOTOS: BILL HEARD



Actor Corbin Bernsen, right, discusses ideas for jointly promoting his new movie and carpooling in LA County with Metro Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond and his staff.

Promoting carpooling

"They asked us to give them realistic information about how carools are formed as background for their movie," says Raymond. "And, since we have access to people who carpool, we discussed ways to cooperate on the movie and to promote carpooling."

The movie, which began production in November, will feature a number of TV soap opera stars, including Anthony Geary, who plays Luke on "General Hospital," and Jeanne Cooper, the long-time star of

"The Young and The Restless" – who also is Bernsen's mother.

Titled "Carpool Guy," the film will be the story of an ambitious young advertising agency executive who moves with his wife to a home in the far suburbs of Los Angeles County, Bernsen says.

The ad man soon discovers that his long, difficult commute is a killer, interfering with both his work life and home life. After trying some creative ways to use the HOV lane, he starts a carpool.

'Life becomes better'

"In the end," says Bernsen, "he

finds that by carpooling and adding a couple of hours to his day, his life actually becomes better."

"Carpool Guy," which will be the actor's directorial debut, is expected to be in general theater release by early fall 2005.

"It's good to see that Hollywood is picking up on carpooling as a better way for people to commute," says Raymond. "A film like 'Carpool Guy' could help us reinforce that message."



Metro's Ed Scannell, left, and Gricel Sanchez listen as Corbin Bernsen describes his "Carpool Guy" movie project.


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Div. 1 Transportation #1 in September's "How You Doin'?" Contest

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(Dec. 9, 2004) Central City Division 1 Transportation recently celebrated their accomplishment as September's Outstanding Transportation Division in the "How You Doin'?" program.

Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford and Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens presented the trophy and their appreciation for a job well done.

The "How You Doin'?" program evaluates all Metro divisions in a number of categories and determines ranking throughout the agency each month.

Division 1 Transportation ranked first in the in-service on-time performance category, and was also highly ranked in the areas of fewest customer complaints and the low number of new Workers Compensation claims.

"Some of the credit for this achievement needs to go to the Line Captain program we introduced in August," said Owens. "Other factors contributing to our success include ongoing 'Rap Sessions' with operators two to three times per week, the line saturations with the Sheriff's Department, our supervisors stepping up their roles in the field, and the fact that the majority of our Field Operator and Feedback are being done out on the line by all Transportation Operations Supervisors.

Experienced operators

Line Captains are experienced operators who serve as intermediaries between operators and the management team, fostering open lines of communication and coming up with useful resolutions to improve lines' performances and help reduce accidents.

The operators are recommended for Line Captain positions by Owens and assistant managers Beth Kranda and Thom Mattocks.

"I am very proud of all of our Division 1 Transportation employees who worked together to place number one in September," said Clifford. "I was particularly happy to see that the division scored high in safety and customer service categories, two areas that we feel are extremely important."

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Appearing in a Metro Rail safety video, Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, on screen, cautions kids: "Tracks are for trains, not fun."

Metro Hosts 'Safety Summit Meeting' for LAUSD Principals

(Dec. 9, 2004) Concern for the safety of children at school and in their neighborhoods was the topic that drew some 150 school principals to a Wednesday morning "safety summit meeting" hosted by Metro.

The Los Angeles Unified School District officials heard presentations on pedestrian, traffic, bicycle and rail safety, fire safety and neighborhood watch, among other topics.

Speakers included representatives from the LAPD, LADOT, Automobile Club of Southern California, Metro and a number of local safety organizations.

"We're asking the principals to make the streets around their school safer and help make children safer and healthier," said Tana Ball, LAUSD project director. "This is a great way to open school district doors to all the safety programs."



Metro's rail safety program manager, Barbara Burns, describes the agency's program during

Ball praised Metro's initiative, especially the effort led by Rail Safety Program Manager Barbara Burns to form a partnership with LAUSD.

Burns was among those making a presentation during the safety summit. She provided an overview of Metro's nationally recognized program and showed the agency's rail safety videos, including the new animated film, "Look, Listen and Stay Alive Featuring the Metro Safety

the "safety summit."

Kids".

Partnering with LAUSD

Metro began partnering with LAUSD last spring to expand the reach of its rail safety program to communities farther away from Metro Rail lines.

Over the months, Metro developed an interactive training video for LAUSD and trained the district's safety officers and others from the School Safe Traffic Zone program. That effort helped reach 36,500 LAUSD students in the first six months.

"The program has always concentrated on schools within a 1.5-mile radius of the Metro Gold and Blue Lines, but we have been looking for ways to reach the whole county," Burns said. "We started with LAUSD as a pilot program, because they were the largest. Now that we have seen it can work well, we will attempt the same kind of partnership with all the school districts."



Three cartoon characters play at a Metro Rail station in the rail safety video, "Look, Listen and Stay Alive."

Metro has received permission to expand its program to Pasadena, South Pasadena, Compton, Norwalk, and is working to include the Long Beach School District.

"Our goal is to have our safety programs shown in every school in LA County twice per year," said Burns. -- *By Shantay Iosia and Bill Heard.*


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Sock Away More Money in 401(k) and 457 Plans in 2005

- [457 Deferred Compensation Plan](#)
- [Social Security and SDI Taxes Going Up](#)
- [W-2 Forms](#)
- [Address Change, Form W-4 Reminders](#)

By DAVE WAKELING

(Dec. 9, 2005) As of January 1, 2005, you will be allowed to defer up to \$14,000 annually from your salary into the 401(k) Thrift Plan.

A special provision in the law allows you to defer an additional \$4,000 in to the 401(k) Thrift Plan if you are a "Baby Boomer" (age 50 or greater by Dec. 31, 2005).

457 Deferred Compensation Plan:

As of January 1, 2005, you will be allowed to defer up to \$14,000 annually from your salary. A special provision in the law also allows an additional \$4,000 if you are a "Baby Boomer."

If you are eligible for retirement within three years, you also are eligible for 457 Plan's pre-retirement "catch-up" provision. Your total deferral may increase to \$28,000 effective Jan. 1, 2005. "Catch-Up Provision" packets are available in the Pension and Benefits Office.

Both Plans

You may contribute to both the 401(k) Thrift Plan and the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan for a total deferral of \$28,000. If you are age 50 or greater by Dec. 31, 2005, you may defer up to a total of \$36,000 in both plans.

If you are in "catch-up" and *less than 50 years of age*, you may defer a total of \$42,000. That is \$28,000 to the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan, plus \$14,000 to 401(k). If you are in "catch-up" and *age 50 or older*, you may defer a total of \$46,000. That is \$28,000 to 457 plus \$18,000 to 401(k).

Contributions are deducted each pay period for a total of 26 per year.

To obtain forms for enrollment or contribution changes, employees may contact the Pension and Benefits Office at 922-7184. Investment information is available from Erick Spencer at ICMA-RC 866-339-8795, Orlando Delgado at ICMA-RC 866-266-7312 or from ICMA-RC Investor Services 1-800-669-7400.

Social Security and SDI Taxes Going Up

As of Jan. 1, 2005, the wage base for Social Security will increase from \$87,900 to \$90,000. This means that some employees will experience an increase in Social Security taxes, even though the tax

rate percentage will remain the same.

At a tax rate of 6.2 percent, this is an increase of \$1,302 in the maximum amount of Social Security tax that can be withheld from an employee's paycheck. Deductions for Medicare remain unchanged.

The wage base for State Disability Insurance (SDI) will increase from \$68,829 to \$79,418. At a tax rate of 1.08 percent, this is an increase of \$45.53 over the 2004 SDI maximum withheld. The maximum SDI tax for 2005 will be \$857.71.

W-2 Forms

Metro is in the process of finalizing the Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statements. They will be mailed to employees' homes in January.

If you need a replacement copy of your Form W-2, you must complete a replacement form. You can obtain the form from Forms Online on the myMetro.net or by contacting Payroll at 922-6832 and requesting that a form be sent to you.

Once the form has been received by Payroll, it may take up to a five working days to process.

Metro will offer again this year a service (available Jan. 31, 2005) for those employees who use or are interested in using TurboTax 2004 to prepare their Federal and state income tax returns.

This means that you can download your W-2 information directly into TurboTax, and a good part of your tax filing will be completed for you. The web site will be included on your 2004 Form W-2. Additional information can be obtained at www.probusiness.com/turbotax.

Address Change, Form W-4 Reminders:

Address Change

You should verify the address and Social Security number shown on your pay stub. If you have a change in your mailing address, please notify your Department/Division Manager so that the change can be updated in the Human Resources system before noon Dec. 28, 2004.

If your Social Security number is not correct, contact Gwen Keene in Human Resources immediately at 922-7148.

You also should verify the name on your Social Security card against the name on your pay stub. The IRS may impose a \$50 penalty on the employee and employer for every W-2 if the employee's name does not match that shown on the Social Security card.

If there is a difference, contact Gwen Keene in Human Resources immediately.

Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance

Now is the time to check your Federal and State tax withholding allowances. Did you marry or divorce, gain or lose a dependent, or have major changes in your family income? If you answered "yes," you may need to file a new 2005 Form W-4.

If you are currently claiming "exempt" from tax withholding, you *must* submit a new Form W-4 by Feb. 15, 2005, if you wish to retain your

exempt status. If a new form is not filed and submitted to the Human Resources Department, withholding for Federal and State taxes will automatically default to "Single" with zero (0) withholding allowances.

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A search of Camacho's residence turned up some of the clothing and property taken during the robbery.

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New Metro Rapid Lines to Serve Hawthorne Blvd., Hollywood, Pasadena

By ED SCANNELL

(Dec. 10, 2004) Metro's sleek and fast Metro Rapid Buses are set to roll on two new lines, effective Monday, Dec. 20.

Hollywood-Pasadena Metro Rapid Line 780 and Hawthorne Metro Rapid Line 740 will introduce Metro customers on those two corridors to the same quick service enjoyed daily by thousands of riders on nine other Metro Rapid lines already in service.

"Metro Rapid has consistently lived up to its promise by delivering fast and efficient service," said Board Chairman Frank Roberts. "It's the only on-street bus service that's beating congestion, as evidenced by the patronage on our existing Metro Rapid lines and the emulation of this great service by many other transit agencies across the country."

The 19-mile Hawthorne Metro Rapid Line 740 will operate Monday through Saturday. Beginning at the South Bay Galleria, it will serve the cities of Redondo Beach, Lawndale, Hawthorne and Inglewood ending at Union Station.

Hollywood-Pasadena line

The Hollywood-Pasadena Metro Rapid Line 780 will operate Monday through Friday, serving the cities of Los Angeles, Glendale and Pasadena. In addition to Hollywood, the 15-mile line will serve other popular destinations including Glendale Galleria and Old Pasadena.

As a result of its competitive advantage over local and limited stop bus service and speeds that rival the private vehicle, Metro Rapid has generated significant gains in ridership on the nine existing corridors, attracting discretionary riders as well as people who depend on public transit.

The Metro Rapid Bus Program debuted on Wilshire-Whittier and Ventura Boulevards in June 2000. Metro Rapid buses will operate on a total of 28 lines when expansion of the program is completed in 2008.

Metro Rapid was selected as a semifinalist in Harvard University's 2002 Innovations In American Government Awards as an outstanding example of creative problem solving in the public sector.

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South Bay Operators Piloting Crime and Incident Reporting System

By RICH MORALLO

(Dec. 10, 2004) One operator reported youngsters playing near a bus stop and occasionally jumping into the street. Another reported two passengers who were continuously refusing to pay the fare. A third operator described a parked vehicle in a red curb zone that was making it difficult for the Metro bus to proceed.

These and other South Bay operators are helping pilot a new procedure to report safety and security hazards or violations of transit rules to management and the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.

"All they have to do is pick up a phone and call 310-225-6000," said Sgt. Jim Rifilato. The call goes to his office at the Rosa Parks Metro Blue Line station. If Rifilato is in the field, a recording machine picks up the message.

To help operators provide a complete report, the South Bay sector has provided a Non-Emergency Assistance Request (NEAR) card that reminds operators what information would help managers and deputies investigate an incident.

Wallet-sized and convenient

"The card is wallet-sized and convenient enough to place in a shirt pocket, so they can refer to it at any time when they want to make a report," said Rifilato.

The 5-by-3 inch card allows an operator to report the date, time, and location of an incident, describe the incident and the people involved.

The card also lists the various activities that can be reported, such as alcohol or drugs, disturbance, drinking or eating, fare evasion, graffiti, loud music, smoking, theft, thrown objects and transients.



Carson Division 18 Operator Dionne Graham, left, tells Operator Larry Chandler of Arthur Winston Division 5 about the NEAR program. Below: The wallet-sized NEAR card helps South Bay operators report crimes or incidents aboard Metro Buses.

Los Angeles Sheriff Department Metro South Bay			
NON-EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REQUEST (NEAR) For Use By Metro South Bay Employees Only - NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION - Dial 310-225-6000 then Press "7" after prompt			
Date:	Time:		
Employee Name:	Phone Number:		
Badge Number:	Division:		
Line:	Bus Run:	Route:	Direction:
Description of Non-Emergency Assistance Request:			
Description of Person Involved:			
Type of Activity:			
Alcohol/Drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disturbance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loud Music	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drinking/Eating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smoking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fare Evasion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theft	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Thrown Objects	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transients	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

"I would also request all callers to speak clearly and slowly so I can get all of the details of their phone message when I'm in the field," said Rifilato.

Staff was briefed

Transit managers have briefed the staff at both Arthur Winston Division 5 and Carson Division 18 on the new procedure, and information tables have been set up to provide followup information.

Operators are also reminded to report ongoing crime immediately to the Bus Operations Center through the bus communications system, with a followup call to NEAR.

Key goals of the NEAR program are to enhance performance improvement in the areas of safety, customer complaints and bus cleanliness.

"This pilot program is designed to more effectively and efficiently respond to non-emergency public safety needs aboard our buses in the South Bay," said General Manager Dana M. Coffey.

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'Tis the season: Metro's ninth year to participate in the annual toy drive for Skid Row kids paints a holiday scene in Patasouras Plaza.



Employees Donate 4,000 Toys to Fred Jordan Mission

• [Metro Choir begins musical rounds of holiday carols.](#)

(Dec. 10, 2004) Dolls, teddy bears, fire trucks – a new bicycle – some 4,000 toys were donated to the Fred Jordan Mission by Metro employees. Even the kids at the Child Care Center pitched in.

PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON

Led by coordinator Bessie Rush-Johnson and the Diversity and Economic Opportunity staff, it was Metro's ninth year to participate in the annual toy drive for Skid Row kids.

"We outdid ourselves again this year," Rush-Johnson said of the generosity of employees at Metro Headquarters, the Regional Rebuild Center and the operating divisions.

Noting that it is the Mission's 60th year of service to the poor of Los Angeles, Executive Vice President Tom Jordan said, "Thanks to caring friends like Metro employees, our



Santa helps load gifts on waiting buses.

partnership has been incredible. Metro is one of the top organizations that is giving back to the community."

CEO Roger Snoble thanked Rush-Johnson and the D&EO staff for their hard work, adding, "I'm very proud of the relationship we have with the Fred Jordan Missions. It's a great partnership and we look forward to continuing it for a long time to come."



Coordinator Bessie Rush-Johnson with Fred Jordan Mission executive, Tom Jordan.

Toys collected at Metro and other organizations will be distributed to the Skid Row kids on Sunday, Dec. 19, from 9 a.m. to noon and from noon to 4:30 p.m. at the Mission.

As many as 10,000 children and their mothers are expected to receive gifts. Jordan says each child will receive two or three new toys and a new blanket. The mothers will receive bags with food for two to three days.

Metro employees and family members 16 years of age and older are welcome to participate in the toy distribution. Last year, some 75 employees participated, Jordan said.



CEO Roger Snoble, with children from the Child Care Center, sparks the holiday spirit at annual gift-giving presentation.

Metro Choir begins musical rounds of holiday carols.



We know it's the holidays when the Metro Choir begins to fill the Gateway halls with traditional music. The choir made their first musical appearance at today's gift-giving drive for Skid Row kids. The Metro Choir begins the annual caroling rounds Dec. 13 and will make appearances through Dec. 22. Gather around the elevator next week for a medley of your favorite carols. [Click here](#) for a schedule. (PDF)

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Editor's Note: CEO Roger Snoble issued this memo, dated Dec. 13, 2004, to all members of the Metro staff.

FY 2005 Budget Actions Planned to Meet \$40 Million Deficit

- Passenger revenue shortfalls, costs will require stringent budget measures
- Hiring freeze, deferred bus and rail projects, other actions
- Budget amendment planned in January

One of our important strategic initiatives this year is to pinch every penny. We have been doing a good job of living by our budget in those areas we can control. Unfortunately, several factors outside of our control have made it necessary to go beyond pinching pennies.

First, passenger revenue is running far below budgeted amounts. Second, fuel, liability claims and workers compensation costs are running well over budgeted amounts.

In all, we are looking at a \$40 million deficit by year-end in the FY 05 enterprise fund budget. The enterprise fund supports all of our transit operations and transit capital programs. In order to meet our fiscal responsibilities we must reduce costs immediately.

Therefore, effective as of Wednesday, December 8th I have ordered the following:

- A hiring freeze on all jobs funded through the enterprise fund with the sole exception of Bus Operators. Offers extended before December 8 may still go forward but no new offers may be made until further notice.
- Bus and rail capital projects that have not yet gone to bid and that have local funding in any amount will be deferred until further notice.
- All furniture purchases, office moves, personal computer orders and office supplies and equipment funded through the enterprise fund are postponed.
- All conference, educational or other non-essential travel funded out of the enterprise fund is cancelled.

Further directives adding to or clarifying this list will be forthcoming.

I regret that we are in this situation; however, there simply is not enough money in the fund to support the level of service we are providing. By taking action now we can get through FY 05 and position

ourselves better for FY 06.

We plan on taking a comprehensive FY 05 budget amendment to the January meeting of the Board of Directors. As usual, I need each and every one of you to assist in meeting this challenge.

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Metro to Provide Free Rides on New Year's Eve

By DAVE SOTERO

(Dec. 14, 2004) Metro will provide free rides on all Metro Bus and Rail lines this New Year's Eve in an effort to provide safe transportation to residents and reduce traffic congestion on the county's streets and freeways.

All Metro Bus and Rail lines will be free from 9 p.m. until 2 a.m. Holiday travelers using the system after 2 a.m. can purchase one-way tickets for \$1.25 or unlimited daily tickets using the \$3 Metro Day Pass.

Passes will be valid from the time of purchase until 2 a.m. the next day. On New Year's Day, Metro Bus and Rail will operate on holiday schedule.

Free rides on the Metro System will not be offered on Christmas Eve; Metro Buses and Metro Rail trains will operate on regular weekday schedules. Buses will operate on Sunday schedules on Christmas Day, Saturday, Dec. 25.

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The notecard set on sale later this week in the Metro Store includes nine replicas of the Neighborhood Posters series.



Four New Neighborhood Posters on Sale in Metro Store

(Dec. 14, 2004) Four new selections from the Metro Neighborhoods Poster Series, featuring works by local artists, are now for sale in the Metro Store.

Holiday Shopping Reminder

Employees receive a 20% discount on Metro merchandise. But, hurry! Metro Store will be closed Dec. 23 through Jan. 2. and re-open at 9 a.m on Monday, Jan. 3.

Priced at \$10 each (\$8 for Metro employees), the colorful posters show scenes of Venice, Chinatown, Echo Park and Leimert Park. Five earlier posters in the series featured East LA, Pasadena, the Miracle Mile, Griffith Park and Highland Park.

Intended as travel destination promotions, the new posters are being installed on Metro buses and Metro Rail trains, in the Gateway Building and in other locations.

The Metro Store also has ordered sets of notecards featuring all nine Neighborhood Posters. The notecards, priced at \$8 (\$6.40 for Metro employees) for a set of nine with envelopes, will go on sale later this week.

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Board OKs Orange Line's Revised Final Environmental Report

The Board also approves acceleration of project construction work

- [Three project alternatives](#)
- [Environmental impacts, costs, benefits](#)

By ED SCANNELL

(Dec. 14, 2004) The Board of Directors has once again given its stamp of approval to the Metro Orange Line transitway project.

On Monday, the Board certified a Revised Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the San Fernando Valley East-West Transit Corridor.

A draft version of the report, released Oct. 22 for a 30-day public review, concluded that the Orange Line, under construction since January 2003, is superior to each of three Rapid Bus alternatives studied in the revised report.

The Board also approved spending up to \$7.9 million to accelerate construction of the 14-mile transitway to maintain its scheduled opening in late August 2005.

Opens in 8 months

"These actions are significant because they have brought the Metro Orange Line project closer to completion," said Board Chairman Frank Roberts. "The acceleration of construction means that the opening of this vital east-west alternative to the 101 Freeway is just eight months away."

The Revised FEIR was prepared at the direction of the California Court of Appeal, which ruled July 19, 2004 that the study should have included an evaluation of Rapid Bus alternatives to the Metro Orange Line project. The public's comments and Metro's responses were incorporated into the Revised FEIR.

"The Metro Orange Line project is clearly superior to the other options we looked at," said Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. "This revised environmental study confirms the view that this project will provide the greatest transportation benefits to cross-Valley commuters."

Valley to join regional network

"When the Metro Orange Line is completed next year, the San Fernando Valley will, for the first time in more than 50 years, be integrated into the regional public transportation network," Yaroslavsky added.

When the Metro Orange Line opens, new 60-foot articulated Metro Liner buses will whisk commuters from Warner Center to North Hollywood in approximately 40 minutes and provide a convenient connection to Metro Rail at the North Hollywood station.

Thirteen stations will dot the Metro Orange Line at approximately one-mile intervals and approximately 3,300 parking spaces will be available at key stations.

Three project alternatives

The Final EIR evaluated three project alternatives: a No Build Alternative, a Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Alternative (enhancement of the existing bus system), and a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative (three variations including the Metro Orange Line Full BRT).

Metro and a team of consultants studied three Rapid Bus alternatives for inclusion in the Revised FEIR:

Three East-West Rapid Bus Routes Alternative (Sherman Way, Vanowen Street and Victory Boulevard);

Five East-West Rapid Bus Routes Alternative (Sherman Way, Victory Boulevard, Oxnard Street, Burbank Boulevard, and Chandler Boulevard); and a

Rapid Bus Network Alternative (as submitted by Citizens Organized for Smart Transit (COST), this network of nine Rapid Bus routes would consist of three east-west routes and six north-south routes).

Environmental impacts, costs, benefits

The Revised FEIR examined the environmental impacts, costs and benefits of each Rapid Bus alternative and reached the following conclusions:

The Metro Orange Line would attract substantially more new riders than any of the Rapid Bus alternatives.

The Metro Orange Line would result in the greatest system-wide travel time savings.

The Metro Orange Line would maintain the most consistent travel time, which would not be compromised over time as the result of increasing traffic congestion.

The Rapid Bus alternatives would all have lower capital costs than the Metro Orange Line because of their minimal construction requirements. However, because the Rapid Bus alternatives would attract fewer new riders than the Metro Orange Line, the Rapid Bus alternatives exhibit poor cost-effectiveness measured on a per-new-rider basis.

The exclusive transitway operation of the Metro Orange Line has distinct land use benefits that would encourage transit oriented development at or around stations and is consistent with adopted local planning documents.

Operating costs for the Rapid Bus Network Alternative would be up to \$10 million more each year than the cost to operate the Metro Orange Line.

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Two generations of CNG buses traverse Patasouras Plaza in this photo.



PHOTO: DENIZ DURMUS

Metro Marks 11th Anniversary of Alternative Fuels Policy

- Agency converting Metro Bus fleet to CNG

In this report:	Metro's Clean Air Numbers
	Metro's Commitment to Alternative Fuels Drove Bus Innovations
	CNG Engines Produce Fewer Emissions than Diesel Engines

By DAVE SOTERO

(Dec, 15, 2004) This year marks the 11th anniversary of a major policy decision by Metro to buy only alternative fuel buses.

That's why, today, the great majority of transit riders no longer smell diesel fumes or inhale diesel soot when boarding or alighting from Metro Buses.

Since 1993, Metro has phased in the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs) and phased out the use of diesel buses, a move counter to most procurement and deployment practices in the transit industry.

Metro now operates the largest compressed natural gas bus fleet in the country, with 1,970 buses – about 80 percent of its entire fleet – running on CNG. In 11 years, Metro's AFV buses have logged more than 450 million operating miles, an industry record.

Metro's Clean Air Numbers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">1,970 Metro Buses powered by CNG450 million miles on alternative fuels since 1993

- 6,400 tons of nitrogen oxide (NOx) prevented
- 50 tons of particulate matter (PM) prevented
- 55% fewer NOx with CNG than diesel
- 96% less PM with CNG than diesel

Reduction in NOx and PM

Metro estimates that it has reduced approximately 6,400 tons of nitrogen oxide (NOx) and 50 tons of particulate matter (PM) since it began using CNG buses in its fleet.

For NOx, that is equivalent to removing 104,500 cars from the road on a yearly basis. For PM, it is the equivalent of removing 32,300 cars yearly.

By not operating diesel, Metro projects that it has reduced potential emissions by about 1,000 tons for NOx and seven tons for PM per year.

Metro’s experience with CNG buses has been positive.

While maintenance costs are typically 15-20 percent higher than diesel buses due to higher parts costs and increased maintenance requirements, Metro expects this price differential to decrease as diesel engines and exhaust systems are reconfigured to meet increasingly stringent California Air Resource Board emission reduction rules.

Metro’s Commitment to Alternative Fuels Drove Bus Innovations	CNG Engines Produce Fewer Emissions than Diesel Engines
<p>Metro’s long-standing commitment to alternative fuel vehicles (AFV) has helped drive innovations in bus technology.</p> <p>New CNG buses such as the light-weight, all-composite ‘CompoBus’ and advanced design, 60-foot articulated Metro Liner transit bus are outgrowths of the agency’s advanced technology bus programs, and will be complementing Metro’s CNG fleet in large numbers beginning next year.</p> <p>“Metro’s 1993 decision to only buy AVFs was a significant paradigm shift for this agency,” says Deputy CEO John Catoe. “It was a bold move, one that required a long-term commitment to meeting the operational demands of CNG. We now see on a day-to-day basis the fuel’s advantages in reducing emissions.”</p> <p>What led to Metro’s decision to switch to AFVs?</p> <p>In 1993, Metro was considering the purchase of 245 diesel buses as part of a 300-vehicle procurement. With the</p>	<p>(Dec. 15, 2004) A comparison of nitrogen oxide (Nox) and particulate matter (PM) emissions between Metro’s workhorse diesel engine and the most common CNG engine in the agency’s fleet reveals that CNG produces 55 percent fewer NOx emissions and 96 percent fewer PM emissions.</p> <p>“Because Metro still operates a small fleet of diesel buses, it can compare specific emissions profiles from both fuels,” said John Drayton, vehicle acquisition manager. “These profiles reveal that CNG provides specific reductions in nitrogen oxide and particulate matter, which helps keep our air clean.”</p> <p>According to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), diesel vehicles contribute 23 percent of all NOx emissions, a key ingredient in particulate pollution.</p> <p>Heavy-duty diesel vehicles such as transit buses and other diesel equipment are reported to be responsible for 70 percent of the total cancer risk from air</p>

feedback of environmental organizations such as South Coast Air Quality Management District and others, Metro developed an alternate procurement plan calling for the purchase of AFV-only buses.

Alternative fuels only

The new plan also required that all future bus purchases would be alternative fuel vehicles only.

The SCRTD had already been experimenting with methanol buses starting in 1989. By 1993, Metro owned the country's largest methanol bus fleet, with 333 methanol-powered buses in revenue service.

Ultimately, these buses proved mechanically unreliable for the rigors of daily transit operations, and had to be repowered with diesel engines.

Metro then set its sights on CNG, and within the 10-year period between 1994 and 2004, took delivery of 1,970 CNG buses from three different bus manufacturers: Neoplan, Newflyer and North American Bus Industries.

With the addition of new CompoBuses and Metro Liner CNG buses next spring, Metro's CNG fleet will pass the 2,000 mark. By 2006, the agency plans to have nearly 100 percent of its fleet running on CNG.

--Dave Sotero

pollution in Southern California.

Metro's alternative fuel vehicle (AFV) policy has proven a catalyst for new air quality regulatory policies in the state.

Demonstrated the rule

In 2000, SCAQMD adopted Fleet Rule 1192 requiring selected public fleets in Southern California to begin phasing in low-emission transit buses. Metro's existing fleet of CNG buses was a significant, positive factor in demonstrating the feasibility of the rule.

Metro's proactive AFV policy has also garnered industry kudos.

The agency received WestStart-CALSTART's 2001-2002 Blue Sky Award for successfully integrating CNG with its countywide Metro Rapid Bus system.

In 1994, Metro received SCAQMD's Clean Air Award for its work in transportation and promotion of clean fuels.

Metro continues to be a leader in the area of clean fuel vehicle technology, evaluating hybrid electric technologies and fuel cells that can improve operating efficiency, reliability and lower emissions.

-- Dave Sotero

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Hands Off Transportation Funds, County Leaders Tell Sacramento

- L.A. County could lose more than \$300 million

(Dec. 15, 2004) Los Angeles business leaders, transportation providers, and elected officials today urged Sacramento to stop using transportation funds to balance the state budget.

They warned that Los Angeles County could lose more than \$300 million in state gas tax monies earmarked for critical traffic-relieving street, highway and public transportation projects in the next fiscal year.

"Californians voted overwhelmingly for Prop. 42, specifically to fund projects that will ease congestion," said Rusty Hammer, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. "Mobility is the linchpin of the California economy; if people and goods can't move, the economy suffers."

CEO Roger Snoble noted that in the last three years, Sacramento has siphoned off \$5.5 billion in transportation funding statewide from mobility projects, which includes more than \$1.35 billion earmarked for Los Angeles County. These include Prop. 42 gas taxes and other transportation funds.

Prop. 42 won approval by 69 percent of California voters in March 2002. It requires state sales taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel be used only for transportation programs.

State can suspend Prop. 42

However, in a fiscal emergency the Governor and the Legislature can suspend Prop. 42. Under this loophole, more than \$2 billion in Prop. 42 monies have been redirected to the state's General Fund since 2003, the year it took effect.

"It would be typical of Sacramento politicians to raid Proposition 42 funds once again to balance their budget on the backs of local cities," said Mayor James Hahn. "But the residents of Los Angeles County have had enough, and we urge the Governor and Legislature not to go that route. That money belongs to the people and should be used to fund projects that will ease traffic congestion."

Metro has been scrambling to push forward transportation improvements but its resources are constrained.

The agency already has agreed, if necessary, to advance the state \$1 billion in local funds to move forward with construction of the Metro Gold Line extension to East Los Angeles, the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley, the Exposition Light Rail Line, Alameda Corridor East grade separations, various street and highway projects, and the

purchase of hundreds of high-capacity buses.

Funds could ease congestion

"The more than \$300 million earmarked for LA County next year could be leveraged with other funds to get an early start on more than \$5 billion in highway, bus and rail projects that would make a serious dent in traffic in this region and also generate an estimated 70,00 full-time equivalent jobs," said Dan Beal, of the Automobile Club of Southern California.

Many local transportation projects could be kept on hold indefinitely if Prop. 42 funds are diverted next year. Among these are construction of a I-405 northbound carpool lane from I-10 to US-101, a Crenshaw Corridor transit way and an extension of the planned Exposition Light Rail Line to Santa Monica.

"We can't afford to sit idly by as LA County grapples with the nation's worst traffic congestion, now for 18 years running," said Hammer.

The Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) recently reported that the average commuter here wastes 93 hours a year stuck in traffic at a cost of \$1,668 each.

"We can actually reduce congestion if we can proceed with our improvements but that hinges on whether or not the state siphons off Prop. 42 funds again," Snoble said.

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"No MTA employees shall accept gifts exceeding fifty dollars (\$50) in value in a calendar year or exceeding ten dollars (\$10) in value in a calendar month from a single source that is an MTA contractor, subcontractor, lobbyist, lobbying firm, lobbyist employee or anyone else doing business with the MTA. No MTA employees shall accept any gift from a bidder or proposer on an MTA contract."

Sect. 5-15-130 Gifts, Title 15, Employee Code of Conduct



PHOTO: BILL HEARD

Senior Analyst Hedi Woods of Risk Management, right, turns over a vendor's gift basket to Senior Ethics Officer Bill Lowe for donation to charity.

Code Requires Most Vendor Gifts to be Turned In to Ethics Dept.

(Dec. 15, 2004) Metro employees turn in about 50 contractor or vendor gifts to the Ethics Department for donation to charities during the holiday season each year.

The gifts, which range in value from \$10 to about \$150, are bundled up and distributed to various organizations each week, says Senior Ethics Officer Bill Lowe.

The Employee Code of Conduct, which can be accessed via the Policies link on the myMetro.net homepage, includes a description of the gift rules in Section 5-15-130.

The purpose of the rule on gifts, according to the Code, is "to assure the public that public employees are not influenced to show favoritism to a contractor based on receiving gifts or for being rewarded for doing his or her job in a way that will benefit the giver of the gift."

Share the gift?

But why, Lowe was asked, can't an employee who receives an expensive gift share it with his co-workers and, in that way, reduce the perceived influence and cost of the gift per person?

"Under the law the effect is the same," he says. "The gift is seen as a

way to influence the agency. Even if the employee shares the gift, it is just influencing more people in the agency.

Under the law an improper gift must be returned or donated to a charity. The Ethics Department accepts the gifts from employees, donates them to charity, and gives the employees receipts for their records.

"We do this as a service to our employees to make it easier for them to comply with the law, to do something nice for a person in need, and help maintain Metro's credibility with the public," Lowe says.

How about homemade cookies?

And what if the gift is a homemade plate of cookies that has no actual market value?

"Even if it's homemade," Lowe says, "it can have a value in excess of the limit, and there's an inherent expectation when giving a gift or receiving something in return. We try to avoid the appearance of any impropriety at all."

Employees receiving gifts should take them to the Ethics Department on the 11th floor of Metro Headquarters.

"We ask that the employee tell the Ethics Department the source of the gift and make an estimate of the value," says Lowe. "We will inform the employee of the charity to which the gift was donated and thank them for their demonstration of good ethics during this holiday season."


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A Wayside Story

- Safety's first at Metro's Wayside Systems, where employees top 900 days without lost work due to injuries.

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Dec. 15, 2004) Wayside Systems has reached almost 950 days with no lost work day injuries this December. No small feat for one of the riskiest jobs at Merto.

Wayside, a group of about 370 employees, is responsible for the maintenance of 20,143,200 square feet of rail and rail facilities.

"Wayside is the fuel, street and traffic signaling all rolled up into one organization and is critical to the success of rail operations," says Rob Chappell, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations. "We're the one-stop shop for rail."

The division is divided into seven departments: communications, custodial, facilities maintenance, traction power, signals and engineering. Together they maintain, repair, install and rebuild rail facilities to inherent to the operation of the rail system.

Wayside employees work in challenging environments.

When repairing a catenary wire last month for Metro Green Line, employees worked in elevated buckets alongside operating tracks. As overnight temperatures dropped to 30 degrees, managers and crews worked 12- and 14-hour shifts to repair the damage.

"We have a pretty dedicated staff who have embraced the safety first program," says Chappell. "Managers and supervisors can preach safety all we want but it's the employees who are the ones who actually do it."


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Terminal 31 has been reconfigured to serve as an auxiliary bus yard during the Division 1 expansion project. The former bus layover zone has been moved to Parking Lot A at the RRC.



Division 1 Opens Temporary Auxiliary Bus Yard Near RRC

- Space needed for 70 buses during Division 1 expansion
- Terminal 31 layover zone moved to RRC parking lot

(Dec. 16, 2004) Terminal 31, the bus layover zone just west of the Regional Rebuild Center at the corner of Cesar Chavez and Vignes, has been temporarily converted to serve as an auxiliary bus division for Central City Division 1.

In a memo to employees, Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford says the layover zone will be used to operate the increased bus service that will go into effect Dec. 19.

"Keeping in mind that safety is always first, pedestrian activity in and through this area should be extremely limited," says Clifford. "Pedestrians should always wear safety vests and should be careful to stay within the sidewalks and crosswalks in the area."

Division 1 expansion

The auxiliary site will be in use during a construction project to expand Division 1, located at 6th and Central, onto land on the south side of the division. The addition is being built to accommodate additional buses, including 60-foot articulated



An earthmoving machine grades land south of Division 1 in preparation for construction of an expanded bus yard.

Metro Liners.

Construction of the new bus yard space has been delayed approximately 90 days due to property acquisition problems,

according to Clifford.

The December service change will result in the assignment of about 70 buses more than the current Division 1 capacity. Those buses will operate out of the auxiliary division until the Division 1 expansion project is completed.

All parking at the auxiliary division is restricted to employees who are operating buses assigned to the auxiliary division.

Layover zone relocated

Meanwhile, the former Terminal 31 layover zone has been relocated to Parking Lot A, directly in front of the RRC. Until further notice, all vehicular traffic in and out of the RRC has been detoured to the Bauchet Street entrance, north of the Twin Towers jail.

Metro employees should be aware of the temporary vehicular traffic restrictions, access modifications, safety and speed signage posted at the auxiliary division.

The auxiliary division entrance from Vignes is now restricted to bus traffic and Metro vehicles. Lyon Street, which runs in front of the RRC, has been temporarily converted to a one-way southbound street, exiting onto Cesar Chavez.


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Division 6 is Seeking Donations for Westside Food Bank

(Dec. 16, 2004) This holiday season Division 6 is helping drive hunger away. The Venice Division is conducting a food drive for the Westside Food Bank in the month of December.

The Westside Food Bank is a local agency that relies heavily on the public for support. The agency supplies food to more than 80 local agencies throughout West Los Angeles and reaches more than 70,000 people each year, half of them children.

Alva Carrasco, assistant transportation manager, worked with the food bank in 2002. The Food Bank collected more than 11,000 pounds of food when she helped coordinate a food drive in the City of Santa Monica.

Now at Division 6, Carrasco has rallied employees to contribute what they can to help the communities they serve. If the food drive proves successful, the division will make the food drive an annual event.

The Food Drive will continue until Dec. 31. Donations of non-perishable foods and dry foods such as pasta, cereal, rice and beans are needed.

The division has placed collection bins in Transportation for employees to drop off donations. Employees who want to make a donation, should contact Gail Ligon at 310-255-4106 for more information. --
From Alva Carrasco



Division 6 operators, from left, Anna McDonald, Melvin Braxton and Lorraine Johnson pitch in for the division food drive.

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Deputy Rich Faulk instructs the 20 new fare inspectors. The agency plans to add 40 security assistants during 2005.



20 New Fare Inspectors to Target Fare Evasion, Improve Safety

By SHANTAY IOSIA

(Dec. 16, 2004) Twenty new fare inspectors have joined the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau in an effort to further reduce fare evasion and improve rail safety.

They are part of a program which will add 60 new security assistants to the Metro Blue and Green Lines during 2005.

"Our goal is to make the rail system safe for the public," says Sheriff's Capt. Daniel Finkelstein, Metro's Chief of Police. "They will be able to prevent crime, assist riders, and help deputies respond to incidents more quickly."

The fare inspectors completed their initial two-week training at the Sheriff's Academy on Nov. 1. They were trained in areas such as cultural diversity, defensive tactics and personal communication.

Mentor program

The inspectors have begun their second phase of training and are expected to complete a mentor program in late December. As more inspectors are hired, those currently in training will be added to the seasoned fare inspectors working on the Blue and Green Lines.

Deputies Rich Faulk and Albert Calibet began working with the new hires in October and expect the inspectors to make considerable contributions to Metro.

They anticipate the presence of more fare inspectors during the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl, Jan. 1, when thousands of people are expected to use the Metro Gold Line to travel to Pasadena.

"We're just happy to have the opportunity to bring more of these folks

on board," says Lt. Roland Choi, who supervises the policing of the Blue and Green Lines. "It will be nothing short of a benefit to MTA, passengers and deputies. They really help us out quite a bit."

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L.A. City firefighters were on hand to help collect toys and load them into a Metro Bus.



Metro Helps Firefighters, KABC 'Stuff a Bus' with Toys for Needy Kids

By ERIC RAPP

(Dec. 17, 2004) Metro buses have carried all kinds of cargo, but on Friday, Dec. 10, one bus became a 40-foot, orange colored Santa's sleigh, filled with joy for kids across Southern California who will be helped by the "Spark of Love" toy drive.

The drive is sponsored by fire departments throughout the Southland, including the Los Angeles City Fire Department. Radio and TV stations also participate.

Last year, the toy drive collected more than 500,000 toys and distribute them to needy children.

Last week, it was Metro's turn to help, working with KABC-7 weatherman Garth Kemp to "Stuff a Bus."

Toys and games

From 5 a.m. until noon, a Metro Bus provided by East Valley Division 15 was parked at Westfield Shoppingtown Fashion

PHOTOS BY ERIC RAPP



Football players from Notre Dame High School dropped by to donate toys to the "Spark of Love" toy drive.

Square in Sherman Oaks. Representatives from Mattel stopped by early in the morning to drop off 20 cases of toys and games to start filling the bus.

Throughout the day, kind souls from all over Los Angeles donated toys to fill the bus.

Kemp's live reports from the location several times an hour helped keep the charity coming. Donors ranged from a group of cheerleaders and football players from a local high school to one young girl who had saved her allowance for months to be able to buy toys for the drive.

Finally, at noon, LA City firefighters loaded the last few toys on to the fully-stuffed bus. Operator Eddie Valles closed the door and drove off to the Fire Department's training academy, where the toys are being gathered.

For one day, that bus was carrying truly precious cargo – holiday cheer for kids who really need it.



KABC-Ch. 7 weatherman Garth Kemp does a live report in front of a Metro Bus in Sherman Oaks to promote the "Spark of Love" toy drive.



Division 15 Operator Eddie Valles drove a Metro Bus crammed with toys to the LA City Fire Department's Training Academy.

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The Transportation Leadership Academy (TLA) Class of 2004 included 26 graduates. Leaders Holly Balderas, center foreground, and OD&T Director Maron Colston, at right, joined the graduates for this photo. [List of graduates.](#)



PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON

26 Employees Graduate from Transportation Leadership Academy

By HOLLY BALDERAS and MARION COLSTON

(Dec. 17, 2004) The Transportation Leadership Academy (TLA) Class of 2004 has graduated.

Twenty-six Metro employees committed the last three months to developing their leadership talents. TLA participants attended seven full day sessions that were held off site and facilitated by internal Organizational Development and Training (OD&T) staff.

TLA instruction included tools and resources on leadership strategies, motivation, leading teams, strategic execution and managing change.

TLA is designed for those Metro leaders who are recognized as agents of change. TLA offers participants an opportunity to demonstrate, through the application of leadership strategies, that internal personnel can be instrumental in developing practical solutions to organizational issues.

TLA participants utilized team building and team development strategies to improve collaboration among team members. Participants work on team projects sponsored by Metro's Chief Officers.



Teams make presentations to Metro executive staff and fellow participants.

Applying the skills

Projects offered an opportunity to apply learned skills to day-to-day operations. This year's TLA Team projects were sponsored by Deputy CEO John Catoe; Maria Guerra, Chief of Staff; Dick Brumbaugh, Chief Financial Officer; Matt Raymond, Chief Communications Officer; and Don Ott, Executive Officer of Administration.

Graduates included Essam Aly, Martin Batistelli, Eddie Boghossian, Paul Briggs, Leonid Bukhin, Jue Buley, Stefan Chasnov, Brian Collins, Aspet Davidian, Byron England, Robert Fischer, Steve Fox, Bill Grunwald, Andy Hughes, Tom Lee, Tim Lindholm, Johnny Lindsey, Frank Lonyai, Roger Martin, Narashimha Murthy, Bob New, Tim Papandreou, Thom Pelk, Steve Rosenberg, Kathleen Sanchez and Wayne Wassell.



Deputy CEO John Catoe, right, presents TLA diploma to graduate Aspet Davidian at conclusion of intensive hands-on program.

TLA was initially developed by UCLA's Anderson School of Business in 1996 and Metro was awarded FTA grant funds to start the program. In 1999, Metro's OD&T internal staff were trained by UCLA to deliver the program in-house and have introduced many new leadership models and best practices.

To be considered for the program, eligible candidates, Grades O and

above, must complete an application and be selected by their Chief Officer. Applications for the Fall 2005 session will be available in August with classes beginning in September.

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General
Manager Dana
Coffey, right,
with Peninsula
Seniors Virginia
and Cecil
Fleener.

Seniors Learn About Metro from South Bay GM Dana Coffey

By RICH MORALLO

(Dec. 17, 2004) Bill Ritchie last took Metro a couple of years ago. "I rode Line 444 into downtown because I wanted to walk around there," recalls the Rancho Palos Verdes resident who is in his early 80s.

Russ Herrington, another senior citizen, vividly remembered the last time he traveled on Metro. "Actually, it was in 1984 when we took the bus from the South Bay Galleria to the Los Angeles Coliseum for the Olympics."

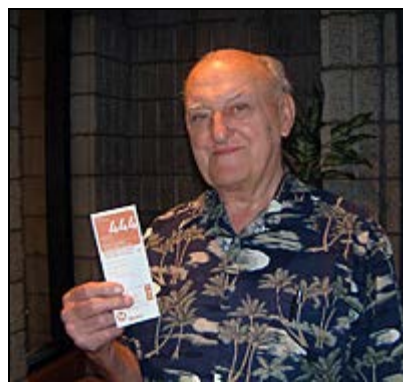
Though they were not regular public transit patrons Ritchie, Herrington and other members of the Peninsula Seniors had recently heard enough about Metro South Bay programs to invite General Manager Dana Coffey to talk about the latest transportation projects in the area.

The seniors, who meet weekly at Hesse Community Park in Rancho Palos Verdes, learned about local bus service changes to increase ridership, Metro's new technologies and the agency's efforts to fight vandalism during Coffey's talk.

Fighting graffiti

"No bus will leave the yard with graffiti," Coffey told the seniors, who asked several questions about how the agency is able to keep the fleet clean and well-maintained in the face of tagging challenges.

The audience expressed surprise as the general manager, who is in charge of both Carson Division 18 and Arthur Winston Division 5, further described the expense in labor, time and materials needed to



Peninsula Senior Bill Ritchie took a Line 444 timetable as a souvenir of his experience riding that line as a young man.

clean up graffiti.

Coffey encouraged the seniors to plan ahead when they use Metro.

"Always be prepared by knowing when the bus arrives and departs by checking the time schedules or calling 800-COMMUTE," said Coffey who has 29 years with Metro and worked as an operator and other positions through the years.

45-foot buses

In response to questions, Coffey talked about the new state-of-the-art, 45-foot Metro Buses that are reinforcing Metro's reputation of being the nation's largest clean-air fleet.

After the talk, many seniors told Coffey that she had renewed their interest and support for public transit.

"I always used to use Metro when I worked at the old Broadway to travel to Crenshaw and Martin Luther King," said Virginia Fleener.

"Leave the driving to us," said Coffey to the seniors. "Take Metro, the extra car."

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PHOTOS: ERIC RAPP



Operator Noe
Orellana gets his
blood pressure
checked at health
fair held onsite at
East valley
Division 15.

Keeping Healthy in Sun Valley

By ERIC RAPP

(December 21, 2004) East Valley Division 15 hosted a Health and Safety Fair for employees Dec. 16, attended by hundreds of bus operators and other division employees.

Representatives from the Van Nuys U.S. Healthworks clinic, which handles medical issues for the division, checked blood pressure, talking about preventative medicine and handing out information designed to help keep all employees healthy. Dr. Thomas Turner, executive director of the clinic, said that, simply put, "we're trying to keep employees from getting sick or hurt."



Dr. Thomas
Turner,
right,
executive
director Van
Nuys U.S.
Healthworks
clinic, greets
East Valley
employees.

Mental health wasn't overlooked, either. Carol Holben, Medical

Standards & Compliance Administrator and the administrator of Metro's Employee Assistance Program, was also on hand to explain EAP benefits to interested employees. EAP provides a number of services for employees who are in a crisis or under stress.

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MTA Director John Fasana, center, joins with the 2005 Rose Court at Memorial Park Station in Pasadena to proclaim the Metro Gold Line as the designated train of 2005 Tournament of Roses events. The Rose Court, from left: princesses Lisa Pallay, Jennifer Propper, Kara Murphy, Queen Ashley Moreno, Allison Pedro, Alaire Hanashian and Megan Sheehan.



PHOTOS: JUAN OCAMPO

Metro Gold Line Proclaimed Designated Train of 2005 Rose Parade

By DAVE SOTERO

(Dec. 21, 2005) The County of Los Angeles proclaimed the Metro Gold Line the designated train of the 2005 Tournament of Roses® events today at a special ceremony with the 2005 Rose Queen and Royal Court in Pasadena.

With approximately one million spectators expected to attend parade festivities, the Metro Gold Line is now the best method of transportation for revelers wanting to escape the hassles of driving and high cost of parking in and around Pasadena starting New Year's Eve.

This New Year's Eve Metro will be operating its rail lines all night long to enable parade attendees to get an early place along the parade route. What's more, Metro trains and buses

will be free of charge from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. to encourage New Year's partygoers to use public transit instead of driving, helping to ensure L.A. County streets and freeways stay safe.



"The Metro Gold Line has now become an important part of the success of the parade," said Caryn Eaves, Director of Public Relations for the Tournament of Roses Association. "This year as we 'Celebrate Family,' we welcome the return of an important family member -- commuter rail service to Pasadena. Up until last year, that service was missing since the last Pacific Electric Red Cars brought parade goers to Pasadena over 50 years ago."

Rose Queen Ashley Moreno visits the operator's cab of the designated train.

"For a great many spectators, the Gold Line will be a welcome relief from the crush of area traffic, allowing them to get in and out of Pasadena quickly and easily," said John Fasana, City of Duarte Councilmember and Metro Board Member.



Along the way, members of the Gateway Carolers set a festive and rousing scene aboard the Metro Gold Line train en route to the designation at Memorial Park Station.

Four Metro Gold Line stations serve parade activity areas. The Memorial Park and Del Mar stations are about two blocks from the parade route. The Lake and Allen stations are approximately four blocks from the parade route.

Rose Bowl football game attendees can exit the Memorial Park station and walk a short distance down Holly Street to the Parsons parking lot at 100 West Walnut Street and catch a free shuttle to the game.

For post-parade float viewing, revelers can take the Metro Gold Line to Sierra Madre Villa Station in East Pasadena, where they can board a specially marked Metro Bus for direct service to Victory Park where floats will be displayed Jan. 1-2. Shuttles will be departing from Sierra Madre Villa until about 3:30 p.m. each day.

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Santa and his elves cordially invite Gateway employees to the Holiday Breakfast on Thursday, December 23rd!



Serving Schedule



6:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Jingle Bell Continental Breakfast

Served at the 3rd Floor Guard Station for you early risers who can't wait for Santa!



7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Holly-day Brunch

Served by Santa's little helpers in Gateway's North Pole (a.k.a. Metro Café)



Jolly Old St. Nick humbly requests your presence at the Holly-day Brunch at the following times:

Time

7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Floor

P levels - 6

7 - 12

13 - 19

20 - 25

Santa Claus is Coming to Town

8:00 – 10:00 a.m. on 3rd Floor

9:00 – 11:30 a.m. on Plaza level

Commemorative "You as Santa" Photos

Pictures with Santa Claus



Live Performances

9:00am/Plaza level: Holiday classic renditions performed by the Gateway Carolers

9:30am/Plaza level: Special program by "The Hope Institute of Music"

(Children ages 4-6) www.himcchoir.org

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!



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PHOTOS: LIZ ARMIJO-HOLBROOK



San Gabriel Valley Division transportation manager Mike Greenwood, at left, foreground, and Metro San Gabriel Valley GM Jack Gabig lead the way at Metro SGV Winter Blood Drive.

Sector Employees Give the Gift of Blood For the Holidays

By LIZ ARMIJO-HOLBROOK

In the midst of the hectic holiday season, Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector employees took time from their busy lives to donate blood at the Metro SGV Winter Blood Drive Dec. 15. Thirty-three employees, including Operators, Mechanics, Maintenance and Sector staff contributed 26 units of blood. Division 9 Operators Ernie Acevedo and Jordan Simone came in on their day off to participate.



American Red Cross representative, Marilyn English, R.N., was delighted with the turnout. Here, General Manager Jack Gabig volunteers. another big turnout next time."

Only 20 employees had originally registered for the drive, so American Red Cross representative, Marilyn English, R.N., was delighted with the turnout. In addition to the usual juice and cookies, donors were rewarded with a promise of a t-shirt and coupon for a Cold Stone ice cream creation.

Sector Sr. Safety Specialist Scott Boim, with the assistance of Return-to-Work Coordinator Carol Hildebrand, organized the effort. "The enthusiasm of the participants is wonderful," said Boim. "I'm looking forward to

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Children receive holiday gifts at annual "Toys for Watts" party.



Operators collect toys for underprivileged children

- Division 18 operators Louvenia Harris and Jimi Greene generate truckloads of toys for a community.

By RICH MORALLO

(Dec. 22, 2004) Louvenia Harris and Jimi Greene have something in common besides driving Metro buses out of Carson Division 18. They both collect toys for underprivileged children.

Every year during the holidays Louvenia, - just call her Lou - and Greene, also known as Jimi G., collect gifts, dolls, games and other knickknacks for neighborhood youngsters.

From September to December Lou and her four sisters and brothers-in-law donate their paychecks to buy playthings and presents for children. Lou's family also organizes the events where they hand out the presents - this year the December 11th Toys for Watts and the December 16th Annual Children Christmas Party on Imperial Highway.

"The party is in its 17th year," remarked Lou who operates Line 40 along Hawthorne Boulevard.



Lou Harris helps coordinate toy giveaway program in Watts.

Lou's family, led by her mother better known in the neighborhood as "Sweet Alice" started the toy collection event in 1988 as a way to pay back a good deed. "My mother was homeless and pregnant when she was 15 years old, and a woman took her in," narrated Lou.

"When my mom asked how she could pay her back, the lady simply told my mom to help someone else when the time comes," said Lou, who added that Sweet Alice, assisted by Lou and her sisters, eventually started the toy collection project in Watts.

While Lou's holiday project has been supported by Metro staff, most of her outreach is to local organizations, civic groups, chambers and businesses in the area. "Various motorcycle clubs have often supported this initiative," Lou revealed, saying that this year they received hundreds of toys including bicycles and Barbie Dolls.



On the job: Jimi Greene



Metro staff promotes Stevie Wonder's "House Full of Toys" program



Motorcycle club arrives to help with toy giveaway.

In 1996, Greene attended a December Stevie Wonder concert at the Wilshire Ebel Theatre. "I saw a couple of my friends collecting toys to help poor families," Greene said. "I work with a lot of people and I knew I could help," said the operator who is assigned to the new Metro Rapid Line 740.

From then on Greene has been coordinating toy collection at Metro South Bay among operators, mechanics, service attendants and other staff. Typically, Greene succeeds in generating truckloads of toys that are dropped off at KJLH radio station and at the Stevie Wonder concert at the Forum in Inglewood.

In his ninth year of working with the project called the Stevie Wonder "House Full of Toys," Greene says he is happy assisting kids in hospitals and homeless shelters. "Our own children may not have everything but they have more than these youngsters we are helping," said Greene who has three daughters of his own.

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Operator David Ojeda as Santa Claus arrived on a bright red bus with an elf (Operator Peter Freeman's son) to deliver presents.



Division One Transportation Hosts Christmas Party for Para Los Ninos Students

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(Dec. 22, 2004) Division 1 Transportation employees played Santa Dec. 17 to a group of low -ncome children from Para Los Ninos, a nearby elementary school that the division has adopted and hosted at various events during the year.

Division 1 Operator Lisa Atilano coordinated the Christmas party with help from Rose Mumford, division managers, and fellow employees. Each Para Los Ninos student was asked to write a Christmas letter to Santa, including a list of toys they wished for. The letters were forwarded to a number of honorary Santas (bus operators) who, in turn, "adopted" a student and purchased one of the toys on the child's wish list.

Approximately 120 children visited Division 1 on the morning of Dec. 17.



The approximately 120 children were greeted by approximately 80 to 90 Metro Bus Operator Santas. The children were treated to a delicious holiday meal, prepared by staff, which included turkey, ham, macaroni and cheese, sweet potato pie, cakes, punch and other treats.

After singing a few songs, the children were called up to receive their gifts by Santa Claus. Operator David Ojeda played the role of Santa Claus, arriving on a bright red bus with an elf (Operator Peter Freeman's son) and visited the kids with handshakes, hugs and holiday greetings.

'A great event'

"It means a lot to the children," said Lisa Monatano, one of the head teachers from Para Los Ninos who helped coordinate the event. "These boys and girls come from low-income homes, so any gifts they receive are really appreciated. We hosted a really nice event for the kids on Halloween, and now we have a great event with Santa Claus, great food, generous gifts, and a really great group of people."

Atilano was heartened by the overwhelming support of the event by Division 1 operators. "We set this up with the teachers from the school, and then asked operators to participate by donating gifts to the children," said Atilano.

"Our employees have said they want to do more for the community, and we had a great response from our operators here. This event has brought a lot of joy to everyone to see these kids have such a good time. I hope we can do it again next year, and for many more years after that."

Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens shared Atilano's sentiments. "We feel it is important to give back to the communities we serve," she said. "It is really gratifying to be able to hand out presents to kids that come from families who may not be able to provide these kinds of gifts. This event brought home the spirit of the Christmas season to everyone involved."

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Metro Bus Operator Anthony Cuadra as Santa Claus.

Santa Spotted in Venice

By ALVA CARRASCO

(Dec. 22, 2004) Last Friday, approximately 550 children from Westminster Elementary School in Venice received a special visit from Santa Claus.

Division 6's Santa Claus, Bus Operator Anthony Cuadra, donned the magical red suit that brought many smiles and giggles to the students of Westminster.

The children lined up to see Santa and they shared with him their Christmas wishes and desires. Santa gave them each a small gift bag donated by proceeds from a fundraiser the Transportation staff coordinated earlier this year.

For the last 4 years, Division 6 has volunteered a Santa to assist the neighboring school. Bus Operator Reggie Ables, now at Division 10, happily volunteered every year to play Santa for the kids.

When Ables transferred to Division 10 recently, Cuadra enthusiastically volunteered to fill in his boots. Cuadra was presented with drawings and letters from the children. This brought tears and smiles to Santa's face.



Asst. Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco, Bus Operator Anthony Cuadra and preschool children from Westminster School.

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Sheriffs bring good fellowship to Division 9's holiday party.



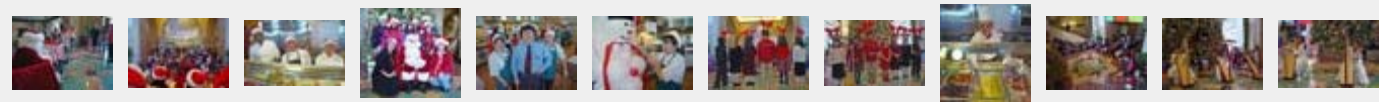
(Dec. 22, 2004) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 hosted a holiday event for their employees and family Dec. 17 and Metro San Gabriel Valley Sheriff Volunteers and Explorers were there to help and also to share in the cheer and good fellowship. They were: Metro SGV Sheriff Deputy Gary De Bondt, Metro Sheriff Volunteers Pete Lara (also a Metro Bus Operator) and Manny Moreno, Metro Sheriff Explorers Edgar Che, Adrian Avila (nephew of Metro Bus Operator Pete Lara), Gabriel Noriega (son of Metro Bus Operator Conrad Noreiga), Andrew De Bondt (son of Metro Sheriff Deputy Gary De Bondt), Gabriel Mendez, Karen Pena, and Emil Pott. -- *From Deputy Gary De Bondt.*



A very Metro holiday was shared by all...



- Scenes from the **Metro Café Holiday Breakfast**, the **Metro Carolers**, **Santa Claus** and a special appearance by the children from the **Hope Institute of Music** in performance. Photos by Gayle Anderson > December 23, 2004



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Back row from left: OPS supervisors Johnny Rios, Division 9 Transportation Manager Mike Greenwood, OPS supervisors Helen Perez, and Ruben Gonzalez joined DAC members front row from left: Victor Aguilar, Pete Lara and Juan Augspurger in donating toys to the Boys & Girls Club of San Gabriel Valley.



PHOTOS: SHANTAY IOSIA

Metro SGV Celebrates 'Giving Season'

By Shantay Iosia

(Dec. 23, 2004) The San Gabriel Valley Sector hopes to brighten this Christmas for less fortunate families with donations of toys and food.

San Gabriel Valley Division 9 operators Pete Lara, Victor Aguilar and Juan Augspurger began the giving season with a food drive on Dec. 17. They and other members of the Division Advisory Committee collected and donated food to the Valley Community Church.

Although California is the fifth largest economy in the world, USDA ranked California 11th in food insecurity rankings. The survey measured the level of adequate and assured access to food to meet household needs.



Metro gifts: Back row from left: Operators Pete Lara, Juan Augspurger, Program Director Gutowski, OPS supervisor Helen Perez, Transportation Manager Mike Greenwood and Executive Director Clayton Hallopeter, present the children with the toys donated by Metro staff.

Among those in need are the families serviced by the Emergency Resources Association located in the Boys & Girls Club of San Gabriel Valley. About 37 percent of families in the area live below the national poverty level.



Enrique Diaz, equipment maintenance supervisor for Division 9 donates the barrel of toys to the Boys & Girls Club of San Gabriel Valley.



A grateful child receives the toys donated by Metro staff to the Boys & Girls Club of San Gabriel Valley.

The centers executive director, Clayton Hallopeter said they expect to provide holiday meals for about 700 families. The holiday baskets will include canned ham, rice, beans, canned vegetables, tortillas and other foods to accommodate families of 6 or more. The toys will be distributed to families who present the greatest need.

"This wouldn't be possible if we didn't get the donations or the support of the public," Hallopeter said. "I think it's going to be a good year this year. We'll have no trouble meeting the needs of the families."

General Manager Jack Gabig sought to extend the sectors generosity and requested donations for an orphanage in Rosarito, Mexico. The orphanage raises 22 children on \$400 a month. The generosity of the

sector was more than Gabig expected and is sure to make the children's Christmas a little warmer.



General Manager Jack Gabig plans on brightening Christmas with donations to Children's New Life Ranch, an orphanage in Rosarito, Mexico.


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Flooding, Power Outages Plague Divisions, but Metro Made Rollout

- Arthur Winston Division 5 hardest hit
- Gateway Division 10 had power outage

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 29, 2004) Flooded streets and power outages plagued transit operations, Wednesday, as heavy rainfall continued to pound the Los Angeles area. But, both Metro Bus and Metro Rail officials reported making rollout, despite weather-related hardships.

Unlike Tuesday, when Rail Operations experienced flooding and minor operational problems on the Metro Blue and Gold Lines, service was reported to be "running pretty smoothly" on all lines Wednesday.

Perhaps hardest hit by the storm were Arthur Winston Division 5 and Gateway Division 10.

Transportation Manager Michael Williams-Carr reported Division 5 had been operating on emergency power since midnight, Tuesday, due to a mile-square power outage in the neighborhood. The outages also affected telephone service, keeping the division from making outgoing calls.

Computers out of service

The loss of power prevented Division 5 administrators from using computers to complete payroll records or make operator assignments for Thursday. That work will be done at the Gateway Building, Williams-Carr said.

Leaks in the newly repaired roof caused flooding on the second floor of the transportation building. Pumps were being used to relieve flooding on the bottom floor of Division 5's parking structure.

Meanwhile, some streets in South Los Angeles were made impassable by up to two feet of standing water. Low-floor buses, prohibited from driving through water more than 12 inches deep, were diverted to other streets.

Nevertheless, Williams-Carr said, "99.5 percent of our operators are on the job, today."

Working in the dark

Lightning apparently struck a DWP electrical transformer near Division 10 around 8 p.m., Tuesday, throwing the facility into darkness for a time. Facilities Maintenance supervisors Ed Turienzo and Tai Lim worked with division personnel to get operations moving again.

Maintenance employees were able to fuel some of the division's 287 CNG-powered buses, but others were sent to Divisions 1, 2 and 3 for fueling. Fourteen owl-service buses were kept in operation, according to Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Jon Harting.

Mike Singer, equipment maintenance manager at the Regional Rebuild Center, said Buildings 1 and 2 lost power Tuesday evening and were still on emergency power at 5:30 a.m. when the first employees reported for work. By 6:30 a.m., however, city power had been restored.

In the Gateway Cities sector, General Manager Alex Clifford reported a short power outage at Gateway Division 1 when a DWP transformer blew. The roof of the maintenance building at Crossroads Depot Division 2 developed leaks, as did the outer walls of the sector office.

Flooding caused detours

In the San Fernando Valley, flooding in the Sepulveda Dam Recreation Area continued to cause detours and there was deeper than normal water standing curbside in many areas.

Some employees had difficulty getting to work from northern Los Angeles County, according to Division 15 Maintenance Manager John Roberts, but they made it in.

"I'm always impressed with our people," he said. "They come to work in the worst conditions. It really shows a sense of responsibility and dedication."


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