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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."