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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

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(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 above 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 Hovsepian, 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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