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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."

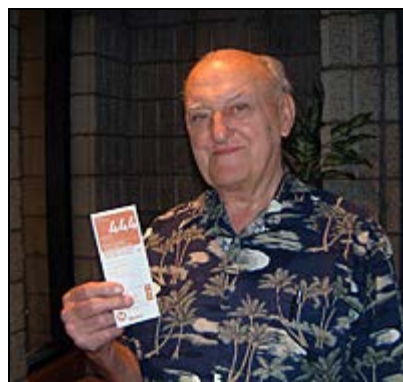
Though they were not regular public transit patrons Ritchie, Herrington and other members of the Peninsula Seniors had recently heard enough about Metro South Bay programs to invite General Manager Dana Coffey to talk about the latest transportation projects in the area.

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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