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Marathon Line-up - TOS Patrice Hill, left, heads up Marathon station in Bus Operations Control. On Marathon Day, she partners with TOS Trenisha Dorsey, right, to relay street re-openings and other Marathon news to bus operators. Photo by Gayle Anderson.



Ready to Roll: BOC Takes on 20th L.A. Marathon

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(March 3, 2005) Bus Operations Control doesn't get a medal at the end of Sunday's 20th Los Angeles Marathon. And even though BOC has been running the streets of all 20 of the marathons, marathon officials have never bestowed any special honors.

And, BOC are participants in *all* of the events, not just the marathon. There's also the Acura Bike Tour, the Wheelchair Race, don't forget, the Emerald Nuts 5/K Run/Walk.



On this special day, one Marathon route equals 100,000 service change notices, 50 detours, 900 bus stop postings, 50 TOSs and four field technicians.

Consider this: (from BOC reports)

- Three months are spent on planning and preparation for the Los Angeles Marathon.
- Approximately 50 Transit Operations Supervisors and four Field Equipment Technicians are assigned at various points along the route and at the Command Post to ensure smooth and safe operation.
- Operations personnel join representatives from LAPD, LAFD, LADOT, Street Services, and Marathon organizers at a unified command post.
- Approximately 50 Metro lines and routes are detoured, many at multiple locations. LADOT, Santa Monica and other Municipal lines also detour during the Marathon.
- It takes four days to post signs at approximately 900 bus stops. Signs are in both English and Spanish, and include a Marathon route map as well as information regarding the nearest alternate boarding location for each line that normally services the stop. Signs must all be in place by Friday, and removed on Sunday as streets reopen.
- Over 100,000 Service Change Notices were distributed through Bus and Rail Divisions, Customer Service Centers, Downtown BID, and Marathon organizers. Detour information is provided to LAPD and Traffic Control Officers to help them answer questions from the public during the event.
- Each affected Division receives an oversized map of the Marathon route and copies of applicable detours two weeks in advance of the event, in order to provide Operators with advance knowledge concerning changes in routing, and other items. These materials are posted on a dedicated bulletin board, along with information concerning changes to Operators' regular assignments (adjusted sign-on times, starting service at temporary terminals and so forth). Each Division has an Instructor on duty at the window the morning of the Marathon to assist Operators when they sign on.
- Marathon officials have chartered two buses to transport athletes who participate in both the Acura Bike Tour and the Marathon. After completing the bike tour, the biker-runners will be transported from the bike finish area to the Marathon start location. The buses, both wrapped in Marathon ads, are currently in service, advertising the event in advance of their special Marathon day assignment.
- At the request of the Los Angeles Fire Department, Metro will position four buses adjacent to the finish line to house participants who may need medical help or just a cool dry place to recuperate following the race.

If there's such a thing as a normal day in BOC, controllers can average about 3,000 calls a day. But on Marathon day, says Tom Jasmin, Bus Operations Control director, the number soars upward by about 350-400 calls.

"It's the busiest day of the year," he says.

Although the 2-year-old L.A. Triathlon is gaining ground on the running event for the number of street closures and route changes, it doesn't quite measure up to the Marathon. "The triathlon is over by 1 p.m. but the marathon goes on past 6 o'clock," noted Jasmin.

Jasmin, along with police and fire officials, gives the runners a 90 minute lead before he tailgates the route in a special vehicle to officially re-open streets closed by the 26-mile race.

Following Jasmin's lead, TOSs will relay street re-openings directly to TOS Patrice Hill in Bus Operations Control, who, along with TOS Trenisha Dorsey, will work a dedicated post, fielding all calls related to the Marathon.

Meanwhile, TOS Luis Alcantar will be stationed at the unified command post at Fire Station #3 in downtown Los Angeles. And, the more than 50 TOSs at the ready will line the famous 26-mile route.

Although BOC is up for the game and in perfect condition for Sunday's race, they're not into carbo-loading. "We just want to keep our passengers moving, and do a good job of it," says Jasmin.

With Marathon XX out of the way, there's only one thing left to do. Get ready for Marathon XXI.

Maybe they'll get a medal next year.

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