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Division 10 Expansion Plans Halted as Property Values Skyrocket

- Final EIR for new Division 6 headed for Board in spring
- Expansion at Division 1, Division 4 continues

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 4, 2005) Plans to expand Gateway Division 10 by 8.5 acres to provide for parking and operation of some 100 Metro Liner articulated buses have been placed on indefinite hold.

A stop-work order was issued, effective Dec. 27, when the property owner rejected Metro's final purchase offer. Negotiations were halted and project termination and closeout has begun.

The property owner demanded approximately 400 percent more than the initial appraised value of the property, putting it out of Metro's financial reach, according to Denise Longley, deputy executive officer of Facilities-Operations.

The 21 parcels considered for the division expansion are located on Mission Road and Gallardo Street, stretching from the south border of the division to Cesar Chavez Avenue. Action begun earlier to acquire the property through eminent domain procedures is expected to be rescinded at the January Board meeting.

Building up, not out

Metro now will look at less costly and more fiscally responsible alternatives to operate the 100 incoming articulated buses, says Longley.

"In the future, we will look at using our existing real estate to its fullest potential," she says. "We'll become more 'urbanized' by building up, instead of out."

She noted that transit properties in New York City and Chicago, where land also is limited and highly valued, have built multi-level transportation and maintenance facilities.

"We may follow their lead, as real estate becomes more expensive in the central core of Los Angeles," Longley says.

Division 6 plans continue

Meanwhile, plans to build a new division in West Los Angeles to replace Venice Division 6, as well as plans to expand Central City Division 1 and Non-Revenue Division 4 are continuing.

The public comment period on plans for the new Division 6 ended Dec. 21 and the developer's environmental consultants are working with Metro to consolidate the comments into the Final Environmental

Impact Report. Longley expects to present the Final EIR to the Board this spring.

Division 1 expansion

Metro has begun the first phase of construction – grading, paving, fencing and lighting – to expand Division 1 onto recently acquired property just to the south of the division, which is located at 6th and Central.

By March, Longley expects the new site will be paved and fenced and ready for use as an expanded bus-operating yard. When Industrial Street, which runs between Division 1 and the new site, is closed and improved, the addition will total approximately four acres.

A temporary auxiliary bus yard was opened in mid-December at Terminal 31 near the Regional Rebuild Center to operate additional consent decree Division 1 buses until the expansion is completed.

Division 4 expansion

A contract is expected to be awarded in January to clear and pave four acres adjacent to Division 4.

That project, due for completion in June 2005, will expand non-revenue vehicle parking from 258 to 500 spaces. The extra parking will permit the consolidation of non-revenue maintenance facilities.

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The Division 15 team focused on reducing Metro Bus accidents are, from left, instructors Joanna Ricci and Robert Filan, Assistant Transportation Manager Ron Reedy, Instructor Michael Johnson, Transportation Manager Gary Spivack and Instructor Ethel Fields.

PHOTO: ERIC RAPP



Rain Couldn't Wash Out Division 15's October Safety Record

By ERIC RAPP

(Jan. 4, 2005) The normally clear skies over Southern California turned gray and rainy in October 2004, but for East Valley Division 15 Assistant Transportation Manager Ron Reedy and the division Instruction team, it turned out to be the best month in a long time.

While other divisions' accident rates went up as the weather turned poor and roads grew slick, the Division 15 team's accident record not only went down from the previous month, it was the best record in the Metro system.

For Reedy and the instruction team, it was the culmination of more than a year's worth of effort to improve ongoing training for operators.

First, the instruction department instituted a policy of accident check rides: Any operator with three or more accidents in a year, even if the accidents are considered unavoidable, has a ride-along from an instructor within three days of the last accident.

A dangerous situation?

"There may be something that the operator didn't even realize they were doing that was causing problems," says Reedy. "Or there may be a dangerous situation that the operator has no control over, that we can identify and work to get fixed."

Sometimes, identifying problems is simplicity itself: Using a map and

pushpins, the instruction team can easily see where most accidents have happened, and come up with strategies to help minimize danger.

Reedy's restructuring of the instruction department also helped to stop duplication of effort and increase timely response to problems.

When he started at Division 15, accident reviews took two-and-a-half months to complete. The instruction team set a goal to finish all accident reviews in two weeks, and met that goal. Now, most instructors are able to be in the field for the majority of their day.

'Couldn't be prouder'

"I couldn't be prouder of this team," says Reedy. "Ethel Fields, Robert Filan, Michael Johnson, Phillip Lockwood, Connie Lussier, and Joanna Ricci have all done a great job of turning this place around."

All the work has paid off. Division 15 has seen a constant reduction in accidents over the past year, leading to October's win.

It's paid off in other ways, too: By having instructors do check-rides with operators who return from long-term sick leave, there have been no Workers' Compensation-related injury relapses in the 13 months since the program began.

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Parade-goers in line at Memorial Park Station await their turn on the Metro Gold Line.



PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON

Metro Gold Line Scores Touchdown New Year's Day

- Metro Gold Line delivered some 60,000 people to Pasadena for the Tournament of Roses festivities and Rose Bowl game, lining the route to Pasadena with safety, courteous assistance and another good impression.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

January 4, 2005 - It didn't rain on the Rose Parade and the Texas Longhorns edged by the Michigan Wolverines, 38-37. And, for the second year, the Metro Gold Line scored big points with parade-goers, Rose Bowl fans and float reviewers attending New Year's Day festivities in Pasadena.

Estimates from tallies and observations at key stations indicate upwards of 60,000 rode the line during the crucial time that began with parade-goers lining up at Union Station before dawn and concluded with the departure of Rose Bowl fans on New Year's night.

Despite the crowds -- ridership was up one-third over the 45,000 who rode the Gold Line during the inaugural New Year's run in 2004 -- there were no delays, no problems, and an impressive organization of



Bruce Shelburne gives directions to parade-goers at Union Station.



Hector Guerrero, right, and Byron England, left, work the Memorial Park Station line.

passenger boardings.

"The operation ran smoothly," said Bruce Shelburne, Rail Scheduling manager who coordinated the Gold Line rides to the Roses. "We were able to build upon the good learning experience of the first year. This year, there was no guesswork and we knew the drill. We already had a good plan in place at the Memorial Park Station for the parade break and the football game breaks."

Ten trains on the Gold Line tracks appeared at stations in unfailing 8-minute intervals. As the parade ended, passengers formed orderly lines at station entrances attended by friendly staff who kept them informed and in cheerful conversation.

Passengers were loaded 50 at a time at Lake and Allen stations during crush hours so that packed trains wouldn't have to pass by long lines of waiting fans at Memorial Park and Del Mar stations, reported Roman Alarcon, Rail Division Transportation manager.

The weather provided the only surprise. The torrents of rain that muddied a large source of Rose Bowl parking at Brookside Park caused the Tournament officials to beseech parade-goers to take public transit to the parade and park at designated Gold Line parking lots adjacent to the stations.

Park they did. The Gateway Transit Center parking was full by mid-morning. Grateful that they didn't have to park, another 300 or so people arrived by Metrolink from Orange County and San Bernardino.

Faces in the Crowd.



Service Attendant Virginia Middleton - Union Station

Crowd control was handled by the Sheriff's deputies, some on horseback or with patrol dogs. Fare inspectors joined a Metro staff of some 20 employees from Rail Transportation, Rail Safety and a handful of volunteers to take on the New Year's Day challenge.

The staff took up posts at Union Station and four Pasadena Metro Gold Line stations from 5:30 a.m. to around 9:30 p.m. on New Year's Day, assisting transit riders with safety and fare purchase.



The parade break: The line at Memorial Park winds down to the platform from Holly Street after the parade ends on Colorado Boulevard.



Sheriff's deputies on horseback direct crowd control.



Metro Rail staff guide football fans at Allen Station to waiting trains for a ride to the Rose Bowl.



Rail TOS Gerald Harper -
Memorial Park platform

Last year, the prospect of thousands of returning Rose Bowl fans created significant concern. This year, the winning play was already in place to receive the Rose Bowl fans departing for and exiting from the shuttles to the Rose Bowl.

When the football game began at 2 p.m., Metro Rail, Metro Bus and Sheriff's personnel were already in a huddle at the Memorial Park Station plotting out ways to assist in directing transit riders to the proper line.



LASD Deputy 'Hero' - Union
Station

As the shuttles returned from the Rose Bowl, Sheriff deputies had already closed off Holly Street for the departing Longhorn fans and disappointed Wolverine supporters.

Train after train of nearly 500 passengers, each tucked into eight-minute departures by the staff, safely escorted everyone back to home, hotels and all points north and south.



Rail Instructor Byron England
and Rail Asst. Mgr. Barbara
Harris - Allen Station

Following that lead, Metro buses lined up on Saturday and Sunday to assist visitors to the float exhibit in Victory Park, a shuttle hop away from the Sierra Madre Villa Station.

"It was a very well-behaved and cheerful crowd," said Shelburne.



Rail Transportation Mgr.
Hector Guerrero - Metro Gold
Line

"People enjoyed the lines," said Alarcon, "They didn't seem to mind the wait. The Gold Line ride was a big part of a great day."

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Governance Councils Schedule January Meetings

By RICK JAGER

(Jan. 4, 2005) Metro's service sector governance councils have scheduled monthly public meetings for January.

Governance council meetings will be held:

- Westside/Central, Thursday, Jan. 6, 3 p.m., La Cienega Tennis Center, Sunset Room, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills.
- San Gabriel Valley, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 5 p.m., San Gabriel Sector Office, 3369 Santa Anita Ave., El Monte.
- San Fernando Valley, Wednesday, Jan. 12, 6:30 p.m., Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center Community Room, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys.
- Gateway Cities, Thursday, Jan. 13, 2 p.m., The Gas Company, 9240 Firestone Blvd., Downey.
- South Bay, Friday, Jan. 14, 9:30 a.m., Carson Community Center, 801 E. Carson St., Carson.


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EDITOR'S NOTE: The death toll from the Asian tsunami, according to the Reuters news service, which cited official sources, now stands at 145,073 and is edging toward 150,000. Sri Lanka reported at least 30,240 dead as of Jan. 5. The United States has committed an initial \$350 million to tsunami relief and has dispatched U.S. Navy and other military units to South Asia to assist in the relief effort. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Florida Governor Jeb Bush are in the region to assess the needs of the various countries affected by the disaster.

How to help: <http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov> The site provides a link to summaries of resources> click on USA Freedom Corps Fact Sheet from the homepage.

Tsunami Survivors: Division 18 Mechanic Learns Family is Safe in Sri Lanka

By RICH MORALLO



Division 18 Mechanic Rohan Kandamby prayed that his family would be safe from the tsunami wave that hit Sri Lanka.

PHOTO: RICH MORALLO

(Jan. 5, 2005) Rohan Kandamby is still as stunned, today, as he was when he first learned about the tsunami that wrecked part of his brother's community on the southeast tip of Sri Lanka.

"I had just talked to my brother long distance on the phone the day before, on Christmas, and the whole family was fine," remarked Kandamby, a mechanic at Carson Division 18.

Then, Kandamby heard about the earthquake that sent giant waves crashing into the Indian Ocean coastal town of Fort Matara, where his brother lives.

"I didn't think I could get through to my brother on the phone on Sunday at 9:30 a.m., but I finally reached my mother who lives about 12 miles inland," Kandamby says. Only then did he learn about his brother's escape from death.

Giant wave struck

Kandamaby's younger brother, Palitha, a doctor, and his wife had been shopping at the market when the first giant wave struck. Their 9-year-old and 6-year-old daughters were at home, about a mile from the coast, with a teenage niece. Palitha and his wife quickly drove back home but the roads were already flooded.

"They had to wade through a quarter of a mile before they reached their house," said Kandamby.

Palitha rounded up his daughters and niece and brought them back to the car where he left them with his wife before wading back to the

house for some important documents.

By the time Palitha reached the house the second time, the dwelling was submerged. He had to climb a tree to escape the rising waters. Army teams eventually rescued him.

'I was so far away'

"On Sunday, the news reported 3,000 people dead in Sri Lanka," says Kandamby. After confirming that his brother was safe, Kandamby still felt sick. "I wanted to help, to do something, but I was so far away."

Later, Kandamby prayed for the sick, homeless and the dead at his temple in South Pasadena. He also gave thanks for the safety of his mother, five sisters and three other brothers who live farther inland and were not affected by the tsunami waves.

Kandamby says the local Sri Lanka association has set up a relief fund. Monetary donations can be made at local Bank of America branches. Used clothing, canned goods and medicines can be donated to the Sri Lanka Buddhist Temple at 920 Summit Drive, South Pasadena, 91030-4351, c/o A. Dhammarama.

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Division 1 Mechanic Celebrates an Academic Trojan Victory

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(Jan. 5, 2005) Paul Sum, a mechanic at Central City Division 1, is celebrating a different type of USC Trojan victory than Tuesday's 55-19 gridiron win over Oklahoma University.

His son, USC graduate student Paul Sum, received the Outstanding Physical Therapy Student Award from the American Physical Therapy Association. The award acknowledges a student physical therapist with exceptional scholastic ability and potential for contributions to orthopaedic physical therapy.

Kornelia Kulig, associate professor at USC, nominated Sum for the award.

"Jonathan is truly an outstanding student, soon to become an insightful and well-educated practicing physical therapist with a tremendous potential to contribute to the Orthopaedic Section of the APTA," said Kulig. "Jonathan is equally effective when working with the less privileged members of the Los Angeles community as well as the most privileged."

The senior Sum was delighted to hear the news.

Desire to help people

"Jonathon was always into sports, but couldn't get into the baseball program," said proud pappa Paul Sum, "so he decided to pursue physical therapy. From day one at USC, Jonathon knew what he wanted to do. His main objective has always been to get in this industry to help people – he's not in it for the money."

Jonathon received his baccalaureate degree from USC in 2001 and will receive his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree when he returns from his four-month internship in Phoenix. He has already completed full-time internships at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center and at Hopi Indian Health Services on the Hopi Native American reservation.

Jonathon will receive his award at the New Orleans American Physical Therapy Association conference next month, and couldn't be happier to receive the award.

"It is truly an honor and privilege, not simply for the award, but to be recognized by leaders in our profession and to be in the company of previous USC recipients," he said.

Mechanic Paul Sum has a USC National Champion in his own family – and couldn't be happier.


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A Case Study:

How Gateway Cities Handled Cancellation of 'The Nanny Express'

(Jan. 7, 2004) The Gateway Cities sector staff went to extraordinary lengths to ensure the public was notified about the proposal to eliminate Line 576 – the “Nanny Express” – and to encourage participation in the public hearing process.

The effort involved emails, letters and phone calls. All literature was printed in both Spanish and English.

The sector staff notified Line 576 customers, elected officials and city staff about the proposed change. Written notice of the proposed cancellation and the public hearing dates was sent to numerous local, state, county and federal officials, and to agencies and organizations.

Notice was also provided in many local and regional newspapers serving the Los Angeles region, including foreign language newspapers. Special English- and Spanish-language rider notices were placed on all Metro Buses, Metro Rail trains and at customer service centers.

Ensured proper notification

Once the sector governance council approved the line cancellation, the sector staff worked with several departments to ensure customers would be properly notified.

The Board of Directors, members of the Los Angeles City Council and Mayor James Hahn's office received notification about the cancellation, and the reasoning behind the decision.

The Gateway Cities' staff worked with the Westside/Central sector to notify elected officials, neighborhood councils, homeowners associations and others that may have been impacted by the cancellation.

Notification included the reason for the cancellation, a map of alternative service available and a phone number to call for more information – including an offer to personally customize alternative service options for existing Line 576 customers.

Distributed special brochure

The Gateway Cities sector staff distributed a special service change brochure that included a list of alternate bus routes on Line 576 buses.

In addition, the staff – many of them bilingual – rode Line 576 buses two weeks before the service change, and on the last day of operation, to make doubly sure that customers were aware of the cancellation and their alternate service options.

The sector staff also met with Metro Media Relations and Marketing representatives to ensure that all notification elements were coordinated. Information on the cancellation and alternative service was posted on Metro's website, accessible through several links.

Media Relations issued a news release to LA County media outlets, including foreign language publications, regarding upcoming service changes and provided contact information on alternative service options to Line 576.

Extensive news coverage

A number of media outlets, including KNBC-TV, the Los Angeles Times, Telemundo and a local National Public Radio station, ran stories about the Line 576 cancellation. Senior Public Communications Officer Jose Ubaldo met reporters on some of Line 576's early morning runs.

Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford and Community Relations Manager David Hershenson were at Central City Division 1 to greet the buses carrying news reporters and were available to answer questions.

Public Relations Deputy Executive Officer Marc Littman anticipated the media's interest in covering the Line 576 story.

"Early on, Media Relations met with Alex and his staff and we all agreed we should bring this story forward and alert the media, particularly those who had covered the Nanny Express in the past," said Littman. "It was a prime example of how Metro acted with compassion and took steps to ease the transition for the nannies and other domestic workers that use Metro Bus service. Kudos to Alex and his staff for going the extra mile."

-- From David Hershenson

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Closely involved in making the changeover from Line 576 were, from left, Gateway Cities sector schedule makers Donald Mills, Grace Hong and Andrew Trujillo. Photo by David Hershenson



End of the Line for the 'Nanny Express'

- 36 years of service ends in December
- Low ridership, excessive service duplication
- [MORE> A Case Study: How Gateway Cities Handled Cancellation of 'The Nanny Express'](#)

By DAVID HERSHENSON and MATT BARRETT

(Jan. 7, 2004) One of Metro's most publicized bus lines came to an end in December when Line 576 was taken out of service because of low ridership numbers and excessive service duplication along all segments of the route.

Affectionately dubbed "The Nanny Express," Line 576 carried nannies, housekeepers and other domestic workers to their jobs in such affluent neighborhoods as Beverly Hills, Brentwood and Pacific Palisades.

Line 576 was implemented in 1968 based on the findings of a commission that was appointed by Governor Pat Brown in 1965 to study the Watts riots.

The report concluded that the riots were symptomatic of a number of problems, including high jobless rates in the inner city, poor housing, and inadequate public transportation services in the South Central Los

Angeles area.

The creation of the South Los Angeles – Pacific Palisades Flyer Line 176 – later changed to Line 576 – was one of the actions taken by the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) to address the public transit issues raised in the report.

Letter from Governor Reagan

As a measure of how important the line was at the time, then Governor Ronald Reagan wrote in a letter to SCRTD, "I wish to commend the Southern California Rapid Transit District for its decision to inaugurate new and improved bus service in the Watts and East Los Angeles area. Your 176 line, linking South-Central Los Angeles with employment areas in Beverly Hills, West Los Angeles and Pacific Palisades fills an important need for faster and more economical service to these areas."

Over the next 30-plus years, additional service was added to serve the area, and Line 576 was reduced to five morning and five afternoon and evening trips each weekday, carrying a total of only around 225 passengers a day.

Although sad to see Line 576 go, most customers understood the rationale for canceling a line with such extensive service duplication. Former riders have a number of additional service options to get where they want to go, although one extra transfer may be involved.

It is also important to note that 100 percent of the service hours from Line 576 has been reinvested to provide new weekend service and expanded night service on other Gateway Cities sector lines.

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Celebrity look-alikes and Metro staff had supporting roles in May press event that starred Metro Day Pass as the \$3 dollar vacation. Warren Morse, DEO Communications, (center with Marilyn Monroe look-alike Gailyn Addis), shared Master of Ceremonies duties with Honorary Mayor of Hollywood Johnny Grant, center at left.



Top Stories of 2004

The Year Was One of Exhilaration and Setbacks for Metro

By BILL HEARD, Editor

[January](#) [February](#) [March](#) [April](#) [May](#) [June](#)
[July](#) [August](#) [September](#) [October](#) [November](#) [December](#)

(Jan. 7, 2004) The year 2004 was one of the most eventful in recent memory for Metro, with exhilarating highs and surprising setbacks that required strong action on the part of employees and management.

In July, a gala groundbreaking got the Metro Gold Line's Eastside Extension off to a good start. The next month, however, a lawsuit halted work for 24 days on another key project – the Metro Orange Line.

In January, budget problems forced cancellation of the Call for Projects, affecting countywide projects valued at \$2.3 billion. In June, Metro provided outstanding shuttle service during the three days when former President Ronald Reagan lay in state at the Reagan Library.

In November, Congress voted \$62 million for Metro Rail and Metro Bus projects. In December, the downturn in passenger revenues and other costs forced Metro to take actions – including instituting a hiring freeze and canceling capital projects – to offset a \$40 million budget deficit.

Metro played host to a number of successful events – Mobility 21, Rail-Volution and the California Transit Association convention – and also honored employees at the “Night of Stars,” as well as at the annual Raildeo and Bus Rodeo.

Here’s a month-by-month replay of Metro’s Top Stories for 2004:

January

The new Metro Day Pass went on sale, Jan. 1, and became a key element of the fare restructuring. Sales were strong, with about 50,000 sold on weekdays.

The Special Master overseeing implementation of the federal Consent Decree issued an order requiring Metro to buy and to place into service the equivalent of 145 new 40-seat buses no later than December 2005. The agency also was ordered to provide at least 370,185 additional annual in-service hours to meet Consent Decree obligations.



While Metro's most senior employee was getting a standing ovation at the presentation of an official commendation for 70 years on the job, Board members joined Arthur Winston at the podium for a heartfelt and spontaneous round of good cheer. Pictured, from left, are directors Mike Antonovich, Frank Roberts, Pam O'Connor, Arthur Winston, Zev Yaroslavsky, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Antonio Villaraigosa, Tom LaBonge, Martin Ludlow, Don Knabe, Beatrice Proo and John Fasana.

Threatened with the loss of millions in state transportation funding and facing a budget crisis, Metro took the extraordinary measure of terminating the 2003 Call for Projects. The move affected 363 local transportation projects valued at \$2.3 billion. It was the first time since the Call for Projects process began in 1991 that one was cancelled.

February

A new policy that took effect, Feb. 1, restricts the use of Metro cell phones to agency business. It requires users to reimburse the agency for the cost of personal calls at the rate of 25 cents per minute.

On Feb. 2, the Board of Directors authorized a limited appeal of a Consent Decree order. Metro asked the U.S. District Court to modify the Special Master's order to allow the agency to make more efficient use of its

resources, rather than requiring Metro to purchase more new buses.

Along the Metro Orange Line construction area, HAZMAT crews were working to clean up 20 spots that lab tests showed had been contaminated with arsenic and lead after nearly a century of railroad operation. Crews excavated the contaminated soil to a depth where arsenic and lead concentrations were below state standards.

March

Beginning March 1, Metro Bus operators were prohibited from using cell phones of all types while "operating equipment or walking in division yards." Deputy CEO John Catoe said the new rule for bus operators is aimed at improving safety for employees and Metro patrons.

As gasoline prices in Los Angeles County rose well above \$2, rideshare inquiries poured into Metro – soaring 45 percent since December 2003. By the end of February, the number of information calls had jumped 51 percent.

In early March, a panel of transit executives warned that Metro's narrow focus on complying with the Consent Decree's bus passenger load standards could cause a "negative spiral of declining ridership." The executives, in Los Angeles for a peer review, said, "Successful routes may be victims of their own success...LACMTA is penalized for growth in ridership."



\$3 Vacation: North Hollywood High School students, from left, Otto Hovsepien, Jesus del Val, Linda Nunez, Leonela Colque and Victor Sotero, reach Metro Gold Line Memorial Park Station in Pasadena on a quest for best itinerary.



A Line 207 Metro Bus turns onto Hollywood Boulevard from Western Avenue just in front of the new Metro Hollywood Apartments.

April

The 11th Annual Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair drew 1,400 attendees to

the LA Convention Center, April 13. Attendees learned how to tap into billions of dollars of local contract opportunities in Los Angeles County.

The Grand Opening of Metro Hollywood Apartments, a 60-unit development at the Hollywood/Western Metro Red Line station, was held, April 19. The first mixed-use transit village to provide affordable housing in Hollywood, it offers low-income housing, 9,100 square feet of retail space, a daycare center and easy access to the Metro Red Line and seven Metro Bus lines.

A multi-agency law enforcement task force swept through the San Fernando Valley, April 13, conducting searches and arresting 24 suspects in a raid targeting graffiti vandalism and its associated violent crimes.

In May, Metro Red Line operators Tu Phan, foreground, Jesus Valdez, center, and Mangit Singh, at left, placed first, second and third, respectively, at the 9th annual Metro Raildeo. Rail Transit Operations Supervisor Esther Pippins, at right, who coordinated the event, accompanied the winners to the international competition in Miami as their coach.



May

Metro began retiring the military-style uniform worn for years by transportation operations supervisors. The new uniform for all TOSs is smart blazers with gray slacks, white shirts and conservative patterned ties. The change underscores the supervisors' professionalism as a reflection of Metro's public image.

The Board approved a plan to add 60 Transit Services Bureau fare inspectors on the Metro Blue and Green Lines. Thirty-six fare inspectors were to be deployed on the Blue Line and 24 on the Metro Green Line.

IMAGES COURTESY OF LEGACY PARTNERS/GATEHOUSE CAPITAL



A cluster of palm trees in this architect's rendering of a proposed hotel/apartment complex marks the entrance to the Hollywood/Vine Metro Rail station. A luxury W hotel, shops and restaurants will surround the subway entrance plaza.



Apartment and condominium residences top a row of shops and restaurants along Vine Street and Selma Avenue in this architect's rendering of the proposed Hollywood/Vine development.

The Board approved developer's concepts for a huge transit-oriented hotel and apartment complex at the Hollywood/ Vine Metro Rail station. The development will dominate almost an entire city block in the heart of Hollywood. It will include a 13-story condominium building, a 10-story luxury W hotel and a five-story apartment building all surrounding the Metro Red Line plaza.

June

Metro launched an all-out effort, June 7, to provide shuttle service for thousands of mourners who paid their respects to the late President Ronald Reagan, who died, June 5, at age 93. Some 95 Metro Bus operators, 14 road supervisors, field technicians and others transported visitors between Moorpark College in Simi Valley and the Reagan Library. Because of overwhelming crowds, the shuttle operated around the clock for a total of 35 hours.

The Board adopted a \$2.9 billion budget, June 7, for FY 2005. The spending plan eliminated some 233 jobs and sharply reduced administrative overhead to balance a structural operating deficit.

The Federal Transit Administration approved \$490.7 million in federal funding, June 1, for a six-mile extension of the Metro Gold Line. In response, CEO Roger Snoble signed a \$600.4 million construction contract to build the extension.

Tossing the ceremonial first shovelfuls of dirt at the Eastside Extension groundbreaking were, from center right, City Councilman Tom Labonge, Supervisor Gloria Molina, Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, City Councilman Antonio Villaraigosa, CEO Roger Snoble and Metro Board Member Pam O'Connor.



July

Taking a score of golden shovels in hand, July 17, local, state and federal officials dug the first ceremonial bits of earth to officially break ground for construction of the \$989.9 million Metro Gold Line's Eastside Extension. The six-mile line is slated to open in late 2009. By 2020, it is expected reach 23,000 daily boardings.



Board Chairman Frank Roberts:

"This is truly an historic day for Los Angeles and for Eastside residents who rely heavily on public transportation to get where they need to go."

The Board approved the purchase of 75 CNG buses from North American Bus Industries. The \$30 million purchase will ensure that Metro has enough new buses to comply with the Consent Decree.

Division 9 Operator Luduvico Castro came out of fourth place in the preliminaries to win the 2004 Metro Bus Roadeo. The Division 18 team of Javier Soria, Mina Ros and Luke Logan won the maintenance competition.

August

The California Court of Appeal, acting on a request by Citizens Organized for Smart Transit (COST), issued an order, Aug. 2, temporarily halting work on the \$330 million Metro Orange Line. Metro was ordered to include a study of the Metro Rapid system in its Environmental Impact Report. Construction

was halted, Aug. 3, and contractor Shimmick-Obayashi laid off its craft workers. Officials estimated the cost of the downtime at \$70,000 a day.

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky tells local media why he believes the Metro Orange Line should be completed. He was joined by from left, U.S. Congressman Brad Sherman (D-Sherman Oaks, CA) and Los Angeles City Council Members Dennis Zine and Tom LaBonge, among others.



PHOTO: NED RACINE

Later in the month, community and political leaders rallied in support of the Orange Line project, and the Los Angeles City Council voted unanimously in favor of completing construction. CEO Roger Snoble removed the stop-work order, Aug. 26, after a 24-day shutdown, and the contractor began rehiring workers. On Aug. 31, COST lost its bid to again stop work when the Superior Court denied its request for a restraining order.

On Aug. 3, some 400 government, business, labor and community leaders attended the third annual Mobility 21 transportation summit. Leaders announced a \$9 billion plan to fund LA County's "Top Ten Traffic Busters," including expansion of light rail lines, more carpool lanes, street and highway and freight corridor improvements.

Board Chairman Frank Roberts, at podium, introduces new 45-foot Metro Bus. Also pictured, from left, North American Bus Industries executive Cliff Henke, Deputy Executive Officer John Catoe and Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke.



PHOTO: SHANTAY IOSIA

Metro introduced the new "CompoBus" to the public, Aug. 6. The lightweight 45-foot bus is the first of 100 "CompoBuses" expected to be in service by the end of June 2005.

On Aug. 27, the Special Master overseeing the federal Consent Decree denied a motion by the Bus Riders Union to extend the decree for another six years. The Consent Decree expires in October 2006.

September

General Manager David Armijo was appointed to succeed Jim McElroy, who resigned as general manager of the Westside/Central Service Sector. Richard Hunt, deputy executive officer for vehicle technology and support, was named to succeed Armijo as general manager of the San Fernando Valley service sector. Hunt remains in charge of development and acquisition of vehicles, including the new articulated buses.

Los Angeles was the site of the 10th Annual Rail~Volution conference, hosted by Metro. The event drew some 1,000 attendees from around the country. "Los Angeles is reinventing itself as a place where it is possible to enjoy a greater quality of life..." said CEO Roger Snoble.

Rail~Volution drew 1,000 participants from around the nation to the Metro-hosted event in Los Angeles.



DNA evidence confirmed that a man arrested outside the Gateway Building, Sept. 2, committed two sexual assaults in the Union Station parking garage. Sexual assault charges were filed against Steven Jackson, 33, who also was a suspect in four other cases.

October

Metro honored its top Transit Operations personnel at a gala "Night of Stars" celebration in Industry Hills. Each bus operator and maintenance employee received a gold medallion and the congratulations of the Metro leadership for a job well done. "Tonight we honor the best of the best..." said Board Chairman Frank Roberts.

Passengers board the Metro Liner at the North Hollywood station for trek to Metro Orange Line.



The Metro Liner made its debut, Oct. 15, during a media event in the San Fernando Valley. Officials gathered for an inaugural ride along the partially completed Metro Orange Line. Among those on hand for the event were Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge.

A Superior Court judge denied a request by Citizens Organized for Smart Transit, Oct. 22, to halt construction on the Metro Orange Line until the Board certified a Revised Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). That same day, Metro released the FEIR for a 30-day public review. The draft report included the court-ordered study of a Rapid Bus.

November

Both houses of Congress passed a spending bill that included more than \$62 million for the Eastside Light Rail Project and two other Metro rail and bus projects. The bill provided \$60 million for the Eastside light rail project, \$675,103 for the final federal installment on the Metro Red Line North Hollywood Extension, and \$2 million for Metro Bus acquisitions – although those sums were expected to be reduced by 8/10ths of a percent.

Metro hosted the 39th Annual California Transit Association Conference and Expo, drawing more than 700 transit professionals from throughout California for three days of meetings sessions to discuss issues critical to today's transit environment.



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.

December

Citing lagging passenger revenues, escalating fuel prices, higher liability claims and Workers' Comp costs, CEO Roger Snoble announced plans to meet the \$40 million deficit in Metro's FY 2005 budget. They included a hiring freeze, cancellation of bus and rail capital projects, postponement of equipment purchases and cancellation of non-essential travel.

Metro increased annual bus revenue service by 250,000 hours, Dec. 19, and added scores of buses to 60 bus lines. The agency also implemented two new Metro Rapid bus lines – Line 740 and Line 780 – and created three new local bus routes.

Light Rail Wayside Systems employees worked around the clock for 36 straight hours to repair damage caused by a train that ripped out a 450-foot section of electrical wire.

As 2004 drew to a close, flooded streets and power outages caused by the heavy rainfall that pounded the Los Angeles area plagued transit operations. But, both Metro Bus and Metro Rail officials reported making rollout, despite storm-related hardships.

'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

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Metro Rail officials in orange vests assess damage to Metro Gold Line overhead electrical wires while members of a contractor's crew, in yellow slickers, consider how to remove fallen trees from the right-of-way. Sheriff's Lt. Mike Parker, left, photographs the scene.



PHOTOS: JOSE UBALDO

Downed Trees Halt Gold Line Service; Buses Trapped in Malibu

- [Safety officials close road into Gold Line yard.](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 11, 2005) Three trees that broke loose from a rain-soaked hillside and fell across Metro Gold Line electrical wires in South Pasadena at 8:20 a.m., Monday, halted through service on the line for 10 hours.

While Metro Rail traction power and track personnel worked to clear the blockage, Bus Operations Control set up a bus bridge between Mission station on the north and Southwest Museum station on the south, with stops at the Highland Park station to take on passengers.

Through service at a reduced speed of 35 mph resumed at 6:20 p.m. when the trees

were cleared from the Gold Line right-of-way and the overhead catenary wires had been inspected and declared safe for operation.

Divisions 1, 2, 3, 9 and 10 provided a total of 6 buses for the emergency service. Service was back to normal Tuesday morning.



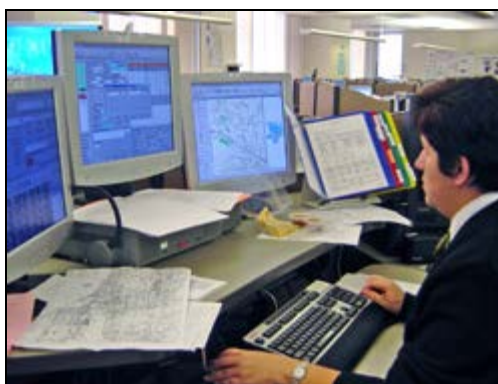
A heavy oak and two smaller eucalyptus trees toppled onto Metro Gold Line power lines in South Pasadena when soggy ground gave way beneath their roots.

Buses trapped on PCH

Five Metro Buses from divisions 6 and 10 were trapped Pacific Coast Highway for several hours, Monday afternoon, when power lines fell across the road north of Pepperdine University in Malibu and a landslide pushed a large rock onto the road near Temescal Canyon Road in Pacific Palisades.

Three of the Line 434 buses were restricted to a nine-mile stretch of highway between the downed power lines and the rock, while two others were between the downed lines and the western end of the bus route. BOC directed the buses to provide shuttle service in their limited areas until the road was cleared.

PHOTO: BILL HEARD



Caltrans workers escorted passengers around the large rock to make their bus connections. One bus was positioned near Pepperdine to serve as temporary shelter while passengers waited for the electrical wires to be cleared from the roadway.

TOS Cynthia Saucedo of the Bus Operations Center monitored Metro Bus operations in the San Fernando Valley, Tuesday morning. Buses on four well-traveled lines in the Sepulveda Basin and in Glendale were being detoured due to high water or landslides.

Meanwhile, Metro Bus operations experienced the usual flood-related detours around the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area in the San Fernando Valley. Buses were rerouted in other parts of the service area due to flooded intersections.

Rewriting deep-water rules

The deep waters caused by the storms have required Bus Operations to rewrite the rules dictating where Metro Buses can be operated during wet weather, according to Tom Jasmin, director of Operations Control.

Previously, the rules allowed buses to operate in 18-inch-deep water, but low-floor buses can't be operated in water more than 12 inches deep without water washing in through the doors.

"That six inches is a big difference in getting people through," says Jasmin. Future detour notices will reflect the new deep-water rules.

The storm that brought some 4.5 inches of rain into the area since Friday caused an hour-long power outage that required single-tracking at the Metro Red Line's Wilshire/Vermont station.

Metro Contract bus service experienced problems in the South Bay and in the San Fernando Valley.

Line 225/226 in San Pedro and the Palos Verdes Peninsula had to detour around a major sinkhole on Western Avenue and a mud slide on Palos Verdes Drive South. Near LAX, Line 625 had to cope with major delays due to flooding.

In the Valley, Griffith Park roads were closed, affecting operations on Line 96. Line 218, which runs from Studio City to Cedars-Sinai Hospital, was cut in half by flooding. Buses from the hospital can only go as far as Sunset Boulevard on the south. The line, which starts at Ventura Boulevard on the north, now deadends at Mulholland Drive.

Road into Gold Line yard closed

The Metro Gold Line yard lost power for a while on Monday, but a more pressing problem is the closing of the road leading into the facility, due to rock and mud slides and concerns about the stability of the hill above the road.

Safety officials directed employees to park at the yard's entrance and use the emergency walkway to the main building. The train car wash also should not be used until its safety can be assured.

Arthur Winston Division 5, which was hard hit in the earlier round of storms, experienced a four-and-a-half hour electrical outage on Sunday, but was in full operation Monday.

The protracted stormy weather also has curtailed most construction work on the Metro Orange Line and the Metro Gold Line's Eastside Extension.

Rain-related damage between Moorpark and Camarillo curtailed Metrolink operations from the Montalvo, Oxnard and Camillaro stations. Metrolink trains between Los Angeles and Burbank were cancelled as were other trains on the Ventura County line.

Weather forecasters are calling the July 2004 to June 2005 period the 13th wettest year on record, with a total of 21.9 inches of rain having fallen at USC – 8 inches more than the normal 5 inches. Predictions are for dry weather from today through Friday.

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Cooking Show

• French Chef to Demonstrate Culinary Flair at Metro Café

Jan. 11, 2005 - From his early days as a chef at Maxim's in Paris to owning and operating "The Cookery Restaurant" in Carmichael, a renowned establishment near Sacramento, French-born chef Jean Luc Chassereau has come a long way.

Now an executive chef for Sodexho, the national umbrella organization that includes the Metro Café, Chassereau travels the western region of the United States to entice the palates of the many patrons of the kitchens in Sodexho's realm.

"Today, healthy eating has the greatest influence on the menu," says the chef. "People are very concerned about the nutritional benefits of what they are eating."

The opportunity to meet Chassereau and sample his cuisine presents itself on Wednesday during the lunch period at Metro Café.

In a retail-style cooking exhibition, the chef will be dishing up a variety of wraps made with naan, a popular Indian bread that looks similar to a conventional wrap but is made of wheat and served warm and puffy.

"It's a quick, cooking technique using fresh ingredients," Chassereau says.

"In our traveling 'Live Action Cooking' show, we customize the meal to the patron's palate and they can take home some quick and easy cooking tips as well." -- *from Gayle Anderson*



Sodexho Chef Jean Luc Chassereau will dish up "On Naan Wraps" in "Live Action Cooking" demonstration set for Metro Café at lunchtime on Wednesday.


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Metro Commute Services hosts Employer Workshop on Rideshare Benefits



Jan. 11, 2005 - Above, Will Schroer, ICF Consulting, and Laura Wheeler of WageWorks, explain tax incentives and other benefits of company-sponsored commuter programs to some 60 employers at Metro Commute Services workshop, today. Below, Commute Services' Teresa Milliken with JPL Employee Transportation Coordinators (ETC's) Robert Kennedy, left, and John Miranda.



"Commuter programs aren't an option for JPL; they're a necessity," says John Miranda, Employee Transportation Coordinator for Jet Propulsion Laboratories. The 177-acre campus, with parking for 4,000, is the workplace of some 8,000 employees and contractors. "We have about 30 vanpools, a bike club and many car pools. If AQMD dropped their requirements tomorrow, we'd still have an employee transportation program. It's definitely a benefit.

-- from Gayle Anderson

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Nancy Michali, director of Service Performance and Analysis, (standing) discusses the Metro Connections program during a meeting of Gateway Cities sector officials and local transit operators and city representatives. Photo: David Hershenson



Gateway Cities Working with Local Transit Operators and Cities

By DAVID HERSHENSON

(Jan. 12, 2005) The Gateway Cities Service Sector has been hosting monthly meetings with transit providers and city representatives responsible for operating service in Southeast Los Angeles County.

The group first met in October to receive a briefing on the Metro Connections program and to get an update on Gateway Cities sector activities. The participants agreed that regular meetings would be beneficial to improved coordination between Metro and local service providers.

General Manager Alex Clifford is pleased with the progress of the meetings.

"We started these sessions with an overview of the Metro Connections program, which can only be successful with the participation of the various service providers in our region," he said.

"The discussions have expanded to include presentations from each of the participating transit operators and cities on their recent, current and future plans to improve bus service in the area," Clifford added. "It is beneficial for Metro, and the other participants, to be aware of what we are all working on, and to work together to provide an efficient and integrated transit system throughout our sector."

10 agencies participated

Representatives from Long Beach Transit, Norwalk Transit, Montebello Transit, Downey Link, Paramount Transit, The Lynwood Trolley Company, the City of Santa Fe Springs, Los Angeles County, Whittier Transit, and the Orange County Transit Authority have attended the meetings.

Jim Parker, who heads Norwalk Transit, one of the larger transit

providers in the Gateway Cities region, thinks the meetings have been very beneficial.

"Our Norwalk Transit System supports the Metro Gateway Service Sector efforts in providing a forum where transit agency stakeholders in the Southeast Region can discuss issues and ideas to work collectively to address the unmet transit needs in our region," said Parker.

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CEO Roger Snoble accepts checks from Metro Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein. The money was Metro's share of cash confiscated during narcotics arrests.



PHOTO: BILL HEARD

Deputies' Narcotics Arrests Pay Off in Cash for Metro

[Also:](#) Meet Ares, New Deputy Dog

(Jan. 12, 2005) Hundreds of narcotics are made each year around LA's Pershing Square, but two recent arrests paid off for Metro – to the tune of \$1,558.27.

When arrested by members of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau, two suspects had a bundle of cash on them in addition to drugs, according to Capt. Dan Finkelstein, Metro's chief of police.

The two were charged, the money was confiscated, and they went to court. Under current procedures, a percentage of the confiscated cash is paid to the agency that sponsors the officers who make a narcotics arrest – in this case, Metro.

So, on Monday, Finkelstein was in CEO Roger Snoble's office to make the official presentation of two checks – one for \$925.91 and one for \$632.36. The "narcotics forfeiture money" will be ploughed back into Metro's law enforcement operations.

New! On the job.

Meet Ares, the New Deputy Dog -

Sheriff's Sgt. Michael Jones pets



Ares, a 3-year-old German shepherd trained in Czechoslovakia to detect guns, gun powder, bullets and explosives. Ares, who joined the Transit Services Bureau in November, now patrols the Metro Red Line with Jones.

-- from *Bill Heard*

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EDITOR'S NOTE: We welcome a new addition to myMETRO.NET, today, with the introduction of a monthly column by CEO Roger Snoble. The CEO's column also will be published in the MetroPeople newsletter that is distributed weekly to employees in the operating divisions.

New Year's Day Operation Gets Year Off to a Good Start

By ROGER SNOBLE

Despite the bad weather we've had the past week or so, I believe the sunshine we're finally getting is a harbinger of great things to come in 2005.



Roger Snoble

Our Metro Operations people got the year off to a good start by providing outstanding rail and bus service to the thousands of Rose Parade and Rose Bowl fans. On behalf of the Board and the staff, I want to sincerely thank them for that great effort.

Over the course of the year, I hope to use this space to talk about issues of concern to all of us as we focus on providing transportation alternatives to the people of Los Angeles County.

Think about this: Metro's staff includes bus operators, maintenance employees, transportation planners, construction engineers, and others with specialties of many kinds.

Improving quality of life

But, whatever role they may fill here at Metro, all of this talent is directed toward improving the quality of life for our citizens. That's why the taxpayers support us and why we want to give them something worthwhile in return – not only for today, but for the future.

Speaking of the future, coming up as the "crown jewel" of this year will be the opening later this year of the Metro Orange Line. Custom made for the San Fernando Valley, it will be an exclusive transitway quite unlike anything else in the nation.

We'll also see progress on construction of the Metro Gold Line's Eastside Extension. And we're planning more projects – such as carpool lanes and traffic signalization – to help relieve congestion on our streets and highways.

Later this month, we'll present a budget amendment to the Board of Directors aimed at getting us through FY 2005. It will be a combination of many different elements, all aimed at overcoming a \$40 million deficit.

Good job of managing

We've done a very good job of managing those things that are within our control throughout this fiscal year – and the budget process has been very successful in that regard. But, our successes have been

overshadowed by spiraling fuel costs and higher insurance and Workers' Compensation costs, among other factors.

This, unfortunately, is not a one-year problem. These difficulties will continue into FY 2006 as Metro operates more mandated bus service. And, because we won't be compensated for that service, either with more passenger revenue or additional tax support, it will be a drain on our resources.

Yes, we have challenges in the year ahead. And we can expect continued bright spots. Let's keep our focus and do our jobs. And remember what we are here for. Happy New Year!

January 12, 2005

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Metro Café: Visiting chef's 'Naan wraps' get rave reviews.



Postscript: Metro Cafe's guest chef dished up nearly 100 Naan wraps, Wednesday, in a "Live Action Cooking" presentation of an East Indian version of the popular wrap sandwich. Chef Jean Luc Chassereau, an executive chef from parent company Sodexho, prepared the Naan wraps on site as groups of Metro and visiting diners gathered to watch. The verdict? "Very good," said Jeanne Kinsel, contract administration director and one of the first customers to sample the cuisine. "I'd order it again." Other customers agreed, including Indian food devotees. "It is authentic flavor and the Naan bread is very good," said another patron. Café Manager Bruce Ueno plans to integrate the Naan wrap entrée into the pasta station selections. Up next: Get ready for half-caf, decaf, double-caf, dry, extra foam, nonfat lattes, cappucino and espresso. Coming soon to a Metro Café near you. - from Gayle Anderson



Chef's Special: Naan bread is painted with tahini and streaks of yogurt-cucumber sauce, then filled with fresh grilled vegetables, and your choice of roasted chicken or beef or vegetarian and quickly "baked" in a special pannini oven. The entrée is served with a tasty pineapple and orange chutney.

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South Bay DAC members (from left) Denise McCoy, Wanda Bates, Alice Hall and Richelle Rayford display transit posters they'll use during public presentations.



South Bay Sector Launches Safety, Anti-Vandalism Program

By RICH MORALLO

(Jan. 14, 2005) Division Ambassador Council (DAC) members at Arthur Winston Division 5 and Carson Division 18 are gearing up for an aggressive community outreach program to stress safety and anti-vandalism in 2005.

"Right now we are recruiting, undergoing training and conducting inventory of our Metro transit and safety materials," said DAC member Richelle Rayford, a Division 18 operator.

"We will continue to be out there in the neighborhoods talking to residents and students about Metro transit services and our safety programs," she said.

The DAC is composed of operators, mechanics and service attendants who, on personal time, promote the agency's safety and vandalism abatement program in communities and on school campuses.

Rayford and Brenda Franklin, a service attendant at Arthur Winston Division 5, recently set up a recruitment table at Division 18.

'Appealed to the staff'

"We appealed to the staff about helping the agency combat graffiti and vandalism on our fleet and property," said Franklin, who noted that 10 members signed up to help that day.

Last month, she and another South Bay DAC member, Wanda Bates, visited Cimarron Avenue Elementary School in Hawthorne to conduct a safety presentation.

"The youngsters learned how to wait safely for the bus, and how to properly board and ride on Metro," said Bates.

Currently the South Bay DAC rolls include 40 staff volunteers from Carson Division 18, and 33 from Arthur Winston Division 5, where the program started in the early 1990s.

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Middle-of-the-Night Inspiration Solves Engine Overheating Problem

- Road calls dropped from 10 a week to 3 a month

By RICH MORALLO

(Jan. 13, 2005) It was a puzzle for Poirot, a mystery for Sherlock, a maze for Monk. And a challenge for Tom Whitman, assistant maintenance manager at Carson Division 18.

Why and how was the wiring that runs the cooling fans inside bus engine compartments breaking? Unless the wiring is in place the cooling fan won't run and the engine can overheat.

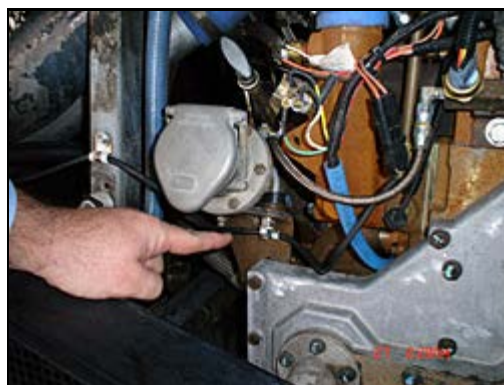
Whitman and other maintenance supervisors were mystified by reports that the foot-long wiring, which is wrapped in rubber, was coming loose from its connection.

"There was no reason for that particular wire to be torn from its location and dismantled," says Whitman.

The delicate wiring connection is located deep on the left side of the engine. The fan clutch wiring is typically clipped to an iron bar and is connected with other wires at its location.



Tom Whitman's mystery: Why and how was the wiring that runs the cooling fans inside bus engine compartments breaking?



The wiring for the engine cooling fan is now tucked away from the engine oil dipstick to avoid accidental disconnection.

Overheating a problem

Buses would arrive at the yard and be serviced in the evening. The next day, some buses – as many as 10 a week – would overheat and require assistance on the road.

Whitman and the maintenance supervisors mulled over the possibilities. They peered deep into the engines and tried to recreate how the wiring was being torn from its socket. No solution came immediately to mind.

Then, one night just before bedtime, the answer bolted out of nowhere to Whitman.

"The buses were being serviced at night when it's cold and dark, so it occurred to me that the attendants were wearing gloves as they serviced the engines," says Whitman. "It seemed to me that an attendant, with gloves on, could accidentally pull or displace the fan clutch wiring while servicing an engine."

Intuition proved correct

Sure enough, his middle-of-the-night intuition proved correct, and Whitman, an 11-year Metro veteran, had the solution.

Glove-wearing attendants were accidentally pulling the cooling fan wires – which are located adjacent to the engine oil dipstick – out of their sockets when they checked the engine oil.

As the buses came through for inspection, he had his mechanics reroute the wiring around the engine oil dipstick to avoid damaging the wiring.

"From getting 10 road calls a week for engine overheating," says Whitman, "our road calls immediately went down to maybe three a month."

Problem solved.

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A Sheriff's deputy checks the contents of a suspicious backpack left at the Pershing Square station. Fortunately, the backpack contained only a glove, a book and other personal items.



Suspicious Package a 'Positive Experience' for LASD

- Security goes to full alert at Pershing Square

(Jan. 14, 2005) In the end, it was only a false alarm, but the "suspicious package" discovered, Thursday, at the Pershing Square station provided a realistic exercise for the Transit Services Bureau and the LASD Bomb Squad.

It began just after 3 p.m. when a patron reported an abandoned backpack to fare inspectors patrolling the station platform. Sheriff's deputies responded and evacuated the station. Metro Red Line trains were directed to bypass the station.

The deputies set up a command post in Pershing Square Park. They were soon joined by Metro Red Line Manager Roman Alarcon, Metro Security, LAPD and Downtown Security officers. The Sheriff's Bomb Squad was called to the scene.

At 5:27 p.m., through trains were halted and Bomb Squad officers set off a controlled charge that blew apart the suspicious backpack. Inside: a glove, a book, a Walkman and some clothing.

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief, and Metro Rail resumed normal operations for the remainder of the evening rush period.

"This was a positive experience," says Metro Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein. "We have often briefed our Metro partners and our riders to say something if you see something so we can make a decision and take action. Everyone agrees that erring on the side of caution is better than ignoring a situation and taking a chance."


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UPDATE: Jan. 21, 2005

More Transit-Oriented Developments Proposed for Metro Sites

- [Item 9, Development of Taylor Yards.](#)
- [Item 10, Metro Rail Station Development.](#)
- [Item 20, Metro Rapid Advertising.](#)
- [Item 21, Video Screens on Metro Buses.](#)
- [Item 11, Metro Orange Line FEIR.](#)

(Jan. 18, 2005) Two proposed residential and retail developments on Metro-owned property at the Taylor Yards and at the Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Rail station will come before the Planning and Programming committee on Wednesday.

Other items of interest in January's round of committee and Board meetings include two proposals for advertising and video programming on Metro buses, as well as additional parking at the Canoga station, a newly approved stop to be built on the Metro Orange Line in Warner Center.

Item 9 was carried over for further discussion during the February meeting of the Planning and Programming Committee.

Item 9, Development of Taylor Yards. Last July, Metro received a proposal from a developer to build 238 rental units, 76 homes and 62,600 square feet of retail space at the Taylor Yards.

The site comprises about 24 acres of land next to the Metrolink maintenance-of-way facility between San Fernando Road and the Los Angeles River. The Metro-owned land lies between the Pasadena Freeway (I-110) and the Glendale Freeway (I-2).

The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to enter a six-month exclusive negotiation agreement with Taylor Yards, LLC. Since the early 1900s, the Taylor Yard and surrounding area has served as a rail storage, maintenance and repair facility for freight trains.

Item 10 approved by the committee and sent to the full Board.

Item 10, Metro Rail Station Development. Last May, Metro received a proposal from a developer to build 200 rental units and 18,700 square feet of retail space at the Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Rail station. The proposed development, which includes Saint Nicholas Foundation property, totals 1.5 acres.

The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to enter a six-month exclusive negotiation agreement with Vermont/Santa Monica Metro Red Line Station, LLC.

Item 20 approved by the committee and sent to the full Board.

Item 20, Metro Rapid Advertising. The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider a motion amending Metro's advertising policy to permit ads on the outside of Metro Rapid buses.

A report submitted to the committee says Metro will receive some \$13.7 million from bus advertising in FY 2005. But, the report notes that, since Metro Rapid was introduced in 2000, the total number of buses that accept advertising has declined.

By amending the policy to permit ads on Metro Rapid buses, the report says, the agency stands to gain as much as \$6.5 million in ad revenue this fiscal year.

Item 21 approved by the committee and sent to the full Board.

Item 21, Video Screens on Metro Buses. The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider a motion authorizing the CEO to sign a 10-year revenue contract with Transit Television Network.

At no cost to the agency, the company would install two small video monitors on each Metro Bus to show customized TV programs. The programming would include news, sports and entertainment programming, simple games, commercial ads and transit advertising.

Item 11 approved by the committee and sent to the full Board.

Item 11, Metro Orange Line FEIR. The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion to approve and certify an Addendum to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Metro Orange Line.

The Addendum provides environmental clearance for additional surface parking – the North Parking Lot – on Metro-owned property adjacent to the Canoga station and park-and-ride-lot previously approved by the Board.

The new station and parking lot will be located on the old Boeing site at Canoga Avenue in Warner Center. Together, both lots will provide some 840 parking spaces.

The motion requests approval for the CEO to include this parking in the planned construction contract for a one-third mile extension of the Orange Line. The extension would include the busway, a bikeway and pedestrian path and landscaping – all leading to the new Canoga station.

The Addendum also covers modifications to a small portion of a planned pedestrian path along Chandler Boulevard as part of the Orange Line project.


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Board Committee Schedule

Wednesday, Jan. 19

- Planning and Programming Committee, 1 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 20

- Executive Management and Audit Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- Finance and Budget Committee, 10:30 a.m.
- Construction Committee, 11:30 a.m.
- Operations Committee, 1 p.m.

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By amending the policy to permit ads on Metro Rapid buses, the report says, the agency stands to gain as much as \$3.25 million in ad revenue by the end of fiscal year 2007.

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Division 3 Transportation employees, joined by General Manager Jack Gabig, left, celebrate their November victory.



Division 3 Transportation is Outstanding Division for November

By ELIZABETH ARMIJO-HOLBROOK

(Jan. 18, 2005) Transportation Manager Dan Frawley, was bursting with pride when he announced that Division 3 was named Outstanding Transportation Division again for November.

Not only has the division been Number 1 two months in a row, it has been the top transportation division eight of the past twelve months in the overall ratings.

"I am most proud of the fact that you had the fewest accidents among all divisions for the month," Frawley said as he made the presentation to his operators.

PHOTOS: ELIZABETH ARMIJO-HOLBROOK



Operator of the Month, Richard Padilla, with General San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig and Division 3 Transportation Manager Dan Frawley.

Also honored was Operator Richard Padilla, who was selected as Operator of the Month for December 2004. Padilla has been with Metro for nearly 18 years, spending most of that time at Division 3.

Besides being an outstanding Operator, Padilla is a member of the band, "Off Route", that has performed at division functions. He proudly accepted a certificate and the congratulations of his fellow employees.

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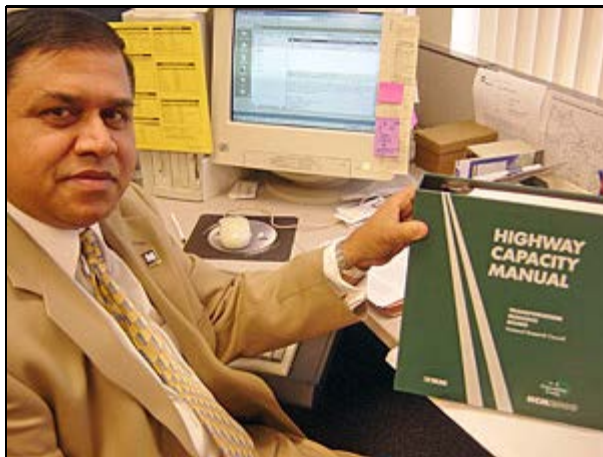
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Dr. Narasimha Murthy, T.E.,
Transportation Project
Manager, Gateway
Cities/Southeast Area Team,
will help provide guidelines for
research that will be used to
update the Year 2000 Highway
Capacity Manual.

Transportation Research Board Picks Transportation Project Manager Murthy for Highway Study Panel

By GAYLE ANDERSON

Dr. Narasimha Murthy, T.E., Transportation Project Manager, Gateway Cities/Southeast Area Team, has been selected by the Transportation Research Board (TRB) of the National Academies to be a panel member for conducting a study on "Regional and National Default Values for Highway Capacity Calculations."

TRB is an arm of the National Academies, also known as Advisers of the Nation on Science, Engineering and Medicine.

During the two-year study, Murthy will work with experts from around the country to provide technical guidance for the research to be conducted on highway capacity calculations. The calculations will be used to update the Year 2000 Highway Capacity Manual. TRB has allocated a budget of \$400,000 for this study.

The Highway Capacity Manual (HCM), a heavily referenced document used by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), State Departments of Transportation (DOT's) and the Federal Highway Administration provides state-of-the-art simple operational methodologies used in planning and preliminary engineering applications.

Murthy is a certified Traffic Engineer in the State of California. He re-joined Metro in July 2003. He is currently the project manager working on the capacity enhancement of Interstate 5 and assisting Metro on several other projects.

He is a co-author of a textbook titled "Transportation Engineering Basics: 2nd Edition," published by the American Society of Civil Engineers used by both undergraduate and graduate schools across the US.


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Service Sector Web Pages Debut on Metro's Internet Web Site

Check it out: [Metro Service Sectors Information](#)

By RICK JAGER

(Jan. 19, 2005) Metro Bus patrons searching for information about transit services offered in their community can now access any of five individual service sector web pages at [metro.net](#)

The five service sector web pages provide a variety of information about the Gateway Cities, San Fernando Valley, San Gabriel Valley, South Bay and Westside/Central service sectors.

The new service sector web page can be accessed by visiting [metro.net](#) and clicking on "Metro Service Sectors Information" and then selecting the desired service sector.

The individual sites include information on Metro Bus lines operated within the sector and service changes implemented. There's also a map showing the five sectors, information about the sector's governance councils, and guidance on how to contact the individual service sector. Some sector pages also provide links to the web sites of the cities within the sector.

"We wanted to provide the public with information concerning activities happening in their community," said Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond. "We encourage patrons to visit the sites to learn more about Metro services in their area."


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Valley Governance Council Begins Review of Proposed Service Changes

- Goal is to improve service and Metro Orange Line connections

By RICK JAGER

(Jan. 19, 2005) Beginning a public process that will reshape Metro Bus service in the San Fernando Valley, the service sector's Governance Council has begun a detailed review of proposed bus service changes in connection with the opening of the Metro Orange Line.

"With the opening of the transitway, we are looking at the most extensive restructuring of Metro Bus service in the Valley in many years," said Governance Council Chairman Coby King. "I hope that many members of the public will attend our upcoming public hearing so that we can make the most informed decisions on how to improve bus service in the Valley."

The 14-mile Metro Orange Line will connect Warner Center and the North Hollywood Metro Red Line station. Existing Metro Bus service will be restructured to take full advantage of the transitway.

Twelve lines are proposed for route, schedule or stop modifications; three lines are proposed for cancellation with resources reallocated to implement three new lines. The affected lines 150, 154, 156, 161, 168, 183, 230, 234, 236, 240, 243, 245, 418, 426 and 761.

New weekday service is proposed for Study Line S-1 between Northridge and Westwood; Study Line S-643, the Pierce College Shuttle to the DeSoto and Winnetka Orange Line stations; and new Line 734 between the Sylmar/San Fernando Metrolink Station and Sherman Oaks.

Improve service to Orange Line

The purpose of the service modifications is to improve service and connections to the Metro Orange Line, reduce service duplication and improve service efficiency.

The proposals were presented at the Governance Council's Jan. 12 meeting.

"We wanted to give our council members a chance to look at a number of options and get their input as well as public testimony, " said General Manager Richard Hunt. "It will help the council make well-informed decisions and help us refine our recommendations for the public hearing."

A public hearing on the proposed service changes will be held Wednesday, March 2, at 6:30 p.m. at the Marvin Braude Constituent Center, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd. in Van Nuys. The Council's decision on a

final package of service change proposals will come at their meeting on March 23.

"These choices are never easy," said King. "But in this tough budget environment, we have to make the right decisions to ensure the best service for the entire San Fernando Valley. The more options we have to do that, the better we can perform our job for citizens and stakeholders."

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at 2-4357[E-Mail Webmaster](#)**LAUSD Honors Metro for Kids' Safety Summit Participation**

(Jan. 20, 2005) The Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Directors has honored Metro for its participation in last December's Kids' Safety Summit.



Rail Safety Program Manager Barbara Burns accepted a LAUSD certificate of appreciation for her team.

Rail Safety Program Manager Barbara Burns accepted a certificate on behalf of her team, which hosted the summit and which has produced a light rail safety program now being used throughout the LAUSD system.

"We spent the past year building a strong relationship with LAUSD so that our rail safety program can be taught in the classroom," says Burns. The program is expected to reach more than 1 million children every year.

Metro's rail safety public service announcements also are shown on the school district's educational channel 58. Burns hopes to have a rail safety link soon on the LAUSD Internet web site.

During the past year, Metro's rail safety team – which includes Community Relations Officer Carlos Valdes and Office Assistant Jennifer Mendoza – developed an interactive training video for LAUSD and trained the district's safety officers and others from the School Safe Traffic Zone Program.

Some 300 teachers and school administrators attended last December's safety summit. In addition to Metro's national award-winning rail safety presentation, they also heard presentations on pedestrian, traffic and bicycle safety, fire safety and neighborhood watch programs.

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

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Targeting Taggers in the San Fernando Valley

- Officers make 32 arrests
in early-morning raid

By Eric Rapp

(Jan 20, 2005) One hundred fifty officers from six different law enforcement agencies fanned out across the San Fernando Valley, Jan. 17, with only one mission: Make sure taggers who had defaced Metro buses, trains, and property wouldn't commit their crimes again.

Organized by Sheriff's deputies Stephan Schneider and Jose De La Cruz of the Transit Services Bureau's Chatsworth substation, the probation sweep included TSB deputies and officers from the Los Angeles Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, LA County Probation Department and the Union Pacific Railroad Police.

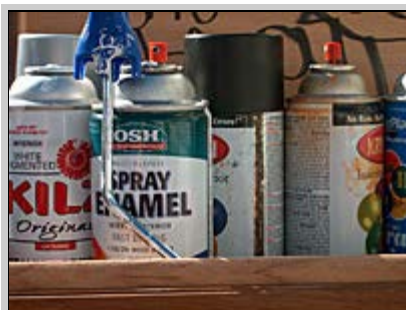
When accepting probation for their initial crime of vandalism of Metro property, the taggers gave police the right to search their home at any time until their probation was over.

On Monday, that bill came due, as the officers searched more than 71 locations throughout the San Fernando Valley for potential violations.

PHOTOS BY ERIC RAPP



Probation sweep team enters residence of suspected tagger in an apartment complex in the San Fernando Valley.



Tools of the Trade



Many probationers were “clean,” without any violations of their probation. But law enforcement officials discovered a number of others who were not living up to the terms set by a judge and had gone back to their criminal ways.

Officers made 32 arrests, confiscated eight guns, and seized liquor and several forms of narcotics, including methamphetamines and nearly two and a half pounds of marijuana. They also confiscated many “tools of the trade” of graffiti vandals, such as spray paint, markers, and etching tools.



Taking a break during the morning-long tagger raid are, from left, Sheriff's deputies Leonardo Castro, Scott Short, Tomas Rodriguez, Jessie Villanueva, Michael Ballai and Mano Lawsin.

In addition, officers were able to finally identify two prolific taggers whose “moniker” – their unique tag – was well known to Sheriff's Deputies, but not yet linked to a particular person.

“An effort of this kind really shows how widespread the problem is, and how tagging affects the entire community,” said Richard Hunt, General Manager of Metro San Fernando Valley. “It costs not just MTA, but the public at large. Bringing together the entire community to focus on a solution to the problem will benefit all of us.”

Metro Police Chief Capt. Dan Finkelstein commented that "tagging is a quality of life issue. Virtually none of our riders want to see graffiti and its presence suggests that an atmosphere of lawlessness exists on the Metro system. Crime stats have continually shown that riding on Metro is very safe."

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Westside/Central Sets Hearing on Proposed Service Changes

By RICK JAGER

(Jan. 20, 2005) The Metro Westside/Central Service Sector will hold a public hearing, Wednesday, Feb. 9, to gather public input regarding proposed Metro Bus service changes scheduled for June or later.

The public hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the La Cienega Tennis Center, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd. in Beverly Hills.

The Westside/Central Service Sector Governance Council is considering implementing two new Metro Rapid bus lines – Line 714 between Beverly Hills and downtown LA and Line 717 between the Hollywood/Vine Metro Rail station and the West Los Angeles Transit Center.

The service sector is considering canceling Line 58 on Alameda Street due to low ridership. Modifications are planned for lines 14, 317, 107, 207/357, 305, 357, 442, 757 and 156.

These proposals may be approved in whole or in part at a date following the public hearing. Comments about the proposed line changes can be sent to the Westside/Central sector office by e-mail to: westsidecentral@metro.net or faxed to (213) 922-1211.


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South Bay Governance Council Member Seriously Injured in Car Crash

By RICH MORALLO

(Jan. 21, 2005) December 5 started out pleasantly enough for Metro South Bay Governance Council member Margaret Hudson as she and family members went to open houses.

Hours later she would be pinned in her wrecked car listening to a paramedic say, "We'll get you out of there, ma'am."

Hudson and her husband, Richard, were heading home to Carson after an afternoon in Pasadena, when their car was broad-sided by another vehicle.

Hudson was transported to County USC where the medical staff treated her for serious injuries. She spent six days in traction. Her husband suffered minor injuries and was admitted to the hospital for observation.

Underwent surgery

On December 13, Hudson underwent surgery for her injuries at Torrance Memorial Hospital. On Christmas Eve, she arrived home.

"I've managed to lose 15 pounds," laughs Hudson, who uses a walker to get from bed to her wheel chair. "I'm able to get around at home; my husband waits on me hand and foot."

A highlight for Hudson was finally getting out in public again.

"This past week I went to the grocery and Target in my wheel chair, " she says. "But I will be up and about soon and I plan to attend the next South Bay Governance Council meeting on February 11."



Metro South Bay Governance Council member Margaret Hudson


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South Bay Schedules Hearing on Proposed Service Changes

By RICK JAGER

(Jan. 21, 2005) The South Bay Service Sector Governance Council will hold a public hearing, Feb. 22, to gather public input on proposed Metro Bus service changes to be implemented in June or later.

The public hearing will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Carson Community Center, Adult Activities Room, 801 East Carson Street in Carson.

The Governance Council is considering proposals to establish new Metro Rapid Line 757 on Western Avenue and transferring line 225/226 service to a Palos Verdes transit agency.

The Council also will consider canceling service on three lines – lines 107, 357 and 442 – and modifying service on eight lines – lines 115, 202, 205, 207/357, 211/215, 305, 439 and 711. The service changes are proposed to improve service quality, to use resources wisely and to consider new services.

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71 Years at Metro...

Just Another Day for Arthur Winston

- Hale and hardy at 98, the man feels 'real good'

By RICH MORALLO and
RICHELLE RAYFORD

(Jan. 25, 2005) Arthur Winston woke up Monday at the usual time – 4 a.m. He breakfasted on Malt-O-Meal, eggs and bacon.

Then, the spry 98-year-old drove his 1994 Toyota sedan to work at the only Metro bus operating facility named after an individual – Arthur Winston Division 5 in Chesterfield Square.

"I don't feel different, today, but I do feel real good," smiled Winston. It was his 71st anniversary at Metro.

As a lead service attendant with a crew of 12, he spent the day cleaning and sending a fleet of 240 spotless buses onto city streets.

A remarkable 71 years

Arthur Winston was 28 years old when he started his remarkable 71 years of continuous work at Metro.

Originally from Okemie, Okla., he and his family moved to Los Angeles in 1918, when Arthur was 12. His father found work in the maintenance department for one of Metro's predecessors, the Pacific Electric Railway Company.

Actually, Winston has worked a total of 76 years for the transit agency if you want to count the five years he spent, beginning at age 15, helping his father at the railroad company. Starting in 1921, he stayed five years before quitting in 1926.

"I had met this young lady, and made plans to marry and move to St. Louis," he explained.

But, Winston and his wife, Frances, never made the move, so he returned to Metro on Jan. 24, 1934 and has stayed with the agency since.



Lead Service Attendant Arthur Winston takes a break from the work day for this photo taken on Jan. 18. He will celebrate his 99th birthday on March 22.

'Employee of the Century'

Cited by former President Clinton in 1997 as "Employee of the Century," and honored last year in Sacramento by the California legislature, Winston missed work only once in the past 71 years when his wife died in 1988.

"I stayed with Metro through all these years because I felt comfortable here," said Winston, adding, "after a certain age I decided to stay on the job 'til I'm 100 years old."

Winston turns 99 on March 22, and has announced his retirement in 2006, when he turns 100 years old.

But, on Monday, Winston's after-work plans on his 71st Metro anniversary were simple.

"I'm passing by a local restaurant to dine on greens and pigs feet," he said.

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Westside/Central Schedules 'Metro Connections' Workshop

By RICK JAGER

(Jan. 25, 2005) The Westside/Central Service Sector Governance Council will hold a workshop on Thursday, Feb. 3 to discuss Metro Connections.

Metro Connections is an innovative and comprehensive approach intended to "rethink" how transit service is provided in Los Angeles County.

Its goals are to improve customer service, better integrate various types of service provided by Metro and other local transit operators, and efficiently use taxpayer's dollars.

When implemented over the next two to three years, Metro Connections will be the first countywide, comprehensive restructuring of the region's bus system since 1980. The initial phase of the new service is planned for implementation during FY 2006.

The Governance Council workshop will begin at 3 p.m. at the La Cienega Tennis Center, 325 South La Cienega in Beverly Hills.

'Hub and spoke' system

The Metro Connections restructuring effort is intended to change the region's predominately downtown LA-focused grid system to a hybrid "hub and spoke" service delivery system that will better serve the region's many activity centers and destinations.

The restructuring will give the region an opportunity to plan how to deploy the county's transit resources to improve mobility, support economic development, maximize public investments in transportation infrastructure, maintain air quality improvements and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

The Westside/Central sector Governance Council workshop is one of a series of meetings that will be held to gather public input on the Metro Connections concept.

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The Wilshire Vermont Metro station now appears to stand on a cliff overlooking a yawning canyon.



Apartment Complex Going Up at Wilshire/Vermont Metro Station

- 449 apartments where subway station plaza once stood

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 25, 2005) There's a gaping hole in the ground where the Metro Red Line's Wilshire/Vermont plaza once stood. At the bottom, a bulldozer pushes dirt back and forth to level the ground.



A newly built ticket vending machine kiosk on the Wilshire/Vermont station plaza off Shatto Place.

But, look ahead 21 months to October 2006. A six-story complex called Wilshire Vermont Station, with 449 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments, shops and restaurants – and a new subway entrance plaza – will dominate the busy corner.

Just north of the new development, LAUSD plans to build a middle school on Metro-owned property to be sold to the school district in the very near future.

In the nine months since ground breaking on April 23, 2004 the housing and retail project is only about 10 percent complete, due in part to delays caused by recent storms, says Dave Walker, Metro construction manager.



A construction worker checks a surveying instrument as a bulldozer works nearby leveling the floor of the construction site.

But, Walker notes that the main portion of the complex will be made of preformed steel-frame units that will be assembled on the site. "When the foundation and subterranean structure are completed, the building will go up real quick."

A complicated project

Wilshire Vermont Station will have two three-story underground garages flanking the subway station. The new plaza will be roughly the same size as the previous sunken plaza, but will be raised to street level, connecting with the existing plaza bordering Shatto Place.

Plans call for arching the apartment building over a new subway portal that will front on the Shatto Place entrance.

The existing station elevator shaft has been extended upward to the Shatto Place plaza to move patrons between ground level and the upper and lower train platforms. One elevator is currently operating and a second elevator is being added.

Three skylights will be converted to fresh air vents for the station, while continuing to bring light into the portal area. Ticket vending machines and information cases also have been added to the Shatto Place plaza.

PHOTOS: BILL HEARD



Construction machines provide a sense of the size of the construction site at Wilshire/Vermont.

Bus layover zone

The bus layover zone that originally spanned the station site has been shut and a new layover zone has been built on Metro-owned property across Shatto Place.

It will accommodate six 40- or 45-foot buses and five new Metro Liner articulated buses. The site includes a building housing an emergency generator and a smaller restroom building for bus operators.

Taisei Construction Corp, headquartered in Cypress, Calif., is building the project for a consortium of Wilshire Vermont Housing Partners, LLP, a limited partnership controlled by CalPers and MacFarlane Urban Realty Company. Urban Partners, LLC, is overseeing development of the project.

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Investigating agencies continue rescue operations at site of Metrolink tragedy Thursday morning.



NEWS PHOTO: BRIAN VANDER BURG / LAT

Metrolink Trains derail at Atwater site near Glendale; 10 die, at least 200 injured

- **On the scene:** Metro provides bus bridge for stranded Metrolink passengers; shuttles continue between Glendale and Burbank stations to transport Metrolink passengers around the accident site.
- **In tomorrow's report:** Donna Blanchard, Metro Commute Services account supervisor, boarded Metrolink train 100 at 6 a.m. Five minutes later, she dived between the seats and braced for the worst.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(January 26, 2005) - At least 10 people died and nearly 200 were injured this morning when two Metrolink trains collided after one hit a car parked on the tracks at a crossing near San Fernando Road and Chevy Chase Drive in Atwater, just north of the Glendale Metrolink Station.

The southbound Metrolink train 100 was heading to downtown Los Angeles shortly after 6 a.m. when it hit a Jeep Cherokee SUV parked on the tracks. The train then bounced into a Union Pacific freight train before crashing into the northbound Metrolink train 901.

The northbound Metrolink train 901, which originates in Union Station and terminates in downtown Burbank, carries an average of 30 to 50 passengers. The southbound Metrolink train 100, which originates in Moorpark and terminates at Union Station, has an average ridership of 200 to 250.

(News sources report police have since taken a man into custody who is suspected of

leaving his car on the tracks in an aborted suicide attempt. He is expected to be charged with homicide in connection with the chain reaction of crashes that culminated in the fiery derailment that left 10 people dead and caused scores of critical and serious injuries.)

CEO Roger Snoble arrived on the scene shortly before 10 a.m., as city officials gathered for a briefing and news conference attended by Los Angeles Mayor James Hahn, Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton, Glendale Police Chief Randy Adams, and Los Angeles Fire Department Chief William Bamattre.

Metro provides bus bridge

Snoble said Metro is providing a bus bridge to transport stranded Metrolink passengers to and from Union Station.

The service was responsible for transporting nearly 900 passengers. Some 550 passengers were shuttled from Burbank Metrolink Station to Union Station. Another 270 passengers were shuttled from Union Station past the accident scene to Burbank Station. The shuttle was disbanded at 9:08 a.m. when Metrolink suspended train service.

Shortly after the accident occurred at 6:05 a.m., Bus Operations Control called Metrolink to offer assistance, said Tom Jasmin, Bus Operations director. Even before the numbers stacked up to disastrous proportions, BOC staff began coordinating with divisions to dispatch buses to the Glendale and Burbank Metrolink stations and Union Station.

A new level of assistance was quickly determined as the story developed. Soon after Metro buses began their first runs, Jasmin established a staging area at the abandoned K-Mart parking lot on San Fernando Road and Fletcher Avenue in Glendale.

Ultimately, some 30 Transit Operations personnel and 20 Metro buses were deployed in the operation, said Jasmin.

Metrolink to resume service

Beginning Thursday morning, Metro will provide a bus shuttle between the Metrolink Glendale and Burbank stations every 30 minutes to transport Metrolink passengers around the site of the accident. The bus bridge provided by Metro allows Metrolink trains to resume regularly scheduled service on Thursday.

For today, Metrolink plans to operate two trains departing at 5:10 p.m. and 6:40 p.m. from Union Station traveling to the Glendale Metrolink Station. From there, Metro buses will shuttle passengers to the Burbank Metrolink Station where they can board Metrolink trains bound for Antelope Valley or Ventura County lines destinations.

The Metro shuttle service will continue until further notice, said Jasmin.


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MTA Board Adopts Report on Proposed \$5.5 Billion Overhaul of Congestion-Plagued I-710 Freeway

Authority Staff to Prepare Scope of Work, Funding Plan for Environmental Phase

- [Locally Preferred Strategy](#)
- [Funding](#)
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By ED SCANNELL

(January 27, 2005) Following months of meetings between stakeholders, elected officials, environmental and industry groups, representatives of the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, and residents living along an 18-mile stretch of the I-710 Freeway from Long Beach to East Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board today adopted the Draft Final Report on the I-710 Major Corridor Study. The report outlines a \$5.5 billion Locally Preferred Strategy aimed at overhauling the heavily congested artery and parallel arterials to accommodate future growth and improve safety and air quality.

The Board also authorized preparation of a scope of work for a future environmental analysis of the project and preparation of a funding plan for the environmental work that would include commitments from multiple funding partners. The scope of work would also include an assessment of impacts to the I-710/SR 60 interchange and an evaluation of alternative project delivery methods. Preparation of the scope of work would employ guidance from community advisory committees along the I-710.

The environmental phase would examine design alternatives and evaluate the benefits and impacts of widening the 50-year old freeway to 14 lanes from the existing six to 10 lanes and adding a four-lane truck facility as outlined in the study's Locally Preferred Strategy.

"All of Southern California's freeways are riddled with congestion, but the huge daily volume of commercial truck traffic and vehicle traffic on the 710, and the freeway's role as a driver of the local, state and national economies, demand we design a fix," said Frank Roberts, Lancaster Mayor and Metro Chair. "Today's action is a significant milestone as we move to expand the capacity of the 710, and the alternative we'll examine in the environmental phase has strong support from the communities along this vital artery."

"A recently completed project study report on the I-5 in North Los Angeles County validates the need for a truck lane on that corridor," Roberts added.

Today's action by the Board caps off a nine month effort by community advisory committees, a technical advisory committee and

the I-710 Oversight Policy Committee to develop a solution that meets the requirements of sound highway construction as well as the desires of residents along the I-710 for a project that would address health concerns, as well as congestion, with a minimal need to acquire properties.

As part of today's action the Board also directed Metro CEO Roger Snoble to form a multi-jurisdictional partnership to identify air quality improvement strategies prior to conducting an environmental study.

The funding plan that staff will develop would need to include commitments from multiple funding partners in addition to Metro such as the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, Caltrans, Southern California Association of Governments, and Ports of Long Beach/Los Angeles, as well as from federal funding and other sources.

Locally Preferred Strategy

On November 18, 2004, the I-710 Oversight Policy Committee approved the I-710 Major Corridor Study's Locally Preferred Strategy, which includes: (1) 10 general purpose lanes; (2) four exclusive truck lanes, two in each direction, between the inter-modal rail yards in Vernon/Commerce and Ocean Boulevard in Long Beach; (3) Transportation System Management/Transportation Design Management (TSM/TDM) improvements, including additional ramp metering, truck emission reduction programs, extended port gate hours, landscaping, etc.; (4) interchange and arterial highway improvements within the corridor; (5) construction of truck inspection facilities to be integrated into the overall design concept; and (6) incorporation of a mini-study of the I-710/I-5 interchange.

The Locally Preferred Strategy includes a hybrid of previously examined design alternatives. The hybrid would increase the I-710's capacity while reducing the number of anticipated residential property acquisitions to five and commercial structures to 61 (excluding the area covered by the forthcoming mini-study of the I-710/I-5 interchange), which would require several design exceptions. The Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans have agreed to work cooperatively to resolve those exceptions.

The recommendations in the Locally Preferred Strategy were culled from numerous meetings involving environmental and industry groups, health experts, representatives from Metro, Caltrans, County of Los Angeles, Gateway Cities Council of Governments, Port of Long Beach, Port of Los Angeles, and residents and elected officials from the 14 corridor cities and two unincorporated areas.

The corridor cities include Long Beach, Carson, Paramount, Compton, Lynwood, Bell, Bell Gardens, Maywood, South Gate, Huntington Park, Downey, Vernon, Cudahy, and the City of Commerce.

The Oversight Policy Committee also recommended that the Gateway Cities Council of Governments return with suggested steps for developing and implementing a corridor-level air quality action plan and to pursue other quality of life improvements for the corridor.

"We as policy makers have to find a way of looking at public works projects and making them work for the community," said Gloria Molina, L.A. County Supervisor and Metro Board Member. "We need to acknowledge that there are serious environmental issues such as air quality that need to be addressed before we can expect that our

communities can support projects like the I-710."

Funding

The anticipated cost of an I-710 EIS/EIR (Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report) is estimated at approximately \$25 to \$30 million dollars and the document would take three to four years to complete.

A separate but complementary study, the Multi-County Goods Movement Action Plan, will be conducted to address region-wide goods movement transportation needs including the potential impacts of goods movement via freeway corridors beyond the I-710.

The I-710 Major Corridor Study assumes that the cost of building the Locally Preferred Strategy would not be exclusively funded using the existing local transportation revenue sources; funding will have to come from a variety of federal, state and new, dedicated sources of revenue. The study also recognizes the economic goods movement benefits of the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, as well as their contribution to worsening congestion, health and air quality.

The Draft Final Report concludes that federal funding including federal earmarks and funds from the goods movement industry (e.g., container fees and/or truck tolls) must each have a role in the development of the Locally Preferred Strategy. For example, the study suggests that the imposition of container fees could produce up to \$1.4 billion in capital funding for improvements on I-710.

Study history

In October 2000, the MTA Board authorized a comprehensive study of transportation alternatives and improvements for the I-710. The study considered a no-build alternative, Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management alternative, and three build alternatives. One of the build alternatives, Alternative E, called for the acquisition of 519 residential properties and 259 commercial structures.

In May 2003, in response to public and community concerns during the evaluation phase regarding the large amount of property acquisitions, the Board approved a motion to develop a hybrid alternative using elements from the three build alternatives that would not require the acquisition of homes and businesses.

In order to ensure greater community participation and develop consensus, the Board directed staff to form community advisory committees. Subsequently, the I-710 Oversight Policy Committee acted to create Tier I, or "grass roots," committees were formed in the seven cities in which the I-710 is located (Bell Gardens, Carson, Commerce, Compton East Los Angeles, Lynwood and South Gate). The committees identified design options that minimized right-of-way acquisitions for their respective cities.

The City of Long Beach developed its own public involvement and engineering process to reach consensus on a freeway design within its city limits, and its design concept was integrated with the work of the remainder of the corridor.

A Tier II, or corridor-wide committee, was formed with representatives from each of the 14 corridor cities, the City of Long Beach and two unincorporated areas, and 15 representatives from academia, business,

environmental, labor and institutional interests.

The Tier II report included recommendations to address a wide range of subjects including health, jobs and economic development, safety, noise, congestion and mobility, community enhancements, design concepts and environmental justice. The report also noted that major infrastructure improvements must be conditioned on improving air quality.

The I-710 Technical Advisory Committee submitted recommendations to the Oversight Policy Committee including that the Locally Preferred Strategy substantially reduce the need for property acquisitions, use a portion of a parallel utility right-of-way, require some design exceptions from Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), improve safety by separating trucks from autos, and reduce emissions by improving truck operating speeds.

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Four Metro employees on board Metrolink Train 100

Employees tell what it was like:

[Donna Blanchard](#)
[Brenda Aguilar](#)
[Russ Murry](#)
[Charlie Fitzsimmons](#)

See also:

- [UPDATE](#) > January 28
- [On the scene](#): During the first 8 hours following the accident, more than 175 Sheriff's personnel were involved in the emergency response effort.

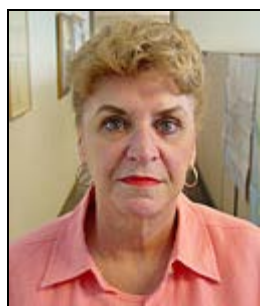
By GAYLE ANDERSON

In the aftermath of the Metrolink tragedy that occurred at 6:05 a.m. early Tuesday morning, Metro employees are counting their blessings.

Some 80 employees typically ride the Ventura County line of the commuter train, said Irma Rivera, who coordinates transit checks distributed through the Metro Employee Rideshare Program. More specifically, 34 report to work between 6 a.m. and 7:45 a.m., a timetable that could have placed a number of employees at the scene of the accident.

At least four employees are reported to have been aboard the southbound Metrolink train 100 when it hit a Jeep Cherokee SUV parked on the tracks shortly after 6 a.m. just north of the Glendale Metrolink Station. Train 100 then bounced into a Union Pacific freight train before crashing into the northbound Metrolink train 901.

Fortunately, except for some very sore and stiff muscles and more than a few bruises, none of the Metro employees were seriously injured. Significantly, all were in the second car of the derailed train. The first car had twisted on its side and caught fire by the time passengers were able to exit. All but one were facing the direction of travel when the train careened, then jolted to a stop. That detail, we will learn, made a significant difference in the force of the impact.



"I immediately went underneath the table between the seats. I thought we were going to roll over." – Donna Blanchard, Metro Commute Services account supervisor.

Metro Blood Drive Tuesday

The American Red Cross will conduct a Blood Drive to benefit Metrolink passengers on Tuesday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Board Overflow Room in the cafeteria lobby on the the third floor. Information: Contact Audrey Chiu at 922-4783 or schedule an appointment online at www.givelife.org Sponsor Code: MTA Participants must bring a photo I.D. to the appointment and are advised to eat a good meal and drink plenty of water before donating.

Donna Blanchard, Metro Commute Services account supervisor, boarded Metrolink train 100 at 6 a.m. Blanchard boarded at the Burbank Station the same as always, but this time she was bound for jury duty in a downtown courthouse. Five minutes later, she dived between the seats and braced for the worst. "I was reading a book and all of a sudden I heard the train hit something," she said. "I immediately went underneath the table between the seats. I thought we were going to roll over." As if in slow motion, Donna grabbed at a guy who had slammed up against the door to steady him as the train jolted and jerked to a stop. "Did the brakes give out?" Rising from her bunker-like space between the seats, she saw co-worker Charlie Fitzsimmons moving through the aisle. "You're bleeding," she said, handing him a kleenex for his ear. Now able to exit, she noticed that men were letting the women exit first, a gentlemanly gesture amidst an unfolding tragedy. She could hear someone shouting: "The train is on fire, let's get out!" And, walking down the tracks away from the accident, propelled by a fear of an impending explosion, someone else was saying, "Does anybody know where we are?" The passengers made their way to the triage area expertly set up by the Glendale Fire Department in the CostCo parking lot. "CostCo employees were wonderful. They brought out water and food – a nearby Starbucks was delivering coffee. "I was really not hurt, very tense and sore, but not hurt." At 8:02 a.m., nearly two hours after the accident, Donna checked out of triage: pulse – 100; blood pressure 128 over 100. "Of course I will continue to take Metrolink," she said, a faithful Metrolink passenger since the commuter trains began operation 12 years ago. "As many miles as I've gone without any problems, it's much safer than being in a car."



"I feel like a grenade, ready to break into a thousand pieces. I really need a good cry. I feel for those families who will never see their loved ones again." -- Brenda Aguilar, Metro Gold Line Rail Operations General Clerk.

Brenda Aguilar has total recall. She, too, boarded the southbound train at 6 a.m. in Burbank, as she has for the last two and a half years to get to her job as a general clerk at the Metro Gold Line. "I felt the stop, realized I can't get ready so I locked my body in one position. I was facing towards the back, and so the cushion of the seat took the weight," she said. Seated in the lower level of the last car of Train 100, and facing away from the direction of travel at impact, Brenda was able to help others caught in harm's way and was perhaps the last person to exit her car. "The sound of rocks underneath the train didn't stop, and grew louder. We were dragging something, going fast, I felt the side scraping, then gravel, brakes made that sound of air release like we were going to stop, now, we're going to stop FAST." I braced myself, moved to the corner, pushed back and then a loud, fast jerk. I went back, then front. Four people – the ones that were standing in the aisle – flew by me. One was a Sheriff. He was stumbling. The woman that was flying was slammed against the seats. Another guy fell on the floor, flying backwards over the woman and another man. The first set of doors opened immediately. When the air came it, it blew the flyers in our face and dust. Then it was dark, but I still could see. People were not moving on the floor. A man was coming down the stairs. His glasses cut his forehead and he was bleeding. He was screaming: 'Get outta here!' I thought all we need right now is panic! So I screamed back: 'Don't scream – you're bleeding.' " Brenda pryed the door to the train's bathroom open and grabbed handfuls of paper towels for those she could see were bleeding. The woman that had tumbled down to the floor was nearly immobile as Brenda loosened her leather jacket to help her breathe. During the long, few minutes following the jolting halt, Brenda made perhaps four calls on her cell phone. The first one was to her office. "I'm going to be late. I think my train derailed," she told a startled Rick Flores. "We have to leave the train – the car in front's on fire," she heard someone shouting. But Brenda didn't exit until she saw the injured woman escorted safely off the train. There were many more encounters with fellow passengers, even on the

way to the triage area. "One only spoke Spanish, and some are my friends I knew from taking the train every day. I thought, well nothing happened to me, so I will help. I'm glad I took all those safety classes at work. It made me ready but I hope I never go through this again." Back at work the same day by 10:30 a.m., Brenda had a smile on her face when she picked up her transit check for next month's passage. "It still feels more secure on the train. Driving scares me more than this!" Hugs from co-workers helped that day, as did phone calls from Rail GM Gerald Francis and DEO Melvin Clark. "Take all the time you need," they counseled. But, Brenda says "This is my family. I feel good over here. I'd rather be here than anywhere else."



"It was like jumping out of a second story window and landing on concrete." -- Russ Murry, Facilities Maintenance Manager at RRC.

Russ Murry's first day on the job as Facilities Maintenance Manager at RRC was January 2 of this year. Before the month was out, Russ would survive Metrolink's worst nightmare. Murry boarded at 5 a.m. sharp in Moorpark. He took a window seat in the second car, lower level, one that was facing the direction of travel. Approaching the Glendale Station an hour later, Murry saw sparks. "That's when I realized this was really serious," he said, sliding down in his seat and bracing his feet for impact. He was thrown at impact, maybe 15 feet, when the train came to a jolting halt. Years of safety training in his former employment in Arizona paid off. "I knew we should get out and get along the fence," he said, and shouted out the direction to stunned passengers. "One guy, who was physically disabled, was helped off the train," he remembered. Murry exited and circled the train. Surveying the scene from both sides of the derailed car, he could see the fire on the first car and the northbound train 901 wedged under the metal walkway that spans the tracks. Directed to triage by firefighters, he was released around 11 a.m. and reported to work at RRC. "My injuries were acceptable," he said, "I was more concerned about those that were seriously injured. Some looked like they had broken their wrists by holding their arms out to protect themselves when they were slammed to the back of the car." Murry will continue to take the commuter trains to work. "I'm a little nervous. Hearing noises like rocks hitting the underside of the train is like feeling the aftershocks of a big earthquake," he said. "But I'm okay. Lightning doesn't strike twice."



"I was flying like a rock, hitting objects, seats, from side to side. I hit three or four people like a cannon." – Charlie Fitzsimmons, Senior Contract Administrator

Charles Fitzsimmons, a senior contract administrator, boarded Train 100 in Chatsworth. He had finished reading the morning Times and was putting his paper away as the train approached the Glendale Station. Suddenly, he began to hear what sounded like gravel and rocks hitting the trains. "I felt the derailing," he said. Then the impact tossed him about the car from his seat on the lower berth. "I was flying like a rock, hitting objects, seats, from side to side. I hit three or four people like a cannon." Fitzsimmons reported his fellow passengers were stunned and silently calm as they exited. The scene outside was surreal, as a fire flickered in the car ahead and passengers were scattered, lying down on the ground. "The Fire Department were there quick," he said. "They did a helluva good job!" After making his way through the triage at the Costco parking lot, Fitzsimmons opted to get a check up from his own doctor and returned home, catching a ride with relatives of a fellow passenger and Chatsworth neighbor. "Oh, no," he said, this experience has not made

him afraid to take the train. He'll continue to ride Metrolink, he said. "It's a godsend."

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On the scene: Sheriff's Capt. Dan Finkelstein, Chief of Metro Transit Police, at left, and Metro Security Director of Intelligence and Emergency Planning Paul Lennon, (with his back to camera) confer with Sheriff Lee Baca, LAPD Chief William Bratton and other law enforcement officials at the site of the Metrolink tragedy in Glendale.



PHOTOS: LASD LT. MIKE PARKER

January 28, 2005 - Eleven people died and some 180 people were injured when two Metrolink trains collided Jan. 26 after hitting a Jeep Cherokee SUV parked on the tracks just north of the Glendale Metrolink Station.

Meanwhile, police have a man in custody who allegedly triggered the Wednesday crash by driving onto the tracks in a failed suicide attempt.

"This was a tragic event," said Capt. Finkelstein. "Yet, the emergency response was immediate and efficient." Finkelstein attributed the expert response to lessons learned from the continuous and ongoing emergency drills conducted with other agencies.

During the first 8 hours following the accident, more than 175 Sheriff's personnel were involved in the emergency response effort. Sheriff's deputies were tasked with assisting Glendale Police in securing the inner and outer perimeters, said Lt. Mike Parker.

Dozens of Sheriff's deputies assisted in the criminal investigation underway, identifying and interviewing passengers and witnesses. The LASD also staffed and operated a 24-hour command post as part of the multi-agency unified command post. (Since the collision occurred in the City of Glendale, the criminal investigation is being led by the Glendale Police Department.)

Two of the 11 people killed in the tragedy were employees of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department: Manuel D. Alcala, 51, of West Hills, a senior general maintenance worker at the County Jail, and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy James Tutino, a 47-year-old father of four who was on his way to work downtown at the Men's Central Jail.



Rescue teams at the site of the derailed Metrolink train 100.

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UPDATE Jan. 28, 2005

Metro bus bridge transports Metrolink passengers - Metro bus bridge allowed Metrolink to remain in operation during the investigation and clean-up period. Bus Operations Control reports some 870 passengers were transported to and from Union Station on Wednesday, the day of the accident. On Thursday, as many as 1,300 passengers shuttled between Burbank and Glendale stations and by noon today, 900 were reported to have used the shuttle during the morning commuting hours.

From news sources: Cleanup crews are working to remove the pile of rail cars from the site of the Metrolink crash in Glendale that occurred at 6:05 a.m. on Wednesday. Authorities expect regular Metrolink service to resume on Monday morning.

Eleven people have died and about 180 were injured. Eight people killed were on southbound train 100. Three died on northbound train 901, including its conductor, Thomas Ormiston. Two of the 11 people killed were employees of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department: Manuel D. Alcala, 51, of West Hills, a senior general maintenance worker at the County Jail, and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy James Tutino, a 47-year-old father of four who was on his way to work downtown at the Men's Central Jail.

At least 27 people remained hospitalized, including the engineer of train No. 100. And at least four of those people were reported to be in critical condition.