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PCH Mudslide Cuts Metro Service to Malibu and Beyond

- Shuttle bus service will serve cutoff area
- Line 434 buses trapped for second time since January
- Rock slide almost hits one Metro Bus

(Feb. 24, 2005) A massive mudslide that continued to block the Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu, Thursday, has cut Metro Bus service to homes, businesses and schools and has forced transit users to walk two miles through the slide area to reach their destinations.

CHP and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department have cordoned off a mile section either side of the slide area to through traffic, but is permitting access to pedestrians.

Derick Mahome, Westside/Central assistant transportation manager, said Line 434 shuttle bus service will be set up beginning at 3 p.m., today, between the slide area at Big Rock in Malibu and the north end of the line at Trancas Canyon.

It was the second time since mid-January that storm-generated mud and rock slides trapped Metro buses on Pacific Coast Highway in Malibu.

Boulder threatened the roadway

On Tuesday, three Line 434 buses operating out of Venice Division 6 were caught in a 15-mile stretch of highway beyond Big Rock Mesa when a mudslide blocked PCH and a 1,200-ton boulder threatened to crash down on the roadway.

One bus, driven by Operator William Hudson, was nearly hit by a rock slide as he evacuated passengers up Kanan Dune Road. He no sooner had driven past Mulholland Drive when the hillside gave way and debris swept across the road.

Hudson immediately called in an alert to prevent the other two buses from taking the same route.

"That saved us from having a bus stuck on that canyon road with no way to turn around," says George Trudeau, assistant transportation manager for the San Fernando Valley service sector, who helped coordinate the emergency service.

Operating shuttle service

Meanwhile, Operators Brandy Ankeny and Certurice Alexander were operating a shuttle service between the blocked area and the end of the line at Trancas Canyon Road north of Zuma Beach.

Late in the day, Trudeau and Transportation Operations Supervisor

Russ Modell directed Ankeny and Alexander to return to their division. With one empty bus and another loaded with passengers, the operators drove all the way to Oxnard before they were able to get onto the 101 Freeway east.

Having signed on before dawn, Tuesday, the operators didn't get back to Venice until after 10 p.m.

In an e-mail to Alva Carrasco, Division 6 assistant transportation manager, Trudeau commended the three operators. "They were excellent out there, very professional, over and above the call, a true credit to your division. (It was) a pleasure to work with them."

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