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Photo by Arlene Lim



New Maintenance Manager Hector Rojas.

Hector Rojas is New No. 1 Man at Division 1 Maintenance

By DAVID HERSHENSON

(May 3, 2005) Hector Rojas has been selected as the new maintenance manager at Central City Division 1 in downtown Los Angeles.

He will succeed Donell Harris, who has been managing both Divisions 1 and 2 Maintenance Departments since January. Harris will return to his normal assignment as maintenance manager of Crossroads Division 2.

Rojas had been the equipment maintenance manager, Fleet Management and Support

Services, since 2002. In addition to managing the bus fleet, he supervised the Vehicle Maintenance System (VMS/M3) staff.

Fleet management ensures that all operating divisions have the right type and amount of equipment to meet demands. It also includes the development and upkeep of the FTA-mandated maintenance plan, handling thousands of road calls through a group of 14 field equipment technicians, managing the maintenance information system, and working with several regulatory agencies such as DMV, AQMD, ARB to ensure the proper licensing and compliance.

Began career in 1981

Rojas began his Metro career with SRTD in 1981 as a service attendant, and went on to work as a leader and a supervisor at Divisions 1, 2 and 10 and in the Quality Assurance Department (QA).

As a QA supervisor, he simulated the CHP inspections for Metro maintenance divisions and supervised the Hazmat and Oil Analysis Laboratory. Later, Rojas worked as a supervisor at the Regional Rebuild Center, where he supervised most of the maintenance shops.

During the selection process, Rojas was the unanimous choice from a long list of internal and external candidates who submitted applications for the position.

"All of the candidates for the position were strong, but Hector really stood out," said Harris. "I am confident that Hector will do an outstanding job managing the division."

Wished him well

Rojas' former supervisor, Milo Victoria, deputy executive officer, Operations, is sorry to see him go but wished him the best.

"Hector has done an excellent job as fleet manager," said Victoria. "He is innovative, hard working, and possesses great communication skills. I'm sure he will excel as division maintenance manager."

Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford is looking forward to working with Rojas.

"Mr. Rojas has an excellent grasp on the inner-workings of the MTA and understands well the need to minimize road calls, provide the customers with clean buses and to achieve 100 percent daily pullout, while at the same time carefully managing the maintenance operation to budget and keeping Safety 1st," said Clifford. "He has a sprit of creativity and innovation and seeks to provide an atmosphere of inclusion and empowerment such that his team members will be encouraged to *'think outside the box'*. Mr. Rojas is one of this agency's shining stars and I look forward to having him join Team Gateway Cities."

Focus on improvements

Rojas is excited about his new position. "I want to focus on improving Division 1's performance - the decisions we make today will affect us tomorrow."

"A strong and effective line of communication is very important to me," he added. "I want to work with everyone, in every shift under my supervision to identify our goals together, and to unanimously come up with a plan to achieve them."

"It is very important for me to involve everyone from the onset because I believe that a sincere commitment NOW is a key to a well-designed FUTURE," he said. "I am truly looking forward to working together with a highly talented group of people."

Rojas and his wife, Jennifer, married for 24 years, reside in Riverside with their children Michael, 24; Daniel, 20; and Jennifer Josephine, 17. Rojas is currently attending the University of Phoenix to obtain a Bachelor's degree in business.

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Deputy CEO John Catoe addresses some 1,500 attending Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair. *Photos by Dave Sotero*



12th Annual Greater LA Vendor Fair Key to Business Opportunities

BY DAVE SOTERO

(May 3, 2005) More than 1,500 attendees and 350 exhibitors participated in this year's Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair, April 27.

The day-long public agency outreach event, the region's largest, was themed "Your Key to Business Opportunities" and featured information-packed workshops, exhibit booths and networking sessions from Metro, the City and County of Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Water District and Los Angeles Unified School District.

"The Fair was really successful this year," said Julie Ellis, Manager for Metro's Client/Vendor Service. "All of the agencies worked together to make it happen. The vendors themselves were pleased with all of the workshops, and a lot of them made connections with other vendors."

Metro conducted several well-attended workshops, including small business orientation, information technology (IT), and small business certification.

From left,
Teresa
Milliken, Al
Rangel,
Valerie
Rader,
Aileen
Landau,
Norma



Elson-Adams offer Metro Commute Services programs at Metro's mega-booth.

'Event sends a clear message'

"We believe this outreach event accomplished much in our efforts to outreach to small, disadvantaged, and minority-owned businesses," said Lonnie Mitchell, executive officer for Procurement and Material Management. "The event sends a clear message to our vendor community that we recognize and appreciate their role in helping this agency achieve its goals."

In addition to Procurement, Pre-Qualification, Diversity and Economic Opportunity, Commute Services, Ethics, and Real Estate participated in Metro's "Mega Booth" to meet directly with members of the small business community and talk about Metro departmental needs and contracting opportunities.

Other Metro departments involved in making the Fair a success included Vehicle Technology & Support Services, ITS and Facilities Maintenance.

This year, the agency hosted its first Speed Networking Session, where over 50 vendors met with Metro staff to begin the dialogue for vendor registration, certification and pre-qualification. Vendor Fair participants also had an opportunity to board a 45-foot CompoBus in the Metro booth to personally experience Metro's vehicle fleet.

Number of sponsors grew

The number of Fair sponsors grew from 5 to 16, and included new public and private industry participation, including Corporate Express, Comerica, Southern California Edison, the Community Redevelopment Agency and Los Angeles World Airports.

Next year, the Los Angeles Community College District is expected to join the Fair as a hosting agency, further strengthening its reach and opening more opportunities to small business.

Vernon Ware, president of View Inc., an IT consultancy in Covina, Calif., said the Fair's IT focus was particularly helpful.

"The Fair was one of the better small business events I've attended, and I go to many," he said. "I was able to meet quite a few vendors that had some interest in my services. I'm following up with them now."


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Metro Rapid Signal Priority to Reach Outside L.A. City Limits

- Project to target four Metro Rapid lines
- [Other Board actions in April](#)

By ED SCANNELL

(May 4, 2005) The Board has approved a three-year, \$6.7 million project to expand the Metro Rapid signal priority system outside the Los Angeles city limits.

The contract, which includes an \$800,000 option, was awarded to PB Farradyne and targets four corridors: Florence Avenue; Soto Street and Hawthorne Boulevard, which already benefit from signal priority where the lines operate in the City of Los Angeles; and the future Long Beach Metro Rapid line.

The contract award follows a successful demonstration, beginning in February 2004, of signal priority technology on Crenshaw Metro Rapid Line 710. It was the first successful demonstration of signal priority operations across multiple jurisdictions.

Metro Rapid's headway-based operation, the wider spacing of station stops and bus signal priority technology, which reduces red-signal delay, collectively have reduced bus travel times in Metro Rapid corridors up to 29 percent.

"Metro Rapid has transformed bus commuting in Los Angeles, in large measure because of its bus signal priority system," said Board Chairman Frank Roberts. "Implementing this technology beyond the city limits will extend the same timesaving benefits to our Metro Rapid customers as they travel through other jurisdictions."

Four target Metro Rapid lines

Florence Metro Rapid Line 711 operates through six jurisdictions in addition to the City of Los Angeles, including Inglewood, LA County, Huntington Park, Cudahy, Bell and Bell Gardens.

Soto Metro Rapid Line 751 operates through five jurisdictions in addition to the City of Los Angeles, including Vernon, Huntington Park, LA County, South Gate and Lynwood.

Hawthorne Metro Rapid Line 740 operates through five jurisdictions in addition to the City of Los Angeles, including Inglewood, LA County, Hawthorne, Lawndale and Redondo Beach.

When opened, Long Beach Metro Rapid Line 760 will operate through seven jurisdictions in addition to the City of Los Angeles, including Vernon, Huntington Park, LA County, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton and North Long Beach.

The Metro Rapid bus program will reach the halfway mark of a planned expansion to 28 lines with the debut of three new lines on Monday, June 27, 2005.

The start of service on Fairfax Metro Rapid Line 717, Beverly Metro Rapid Line 714 and Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus Rapid 3 line on Lincoln Boulevard will bring the total number of Metro Rapid bus lines to 14 and will expand Metro Rapid service to 205 route miles.

Other Board actions in April

The Board also took action on the following items during the April meeting:

- **Item 7, New Metro Rapid Service.** The Board approved a motion to provide Metro Rapid service on Fairfax Avenue between Hollywood & Vine and the West LA Transit Center beginning in June 2005.
The motion includes rescheduling the opening of Metro Rapid service on North Sepulveda from June 2005 to June 2006, with a goal of implementing it as early as December 2005, if funds are available.
- **Item 31, Bike Lockers and Racks.** Acting under its authority, the Construction Committee authorized the CEO to award a \$234,628 contract Johnson Barnes & Finch, Inc., of Lakeside, Calif., for 104 bicycle lockers and 78 bicycle racks for use on the Metro Orange Line.
- **Items 43 and 44, Contract Bus Service.** The Board authorized the CEO to award a \$43.2 million contract to Transportation Concepts to operate four routes – Lines 96, 167, 218 and 603 – in the North Region.
- The Board also approved a \$33.2 million contract with Southland Transit to operate six routes – Lines 177, 254, 256, 266, 270 and 605 – in the East Region.
- **Item 45, First Transit Contract.** The Board carried over for possible action in May a vote authorizing the CEO to award a \$76.9 million contract to First Transit, Inc., to operate 10 routes – Lines 125, 128, 130, 205, 214, 225, 232, 607, 608 and 625 – in the South Region.



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Revenue Equipment Maintenance Dept.'s 940 Injury-Free Days



Members of the Revenue Equipment Maintenance Department celebrate their achievement in preventing injuries. Below, five members of the Revenue Equipment Maintenance team collectively have 60 years of injury-free work time. From left are M.C. Chan, Clifford Niels, Danny Cachola, Carlos Roque and Gary Vu.



(May 4, 2005) Having gone 940 days without a lost-time injury, the Revenue Equipment Maintenance Department of Central Maintenance recently celebrated another milestone with a luncheon barbecue.

Assistant Maintenance Manager Jesus Godinez attributes the team's accomplishment to a priority in focusing on Metro's Safety's 1st! program.

Each month, the department conducts safety meetings to remind employees to work safely at the work place, as well as at home. Bi-weekly field observations are conducted to address issues needed to make the workplace safer.

Team members Gary Vu, Carlos Roque, Danny Cachola, M.C. Chan

and Cliff Niels have a total of more than 60 years of injury-free work. Each received a gift certificate for his hard work and dedication.

Deputy Executive Officer Milo Victoria, Maintenance Superintendent Michael Stange, and Senior Safety Specialist Pat Chism were on hand to celebrate the group's accomplishment.

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Photos by Rich Morallo



At the Trailblazers Banquet are, from left, DAC member Richelle Rayford, Arthur Winston and General Manager Dana Coffey.

Arthur Winston Honored Among 'African American Trailblazers'

By RICH MORALLO

(May 5, 2005) With only nine months to go before his 100th birthday, Service Attendant Arthur Winston continues to draw attention and recognition for his many years of remarkable service to Metro – and Division Ambassador Council (DAC) members are helping him make his public engagements.

Winston had just settled down to another quiet Saturday afternoon at home, recently, when the phone rang.

"It was Richelle Rayford, a DAC member and my ride, who said she was on her way to pick me up," recalls Winston.

As it turned out, he had just a few minutes to get ready for an awards presentation by the Crenshaw United Methodist Church in front of 200 people at the Torrance Hilton.

The African American Trailblazers award banquet had skipped his mind but Winston, escorted by Rayford, made the function in time to participate in the pre-dinner publicity photo session with South Bay General Manager Dana M. Coffey.

'Honored as a Trailblazer'



Arthur Winston was a guest on KPCC-FM radio's "Talk of the City," hosted by Kitty Felde.

"Arthur was honored as one of five Trailblazers for his 71 years of continuous service with Metro," said Edith Goff-Youngblood, a member of the church and Metro employee. "He began working in 1924 and continues on the job today."

The banquet, in its 10th year, recognizes individuals who are "Trailblazers" in their vocational pursuits and within the greater community.

"Arthur really enjoyed himself at the function," added Rayford. "The organizers arranged to recognize Arthur first in case he wanted to go home early, but that wasn't the case - he stayed after the presentations to talk to people."

In constant demand by the media, Winston recently traveled to Pasadena for an interview on KPCC-FM radio. The Metro icon was interviewed by Kitty Felde, host of the program "Talk of the City."

Marco Pedemonte, another member of the DAC organization that conducts community outreach, escorted Winston to the radio station located at Pasadena City College.

"We wanted to make sure Arthur got to the station in time and I was very familiar with the area since I graduated from PCC," said Pedemonte.

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Photo by Eric Rapp



From left, Division 8 operators Roldan Guingao, Bablu Singh, Richard Jajja and Phillip Cegielski await the Indian Harvest Festival Meal prepared by Operator Prakash Bhamidi, foreground (seated).

West Valley Division 8 Celebrates Indian Harvest Festival

By ERIC RAPP

(May 5, 2005) West Valley Division 8's bus operators of Indian heritage held a feast in April to celebrate Vaisakhi, the Indian Harvest Festival and New Year.

The division's "Desiboyz Club," made up of Indian operators, cooked traditional foods for employees.

Delicacies included pakoras, a fried vegetable dumpling, and kaas malai, a sweet dessert.

Many Indians, especially Sikhs, hold Vaishaki to be the most important date in the calendar. Many celebrate it twice yearly – in April and November.

The holiday commemorates the founding of two religious orders, one in 1699 and another in 1875. It also marks the date when an important religious figure, Guru Arjan Das, was martyred.


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Metro Proposes \$2.86 Billion Budget for FY 2006

- \$153 million less than current budget, despite rising costs
- Eliminates 133 positions; adds 98 union jobs
- No fare increase proposed

By ED SCANNELL

(May 6, 2005) CEO Roger Snoble has proposed a \$2.86 billion spending plan for FY 2006 that is \$153 million less than the current amended budget despite rising fuel, insurance, security, worker's compensation and other costs.

General and administrative spending has been reduced to absorb these increases, including the elimination of 133 full-time equivalent (FTE) contract and non-contract positions. Metro officials indicated that will mean a layoff of between 80 and 100 employees.

Schedule of Review

- The Board of Directors will conduct a budget workshop at 9 a.m., Monday, May 9, in the Board Room.
- A public hearing is scheduled at 10:30 a.m., Thursday, May 19, and the Board is expected to adopt the budget at a meeting set for 9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 26.

This is offset, in part, by the need to hire 98 union employees next year, mostly operators and mechanics, to operate the Metro Orange Line and also to comply with federal Consent Decree orders to continue adding more service on Metro Bus lines.

No fare increase proposed

The draft budget does not propose a fare increase. However, to help balance the budget Metro will be forced to use \$77 million in "one-time" revenues such as the sale or lease of railroad right-of-way property.

"In the year ahead, Metro again will be straitjacketed by financial constraints on many fronts and, yet, we will still push forward on major transit projects that will offer commuters and others new ways to beat traffic and the high price of gas," Snoble said.

Nearly half the budget -- \$1.295 billion or 45.3 percent -- is earmarked for Metro Bus operating and capital expenses and support for municipal bus operators and paratransit programs countywide.

Metro will take delivery of 176 new buses in the next fiscal year, including 170 new 60-foot articulated buses. Additional buses may be ordered in FY 2006, but delivery probably will not take place until FY 2007.

In the fiscal year beginning July 1, the agency will operate three new

Metro Rapid lines and begin service on four others. The agency also will deploy 200 new articulated Metro Liner buses. The proposed budget does not include funding for the 134 buses the Special Master says must be added to the Metro Rapid fleet.

Metro Rail operations, construction

The second biggest slice of the budget pie -- \$613 million or 21.4 percent -- would go for Metro Rail operating, construction and capital costs. This includes major construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension. Another \$57.9 million -- 2 percent -- is LA County's subsidy for the Metrolink commuter rail network.

It is also possible in FY 2006 that Metro could break ground on the first phase of the Exposition light rail line to Culver City.

As one money-saving measure, some Metro Rail headways will be extended by one or two minutes, said Deputy CEO John Catoe, adding, "We don't think our customers will experience any degree of degradation of service with these surgical adjustments we'll make."

Street and highway funding

The next biggest portion of the draft budget -- \$519 million or 18.1 percent -- is for highway and other regional transportation programs such as the Freeway Service Patrol, construction of freeway carpool lanes, freeway sound walls, street widening, better traffic signal coordination, grade separations at railroad crossings, bikeways, ride-sharing incentives, shuttles, and other local transportation programs.

These accomplishments stand out in sharp relief considering that Metro can expect virtually no support from Sacramento because of the state budget crisis. The prospects for increased federal funding are remote.

That puts Metro in a precarious situation if the agency is saddled with additional financial burdens, Snoble said.

Among the risks in this budget are rising fuel prices, the potential for eliminating existing state gas tax funding, and new federal Consent Decree orders to add even more bus service on top of the nearly \$1 billion Metro has spent in the past eight years complying with the Consent Decree.

"The bottom line in this budget is that we'll get through the year," Snoble said Thursday, "but, there is simply no way to sustain this level of operations without more revenue or reducing our level of service."

Debt service up slightly

Metro's debt service next year will be \$309.7 million -- 10.8 percent of the budget. That's up \$4.1 million from this year for planned debt issuance primarily due to support the Metro Eastside Extension and the Metro Orange Line.

Rounding out the FY 2006 draft Metro budget are expenditures for other governmental programs such as transportation planning, capital projects such as warehousing, legal and other expenses. These expenditures total \$64.7 million or 2.4 percent of the budget.

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South Bay Schedules Manager Madeline Van Leuvan with one of daughter Julie's paintings, "Colorful Twist."

"Mother's Day reminds us that being a mother means always being there for your children."

-- Madeline Van Leuvan

Mother's Day Has Special Meaning for this Metro Mother and Daughter

- Madeline Van Leuvan helps care for daughter with multiple sclerosis

By RICH MORALLO

(May 6, 2005) This Mother's Day, Madeline Van Leuvan will pick up the phone and talk to her daughter, Julie, in Louisville, Colorado.

"I'm planning to wish her a Happy Mother's Day," says Van Leuvan, a schedules manager for the South Bay Service Sector. She notes that Julie, herself, is the mother of a five-year-old daughter.

Van Leuvan will also tell Julie that they can celebrate Mother's Day properly, later in May, when she plans to pay a visit.

"We celebrate Mother's Day much the same as everyone else does with flowers and candy and the special meal," said Van Leuvan. "But, aside from the pleasantries and celebrations, Mother's Day reminds us that being a mother means always being there for your children."



Daughter Julie with her daughter, Eva, at home in Louisville, Colorado.

Diagnosed with MS

Twelve years ago, when Van Leuvan's daughter was 24 years old and newly-married, doctors diagnosed her with multiple sclerosis.

"I was actually visiting Julie and her husband at the time they received confirmation about the disease," says Van Leuvan.

Through the years Van Leuvan, who celebrates her 33rd anniversary this year with Metro, continued to give her daughter support, care, love and attention.

"Most of my vacations are spent with Julie and her family," explains Van Leuvan. "MS is a progressively debilitating disease, but for the first several years, Julie was able to care for herself."

These days, however, her daughter has trouble with muscle movements and speech, is in a wheel-chair and requires a full-time caregiver.

'She was a star athlete'

"MS has been difficult for Julie - she was a star athlete, " says Van Leuvan. Julie was also an art lover and artist as a child, and continues in that field. She dedicates several days a week to painting.

Recently, Julie conducted an art class for her daughter's kindergarten class. With assistance from an art therapist, Julie instructed the youngsters in "splash art," creating a colorful abstract painting by throwing brushfuls of paint onto a canvas.

As the need has required, Van Leuvan has traveled wherever her daughter was - first to Northern California and then to Colorado - to help care for Julie whenever there wasn't a caregiver. She would assist in the search and interviews for professional attendants.

"One occasion, I helped care for my daughter for almost two months while I made sure the right caregiver was hired " she says.

"On Mother's Day, I will make my call to Colorado and thank my son-in-law for the great job he's done caring for Julie," says Van Leuvan. "And I'll tell my daughter Mother's Day means I'll always be there for her."


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Say Cheese! 'Go Metro' Needs Poster Models

By ARLENE LIM

(May 10, 2005) Metro Communications is casting volunteer models to pose for the next phase of the "Go Metro" advertising campaign. It's not too late; you too can be a star with Metro.

Those interested should submit a recent digital photo to Grisel Sanchez by close of business on Wednesday, May 11. She can be contacted at 922-4286 or at sanchezg@metro.net.

Models will be selected from the photos received. Employees must have their supervisor's permission to participate.

Models are being cast for:

A Pair of European tourists: One adult male, age 50+ years and one adult female, age 50+ years.

A CEO-type businessman: Adult male, age 50+ years, tidy appearance and confident demeanor.

Four football players: Substantially sized men, age 18-30 years; think linebacker... you'll be wear full uniforms, pads and helmets.

A reindeer: A taller adult willing to wear a reindeer costume and spread holiday cheer.

A college student: Female, age 18-24 years.

Extras of all kinds to pose as passengers.

Remember, it must be a recent picture, you can't send your glamour shots from the '80s hoping to be chosen as the college student.

Photo shoots will be held from May 24 through May 27. Those who are selected will be contacted and given all the necessary details for their photos shoot.



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PHOTOS: AJITH PEIRIS



Solar panels installed at Division 15, like these shown on the roof of the transportation building, will provide 20 percent of the division's power needs.

Installation of Solar Power Panels goes off without a Hitch

- The 1,638-panel installation is largest at a U.S. transit property

By ARLENE LIM

(May 10, 2005) After months of construction, the solar panel installations at East Valley Division 15 and West Valley Division 8 are complete.

"We're happy that it's installed and it was successful," said Tim Lindholm, Facilities Operations project manager for the solar panel installation. "It's an innovative way to use all this empty rooftop real estate at these divisions."

The 1,648 panels, which can generate a maximum of 426 kilowatts, are currently generating 400 kilowatts on a sunny day. Even on not so sunny days, the panels have been performing well.

"They're exceeding our expectations," said Lindholm, who has noted that the solar power system in the San Fernando Valley sector is the largest such installation ever at a U.S. transit property.

'100 percent sound'

There had been some concern about possible wind damage to the panels, which are installed on the roofs of the transportation and maintenance buildings at the two divisions.

But, even after a season of heavy rains and wind, the panels and buildings are still "exactly where we want them to be and 100 percent structurally sound," says Lindholm.

Actually, the rain has served as a good cleanser of the dust and dirt that can accumulate and decrease the productivity of the panels. The next sunny day after the rains, the power output increased.

The panels will be publicly unveiled, June 1, with many, including the press expected to attend.

"We've had a lot of support for this through our Board members and elected officials, so it's just a chance to publicly unveil it," said Lindholm.

More installations soon

New panels will be installed at two more facilities. According to Lindholm, the West Los Angeles Transportation Facility - the new Division 6 - will integrate solar panels as car shade structures.

The Transportation Building at San Gabriel Valley Division 9 also will have a solar generation element. Both projects will begin construction in summer 2005.

If the panels prove to be a success and funding is secured, Lindholm hopes that, in time, more facilities can enjoy the benefits of solar power.

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Gateway Cities Divisions Celebrate Cinco de Mayo in Style



Cinco de Mayo party at Division 2.

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(May 11, 2005) Gateway Cities Sector Divisions 1 and 2 each hosted a party, last week, to celebrate Cinco de Mayo.

Both celebrations were planned by employees and management, and were funded through employee donations, fundraising activities and a \$500 donation to each division from Union Local 1563.

Central City Division 1

Division 1 employees Rose Mumford, Lisa Atilano, and Rosa Chavez were some of the lead employees who worked with management at the division to plan, prepare food for, and put on the Cinco de Mayo party.



Dessert at Central City Division.

Operator Jaime Figueroa helped out with the entertainment by donating the services of a DJ, music and sound system. Employees enjoyed chicken and beef fajitas, rice, beans, guacamole, cactus and a special Cinco de Mayo cake.

Crossroads Depot Division 2

Division 2's party was organized by Robert Rodriguez and Jerry Diaz, along with Norma Carrasco, Kathy White, Sid Carr, Edgar Aceituno, Ramiro Mota, Doris Guzman and Joel Ramos (to name just a few).

A BBQ was used to prepare carne asada and marinated chicken, which was served along with taquitos, homemade guacamole, rice, beans, a variety of desserts and drinks.



Division 2 Cinco de Mayo organizers Robert Rodriguez, left, and Jerry Diaz.

Rodriguez said the event's success was due to a great team effort.
"Jerry and I really want to thank everyone for participating.
Management also went all out to support the event and work with us.
It looks like everyone enjoyed the event – we're already looking
forward to next year!"

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Graduation Celebration: Metro Will Honor Your Graduate

- Download and print your ["2005 Graduates Form"](#) here. (PDF)

(May 11, 2004) May and June are the "cap and gown" months for many families – a time to honor our high school, vocational school and college graduates.

Once again this year, the names of graduates will be listed in a special "Metro Honor Roll," a compilation of those who earned their diplomas, certificates or degrees in 2005.

If you or someone in your immediate family graduated last winter or will graduate this semester, *myMetro.net* wants to know.

The names of Metro employees and the children, grandchildren and spouses of employees are eligible to be included in "Metro Honor Roll."

Posted on web site June 23

The "Metro Honor Roll" will be posted, June 23, on the myMetro.net web site and will be distributed as a special employee publication.

To be included, employees must fill out and submit a "Graduation Celebration" form no later than June 16. Forms should be returned to Arlene Lim at mail stop 99-19-8 or faxed to 213-922-2704.

Forms are being delivered to all work locations. They also are available in a .pdf file on the Intranet, in the MTA Research Center library, in the Employee Center and in the Metro Café lobby.

Graduation Celebration forms also are available by mail or FAX by contacting Communications Manager Bill Heard at 922-7479.

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[<Back to:](#) "Transportation Institute Says Metro's Efforts Making Dent in L.A. Congestion"



Noontime traffic
in the San
Fernando
Valley. >

Transportation Institute Cites Benefits of Public Transit

- Lack of transit would have added 1.1 billion hours of delay

By ED SCANNELL

(May 12, 2005) In recent years, there has been a marked increase in the number of discretionary riders who use the Metro System's buses and trains.

The number of Metro riders with a car or truck available increased from 22 percent in Fall 2002 to 30 percent in Fall 2004.

The Texas Transportation Institute's 2005 Urban Mobility Report acknowledges the benefits of public transportation, saying "if public transportation service was discontinued and the riders traveled in private vehicles, the 85 urban areas would have suffered an additional 1.1 billion hours of delay in 2003."

Report co-author David Schrank is encouraged by the performance of the Metro Rapid bus program, which in late June will reach the half way mark of a planned expansion to 28 lines, and says he's interested to see the impact of the Metro Orange Line, Metro's 14-mile exclusive transitway, when it opens later this year.

Bus rapid transit 'fairly successful'

"The early information shows that bus rapid transit has fairly good ridership and is fairly successful," he said.

The report says expanding the capacity of streets and highways will be

necessary to keep pace with development. One such project in L.A. County is the 101/405 freeway project, which will remove the chronic bottleneck from this overburdened interchange.

Schrank and co-author Tim Lomax say that the efficiency of roads can be increased through the use of information technology, including educating travelers about their options.

In September 2004, Metro entered into an agreement with TrafficGauge, Inc. for a demonstration to provide real-time freeway traffic congestion information to owners of TrafficGauge's hand-held electronic traffic monitoring device.

Changes needed in developments

Schrank and Lomax suggest that changes must be made in the way that commercial, office and residential developments occur to sustain the "urban quality of life" and gain economic development "without the typical increment of mobility decline."

Clearly, public transit is at the forefront of such change in Los Angeles County and it is reshaping L.A.'s urban landscape.

An informal survey conducted by Metro in 2004 showed that developers and their partners are investing more than \$4 billion in at least 30 new development projects around Metro stations throughout Los Angeles County.

Schrank and Lomax say it's a given that large urban areas will be congested and "realistic expectations are also part of the solution." But they are quick to point out that with a balanced and multi-pronged approach congestion "does not have to be an all-day event."

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A carpooler in the HOV lane beats traffic buildup on the 405.



PHOTO: LUIS INZUNZA

Transportation Institute Says Metro's Efforts Making Dent in L.A. Congestion

- Congestion reduced from 98 hours in 2002 to 95 hours in 2003

By ED SCANNELL

(May 12, 2005) Traffic congestion in L.A. and Orange counties tries the patience of the most patient driver. But there's some encouraging news.

The Texas Transportation Institute's 2005 Urban Mobility Report concludes that the multi-pronged approach of transportation agencies, including Metro, reduced the number of hours drivers in L.A. and Orange counties wasted in traffic from 98 hours per year in 2002 to 93 hours in 2003.

[More!](#)

See also:
"Transportation Institute Cites Benefits of Public Transit"

"The Texas Transportation Institute's conclusion supports Metro's longstanding belief that a 'one size fits all' approach is not the best way to chip away at traffic congestion," said CEO Roger Snoble. "It takes a variety of tools, everything from carpool lanes to public transit to information technology, to better manage the traffic on our streets and highways."

While this year's report notes that a slowdown in California's economy in 2002 and 2003 may have resulted in a decline in cars and trucks on streets and highways, it also credits operational improvements, including an increase in freeway ramp metering and freeway

surveillance cameras, and better incident management with lessening the annual hours of delay in Los Angeles and Orange County.

‘Starting to whittle away’

“We’re starting to whittle away at this,” said the Texas Transportation Institute’s David Schrank, co-author of this year’s Urban Mobility Report.

“Knocking off three or four hours of delay per year is something you may not notice, but it’s a start,” he said. “As a major urban area makes more of these operational improvements, diversifies its land use and expands public transportation, those three or four hours will turn into six or eight.”

While the annual Urban Mobility Report does not study the impact of individual transportation improvements, Schrank says each improvement may eliminate one to three percent of the traffic congestion that plagues large urban areas, including the Los Angeles region.

“What we’re seeing is that each of these treatments eliminates some delay,” said Schrank. “Because of that, the more you can put out there the more delay you can eliminate.”

- [More!](#) Transportation Institute Cites Benefits of Public Transit

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Long Beach Councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal to Join Board

By RICK JAGER

(May 13, 2005) Long Beach City Councilmember Bonnie Lowenthal has been selected to serve on the Board, filling one of four seats that represent the 88 cities within Los Angeles County.

Lowenthal, who will be sworn in this month, was elected by the Los Angeles County City Selection Committee at a May 5 meeting to fill the seat left vacant by Beatrice Proo, a former councilwoman from Pico Rivera.

"I am grateful for the Selection Committee's support in filling this important position and look forward to working with the entire Board of Directors as we strive to improve the mobility of the region through the implementation of important transportation solutions," said Lowenthal.

Currently, Lowenthal chairs Metro's Gateway Service Sector Governance Council, serves on the Gateway Cities Council of Governments and is the Long Beach representative on the Transportation and Communications Committee of the Southern California Association of Governments.

A Long Beach resident for 34 years, Lowenthal has served on the Long Beach City Council since 2001, representing the First District. She also chairs the city's Housing Authority. Previously, she served on the Long Beach Unified School District Board of Directors from 1994 to 2001.

A licensed marriage, family and child counselor, Lowenthal earned a BS in sociology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison; and a MS in community and clinical psychology at Cal State Long Beach.



Long Beach City
Councilwoman Bonnie
Lowenthal


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El Monte Man Arrested at Gateway on Fraud, Grand Theft Charges

- Claimed \$8,000 for alleged injuries on a Metro Bus

By PAM MURANO

(May 13, 2005) An El Monte man who claimed he was injured during a Metro Bus ride was arrested at the Gateway Building, Wednesday, and charged with insurance fraud and grand theft.

The Superior Court set a bail of \$85,000 for Eddie Dominguez, 49, who had submitted an \$8,000 claim for injury he said he sustained on Dec. 11, 2004.

Dominguez alleged that the operator of the bus he was riding was driving erratically and suddenly braked causing him to fall from his seat to the floor. He claimed that passengers attempting to exit the bus trampled him.

Investigator Roy Romero of Metro's Special Investigation Unit was able to view Digital Video Recorder evidence from the bus and determined that Dominguez never left his bus seat during his ride on the bus that day.

Additionally, Romero determined that the injuries Dominguez claimed were from a previous injury that occurred on February 11, 2004. That injury was for multiple stab wounds, injuries that would not be consistent with Dominguez's current claim.

Altered medical records

Further investigation revealed that Dominguez had altered the medical records, changing the month from 2-11-04 to 12-11-04.

"Good investigative work and technology teamed up to prevent a costly fraud," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "This effort by our Special Investigation Unit also protected a Metro Bus operator from a false allegation."

Romero submitted the case to the California Department of Insurance and the State District Attorney's office where criminal charges were filed.

A warrant was issued, April 28, for the arrest of Dominguez, charging him with three counts: presenting a fraudulent claim for payment, presenting a written false insurance claim and attempted grand theft.

Invited him to Gateway

On Monday, May 9, Romero called Dominguez, claiming to be an employee of the "Metro Claims Settlement Department" and invited him to the Gateway Building to receive a settlement check for his

claim.

When Dominguez arrived at the Metro Gateway Building at approximately 10:30 on Wednesday, May 11, he was taken into custody on the outstanding warrant.

Department of Insurance Investigator, Corey Dudley, and three other members of the states' Auto Fraud Team executed the arrest and transported Dominguez to Los Angeles County Jail for booking. Members of Metro's LASD Transit Services Bureau also assisted with the arrest.

As he was led from the building in handcuffs, Dominguez was still asking for his settlement check, arresting officers said.

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Late-Night Metro Rail Service to be Trimmed, Beginning June 26

(May 13, 2005) Deputy CEO John Catoe has confirmed that some late-night Metro Rail service will be trimmed, beginning June 26, in a cost-cutting effort aimed at meeting proposed budget cuts and to offset anticipated losses in state funding.

Although earlier plans were to extend some Metro Rail headways by one or two minutes throughout the day, Catoe said eliminating some late-night service would work better.

The plan calls for cutting trips in each direction on the Metro Green and Gold Lines and on the Wilshire/Western branch of the Metro Red Line. No changes are planned for the Metro Blue Line, which has high ridership most of the day and on nights and weekends.

The cuts will amount to some 40,000 rail vehicle service hours in FY 2006 from the current 659,000 service hours. Metro Rail peak-hour headways are now 10 minutes, with off-peak headways at 15 minutes.

Late-night service

Beginning June 26, the last trip on the Metro Green Line from Redondo Beach to Norwalk would leave at 11:55 p.m. instead of at 12:55 a.m. Westbound, the last train would depart Norwalk at 12:34 a.m., instead of 1:34 a.m.

The last westbound trip on the Wilshire/Western branch of the Metro Red Line, would leave Union Station at 11:27 p.m., instead of at 12:27 a.m. The last eastbound train from Wilshire/Western would depart at 11:42 p.m., instead of at 12:42 a.m.

On the Metro Gold Line, the last northbound train from Union Station would depart at 11:52 p.m., instead of at 12:52 a.m. The last southbound train from Sierra Madre Villa station would depart at 12:31 p.m., instead of at 1:31 a.m.

Catoe said plans also call for reducing the number of cars on the three rail lines during afternoon and nighttime non-peak hours. That could mean running four cars instead of six on the Metro Red Line in off-peak and reducing Metro Green and Gold Line trains to one car at times.

The Board will review the plan during discussions of the proposed \$2.8 billion budget for FY 2006.

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At a City Hall news conference Wednesday, Metro CEO Roger Snoble called for restoration of Proposition 42 funding to continue critical highway and transit projects.



Los Angeles Leaders urge Sacramento to Restore L.A.'s Transportation Funding

(June 16, 2005) At a news conference June 15, L.A. City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel, CEO Roger Snoble, and local business and labor leaders urged state legislators to institute permanent protections for Prop. 42 gasoline tax revenues to ensure the future funding of key transportation projects.

"Very few problems affect the quality of life of Los Angeles' residents more than traffic congestion," said Councilwoman Wendy Greuel.

"Los Angeles' leaders are urging Sacramento to restore the transportation funding that keeps business, job creation and communities moving forward," said Greuel. "We are counting on Sacramento to do the right thing and restore Proposition 42 transportation funding this year, and in future years, so we can get Los Angeles moving again."

Metro CEO Roger Snoble said full funding of Proposition 42 in the next state budget would provide approximately \$300 million in additional transportation revenues for Los Angeles County. While encouraged that legislators appear ready to restore Proposition 42 funds, Snoble urged continued efforts to secure the more than \$20 billion in funding necessary to meet the county's mobility challenges.

Councilwoman Greuel and CEO Snoble were joined by Rusty Hammer of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce; David Fleming of the Valley Industry and Commercial Association; Bill Luddy of the of the Carpenters and Joiners of America union; representatives of the Building and Construction Trades Council and SEIU Local 347; Wayne Tanda of the city's Department of Transportation; and Bill Robertson of

the city's Bureau of Street Services.

Proposition 42, passed by the voters on March 5, 2002 by 69 percent of the voters, amended the California Constitution to require the sales tax on gasoline to be used annually for state and local transportation purposes. These funds, which were previously allocated to the state's General Fund for any state program, were designated specifically to improve road safety, fund mass transit and reduce traffic congestion.

Recent State budgets have included transfers and loans from transportation funds to the state's General Fund, resulting in a suspension of Proposition 42 and a loss in much-needed transportation spending.

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Adoption of FY 2006 Budget to Lead Way at May Committees

- [Item 24, FY 2006 Budget.](#)
- [Item 16, Drug and Alcohol Policy.](#)
- [Item 17, Positions and Compensation.](#)
- [Item 19, Transit Police Services.](#)
- [Items 7 and 27, Air Quality Funding.](#)
- [Item 43, Rail Scheduling Program.](#)

(May 17, 2005) Adoption of the proposed FY 2006 Budget promises to get most of the attention during Board committee meetings, this month, but two motions concerning jobs, compensation and Metro's drug and alcohol policy should be of interest to employees.

Also on the committee agendas are motions concerning Transit Police services in 2006 and funding for bus purchases. A public hearing on the Budget is scheduled for Thursday, May 19.

Item 24, FY 2006 Budget. The Finance and Budget Committee will hold a public hearing for the proposed \$2.86 billion FY 2006 Budget and will consider a motion to adopt the budget at the committee meeting to follow. The motion includes provisions concerning funding for capital construction and acquisition, non-contract employee positions and salary ranges, contract pay and benefits, a \$4.7 million fuel reserve, and an expenditure of \$4 million for security on the Metro Orange Line.

Item 16, Drug and Alcohol Policy. The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider a motion to adopt a revised drug- and alcohol-free work environment policy that includes a newly created Rail Post-Incident Test and clarifies ambiguous sections of the policy.

Metro's drug- and alcohol-free work environment policy "strictly prohibits employees from using illegal drugs at all times; prohibits unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession and use of any controlled substance in the workplace; and prohibits alcohol consumption while on duty, subject to duty or present on any Metro property."

Board of Directors May Meetings

• Wednesday, May 18

- Planning and Programming, 1 p.m.

• Thursday, May 19

- Executive Management and Audit, 9 a.m.
- Public Hearing, FY 2006 Proposed Budget, 10:30 a.m.
- Finance and Budget, 10:30 a.m.
- Construction, 11:30 a.m.
- Operations, 1 p.m.

• Thursday, May 26

- Board of Directors monthly meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Item 17, Positions and Compensation. The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider a motion to adopt a revised job position and employee compensation policy, along with a non-contract salary schedule that reflects inflationary increases.

The revised policy would allow the Board to retain overall control of Metro's salary schedule and provide for annual approval by the Board of wages and benefits. It also would provide for Board approval of all salary offers in excess of the salary range midpoint, plus 10 percent, or in excess of \$125,000 a year.

Item 19, Transit Police Services. The Executive Management and Audit Committee will consider a motion to modify the memorandum of understanding with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, which provides deputies, fare inspectors and staff for the Transit Services Bureau.

The motion calls for not-to-exceed funding of \$54.2 million for transit security services in FY 2006. It would include an additional \$4.7 million to expand security services for the Metro Orange Line "if revenues can be identified for the period of July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006."

If funding is identified for Metro Orange Line security, LASD would provide an estimated 13 patrol deputies and a team leader, four motorcycle deputies and 12 fare inspectors. Ten fare inspectors would be transferred from the Metro Blue or Green Lines; the other two would be new positions.

Items 7 and 27, Air Quality Funding. The Planning and Programming and Finance and Budget committees will consider a motion to program \$26.6 million in federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funds for purchase of 75 40-foot CNG buses from North American Bus Industries. The Board optioned the purchase with NABI in July, 2004.

Item 43, Rail Scheduling Program. The Operations Committee will consider a motion to award a \$352,190 contract to Giro, Inc., to upgrade Metro's HASTUS system to handle Metro Rail vehicle, crew and roster scheduling. Currently, rail schedules are develop manually. HASTUS has been used since 1997 for bus and operator scheduling and the proposed upgrade would consolidate all Transit Operations scheduling into one system.


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Metro's 'Talking Bus' in Full Operation by Mid-Summer

- Automated voice system installed on 2,500 buses
- Pilot program gets favorable comments from riders

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 17, 2005) By mid-summer, Metro Buses will be talking to their riders.

That is to say, the new Automated Voice Annunciator system (AVA) will be operational on 2,500 of Metro's 2,600 buses and will be ready to announce bus stops throughout the county.



[Who said that?](#)

Earlier this year, AVA was thoroughly tested during a pilot program using 29 Venice Division 6 buses. It has now been installed on all Westside/Central Service Sector buses and will be phased in over the next couple of months in the other four service sectors, according to ATMS Project Manager Tom Pope.

"We're getting favorable, real favorable comments from people," says Bus Operations Center Director Tom Jasmin. He notes that calling the major stops, transfer points and points of interest will ensure that Metro complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

During the pilot project in the Westside/Central sector, Jasmin dispatched a team of transportation operations supervisors under the direction of Kevin Dukes to drive the Division 6 bus lines and evaluate the voice system.

Checked the accuracy

Over a two-month period, the TOSs checked to see that AVA announced each stop, whether the announcement was accurate and if it was pronounced correctly.

The AVA computer system holds the names of all 18,500 stops on the 189 Metro Bus lines and, during the test phase, three TOSs listened to every single announcement. Adjustments were made and, in some cases, announcements were re-recorded.

"When we get full fleet implementation and the regular bus operators are running the routes, I'm sure we'll make more corrections," says Pope.

When AVA is implemented at a division, a bus assigned to a particular route – or to more than one route – will be programmed to announce the stops in sequence on both the out- and in-bound runs.

As the bus approaches a stop, AVA will announce that stop and the next one along the route. An external speaker will announce the bus

line and destination to patrons waiting to board.

'Help for the sight-impaired'

"AVA is a real help for the sight-impaired at bus stops, especially in the downtown area where multiple bus lines serve a stop," says Jasmin. "There could be up to 100 people waiting for buses."

The AVA system is flexible enough to adapt to changes in bus routes and to the elimination or addition of stops. The names of new stops also can be recorded and included in the AVA computerized inventory.

But, even though Metro will rely on AVA to make most bus stop announcements, the operator remains in control. In the event of systems failure, for example, the operator can use the PA system to call requested stops.

The operator also can adjust the volume of the internal speaker and soon will be able to adjust the external speaker volume. Currently, external speakers are turned off between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. to avoid disturbing neighbors along the bus routes at night.

AVA is the most "public" element of the Automated Transportation Management System. ATMS includes an automatic passenger counter, voice data radio, a Global Positioning System-based vehicle locator, and a vehicle diagnostic and equipment monitoring system.

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**Bikes, Prizes
for 11th
'Bike to Work Day'
May 19**

By JOSÉ UBALDO

(May 18, 2005) Metro is promoting the 11th annual Bike to Work Day, Thursday, by offering two commuter bikes, messenger bags, bike helmets, locks, and reflective lights to those who register in advance online at [Metro.net/biketowork](#) and pledge to pedal to work or school on that day.

Metro also will offer free rides on Metro buses and trains to bicyclists who use Metro for part of their commute.

The agency is sponsoring Bike to Work Day with its partners at the California Bicycle Coalition, Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, the City of Los Angeles, Good Samaritan Hospital, 7-Eleven, REI and Zone Perfect.

Metro has spent more than \$10 million funding such projects as the Long Beach Bikestation, bike lockers and racks at Metro Rail and Metrolink stations. Expenditures include public facilities to encourage commuters to bike to work and to educate children on safe riding habits.

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Operator Rafael Gutierrez, retiring after 33 years, was presented with gifts by, from left, UTU representative Thomas Isaacs, Division Transportation Manager Yvonne Brewer-Smith and General Manager David Armijo.



Photos: Richard Long

Three Good Reasons to Celebrate at West Hollywood Division 7

By JODY LITVAK

(May 18, 2005) West Hollywood Division 7 staff had three good reasons for a party earlier this month: Employees celebrated moving back into the newly refurbished transportation building; they honored 11 co-workers; and they marked the Cinco de Mayo holiday.

Division Transportation Manager Yvonne Brewer-Smith organized the party as a way to welcome employees back into the transportation building after several months working in trailers. During that time, the interior space was refurbished leaving brighter and newer facilities for the operators.

"It's good to have everyone back under one roof again," said Brewer-Smith. "The facility looks so much better."



Sector General Manager David Armijo and Division Maintenance Manager Jim Pachan recognize service attendant Taffy Lillard who retired with 23 years of service.

Managers from the division, sector office, and other divisions, along with union representatives, all pitched in to serve up a variety of barbeque and Mexican dishes to both operations and maintenance employees. Several employees commented how much they appreciated management doing this for them.

Work continues at division

While work on the transportation building is complete, work is still ongoing in the maintenance yard. Pavement has been replaced in the yard and a new storage facility has been constructed. A new tire area is almost finished and work remains to be done for a new maintenance supervisor's office area and repair bays for articulated buses.

"We are already enjoying these improvements but are looking forward to having all of the work done," said Division Maintenance Manager Jim Pachan. Work should be complete on the remaining improvements in July.

During the party, General Manager David Armijo participated in recognizing division employees for special service and some recent retirees.

Recognized for their participation in recent special Hollywood Bowl service were Linda Abnerollie, Robert Beard, Larry Bell, Monzur Chowdhury, Mauro Guerrero, Starla Jefferson, and Howard Lewis, along with Transportation Operations Supervisor Richard Wright.

Retirees who were honored for their service were operators Rafael Gutierrez (33 years) and Orlando Mendrano (30 years), along with service attendant Taffy Lillard (23 years).

Gutierrez brought his wife and several family members to the party with him. Taking the microphone, he said, "In my last days, I was much nicer and truly enjoyed my job more. I wished I had done this sooner. My customers were nice to me. I learned that you should take care of your customers, because they will take care of you."



UTU Representative Thomas Isaacs serves Division 7 employees at a recent Cinco de Mayo celebration.



Enjoying the celebration are, from left, operators Andre Burroughs, Tammy Arnold and Miguel de la Cruz.


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Funeral Arrangements for Debra Ann Howard

- Daughter of Metro's Joe Coleman

(May 18, 2005) Funeral arrangements for Debra Ann Howard, daughter of General Services Supervisor Joe Coleman, have been set for noon, Monday, May 23, at Green Acres Mortuary, 11715 Cedar Ave., Bloomington, Calif.

A viewing is scheduled from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m., Sunday, May 22, at the mortuary.

Howard died Sunday past weekend after a lengthy battle with meningitis. Her survivors include her father and mother, three children and three grandchildren.

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Metro car card features likeness of Division 9's Mike Mitchell and a description of his work.



Division 9's Mike Mitchell Featured on Metro Car Cards

- Mopper-waxer recognized for professionalism

By PHIL MOORES

(May 18, 2005) Mike Mitchell can be counted on to keep San Gabriel Valley Division 9 clean and safe for nearly 400 employees every day.

Mitchell, 51, a mopper-waxer, also occasionally cares for the El Monte Transportation terminal, the busiest terminal in the western United States serving more than 10,000 customers a day.

Since joining Metro in September 1978, he has met these challenges with persistent professionalism and a never-ending smile. His attitude is always professional and positive.

Now Metro customers can catch a glimpse of Mitchell, one of several employees nominated by their managers to be featured on car cards posted in Metro Buses. The ads recognize employees who perform their jobs in an exemplary manner.

An earlier car card pictured Division 9 Operator Luduvico Castro, winner of the 2004 Metro Bus Rodeo and the 2004 Night of Stars Spotlight Award winner.

'Standards of quality'

Speaking of Mitchell, Division Maintenance Manager John McBryan says, "Mike's seniority allows him six weeks of vacation a year and he is sorely missed because his standards of quality are not often met by his replacements."

During the recent rains when the division's roof was leaking, Mitchell worked extra hard to keep Division 9 floors dry and hazard free.

"Mike is always taking such good care of us, we never have to ask him for anything. We are really lucky to have him", says Transportation Manager Mike Greenwood.

Mitchell's diligence has resulted in Division 9 transportation being one of Metro's cleanest. His attention to detail pays big dividends.

"Mike looks for areas that need attention, especially safety issues," says Assistant Transportation Manager Aurora Jackson. "He removes the wet floor hazard signs promptly so people don't get used to seeing them. It's those details that set him apart."

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The Division 8 Maintenance team celebrates a double win as Best Maintenance Division for March and its part in winning Best Division for the third quarter FY 2005.



'Photo Finish' for Divisions 8 and 9 in Quarterly 'How You Doin'?' Contest

(May 19, 2005) It was a "How You Doin'?" contest "photo finish" for West Valley Division 8 and San Gabriel Valley Division 9, which tied for third quarter FY 2005 honors as Best Division.

Division 8 also won the award for Outstanding Maintenance Division for March, scoring highest for miles between mechanical failures and fewest Worker's Comp claims. North Los Angeles Division 3, which got highest marks for in-service, on-time performance, was named Outstanding Transportation Division for March.



Division 8 Transportation employees marked their Best Division of the Quarter win with a barbecue.

For Division 8 Maintenance employees, the honor was exciting but no surprise, as the team regularly wins monthly competitions for Best Maintenance Division of the month.

"It's a team effort," said Division 8 Maintenance Manager Pat Orr. "The effort our employees put into their jobs really shows up, not just in performance statistics, but in the cleanliness and reliability of our buses."



The Division 9 team celebrated their selection as Best Division for the third quarter with a barbecue. They were joined by General Manager Jack Gabig, Transportation Manager Mike Greenwood and Maintenance Manager John McBryan.

Commenting on Division 9's win, Maintenance Manager John McBryan, said, "Transportation leadership has done a good job. People have a good feeling when they come to work. Our maintenance department staff is the best! They really care about their jobs and have a tremendous amount of pride."

Division 8's Transportation Department employees also were proud of their part in the victory.

"We always do well," said Assistant Transportation Manager Ralph Gray. "Winning awards like this is proof that our employees' hard work has a real impact."



General Manager Jack Gabig, left rear, joined Metro Bus operators at Division 3 in celebrating their How You Doin' win for March.

Noting that Division 3 transportation has won the monthly contest 11 times in the past 16 months, Transportation Manager Dan Frawley said, "Their consistency shows that they are true professionals and really care about the level of service they provide to our

customers. Our staff and bus operators take great pride in the jobs they do.”

-- *Eric Rapp contributed to this story.*

Photos: Eric Rapp, Tanya Romo and Elizabeth Armijo-Holbrook

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Rail Operations General Manager Gerald Francis and DEO Melvin Clark, rear center, join Transportation Manager Eugene Adams and members of the Metro Green Line team to celebrate their safety achievement. Below, Transportation Manager Eugene Adams, at left, and members of the Metro Green Line team.



Metro Green Line Employees Surpass 300 Injury-free Workdays

By WILBUR BABB

(May 19, 2005) Metro Green Line team members working safely together over the past year successfully compiled a safety record of more than 302 days - and counting - without a recordable Cal OSHA lost-work day.

The approximately 100 Transportation and Fleet Services employees were recognized for this accomplishment at a barbecue held at Green Line Operations on Thursday, May 12.

It's not unusual at the Metro Green Line division to have some sort of reminder stressing safety in the shop, whether its wearing goggles, safety boots or even safety on stairs, especially using handrails.

The continuing safety record is credited for an overall plunge in Worker's Compensation and Cal OSHA recordables, down significantly from a year ago.

'Remarkable accomplishment'

"That's a remarkable accomplishment considering the nature of work we perform here," said Division Transportation Manager Eugene Adams.

Managers, supervisors and front-line employees point to a variety of practices that account for their accident-free success.

Represented employees hold regular Standing Local Safety Committee meetings, with all unions represented. All meetings begin with safety contacts. Normally, Incident Investigation meetings are held to review unsafe behavior and accidents.

But, since Transportation and Fleet Services have experienced no incidents for the past nine months, "near misses" have been the topic of discussion for most of the meetings.

"The close working relationship between management, Fleet Services, Transportation, and Rail Operations Safety has developed a good team attitude towards safety," said Rail Operations General Manager Gerald Francis. "The entire Metro Green Line team should be commended for helping to protect the lives and well-being of the men and women who keep our agency on the move."


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Members of the safety team at the new bus stop in front of Locke H.S. on 111th Street. Front row, from left, Madeline Van Leuvan, Dr. James Person, Veronica Navar, Glenda Gonzales and Cassandra Dixon. Back row, from left, Scott Greene and Tom Kelso.

Metro Bus Service Improving for Locke High Students

By RICH MORALLO



(May 20, 2005) Locke High School students headed home after classes now will have an easier and faster time boarding Metro in Southeast Los Angeles.

"Local passengers, faculty and students will be able to catch Line 52 right in front of the school administrative building on 111th Street," South Bay General Manager Dana M. Coffey announced in front of 150 city officials, parents, teachers and residents at a recent community meeting.



Los Angeles Councilwoman Janice Hahn, left, and General Manager Dana M. Coffey at the recent safety collaborative meeting at Locke High School.

The audience broke out in applause because they knew that in the past the students had to cross busy Avalon Boulevard to catch the northbound line.

Additionally, Metro will send a Line 48 bus directly to the stop at San Pedro and 110th Streets at the end of classes, at 2:54 p.m. on school days.

'Guaranteed a seat'

"Passengers who want to head north on San Pedro Street will be guaranteed a seat," explained

Service Development Manager Madeline Van Leuvan. Previously, some students would walk south on San Pedro to an earlier stop to make sure they had a seat on the bus.

The new Line 48 service change includes allowing three minutes for passengers to board the bus before departing at 2:57 p.m. for Manchester Avenue. Line 52 will also arrive at the administrative building at 2:54 p.m., depart after three minutes, return to Avalon Boulevard and proceed to Manchester Avenue.

Van Leuvan, who coordinated the Line 52 and Line 48 changes with Metro Gateway Cities and Metro Westside Central, was enthusiastic about contributing to a safe school environment. "We want to support the neighborhood families, students, and teachers."

'Keep students safer'

"Metro has been cooperative every step of the way in looking for ways to keep students safer on the streets," said LAPD Capt. Sergio Diaz during the meeting at the high school.

That assembly included briefings from the 20-month-old community-based safety collaborative formed to achieve, among other goals, safety for student getting to and from school.

South Bay employees participate in similar safety collaboratives at other high schools, including Westchester, Washington Preparatory, and John C. Fremont.

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Metro gets a preview of new Breda model 2550 light rail car.



Above, AnsaldoBreda officials Giancarlo Fantappiè, Lucia Di Meglio and Michael Pracht. Below, from left, Metro Deputy CEO John Catoe, Rail Operations DEO Dave Kubicek, Rail Operations GM Gerald Francis, Contract Manager Larry Kelsey, Contract Administrator Ed Velasquez and manufacturer representative Lucia Di Meglio.

May 20, 2005 - Custodian Guillermo Ramos dusts cover of model light rail car on display in the Gateway Building lobby as Metro officials meet with manufacturers, Thursday, to arrange delivery of the Breda model 2550 light rail cars manufactured by the Italian firm AnsaldoBreda S.p.A. The first car of a 50-car order is expected to arrive at LAX on a Russian transport plane in mid-June.



Photos: Gayle Anderson

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Metro Orange Line

COUNTDOWN

Metro Orange Line
Photos by Ned Racine
Senior Community Relations Officer Ned Racine is on the scene at the Metro Orange Line, where construction of the transitway is underway in the San Fernando Valley. Photos were taken April 6 at the DeSoto Station and of the landscaping nearby on April 27.

Scroll below to select images.

April 2005



April 27 2005 - Mixing rock

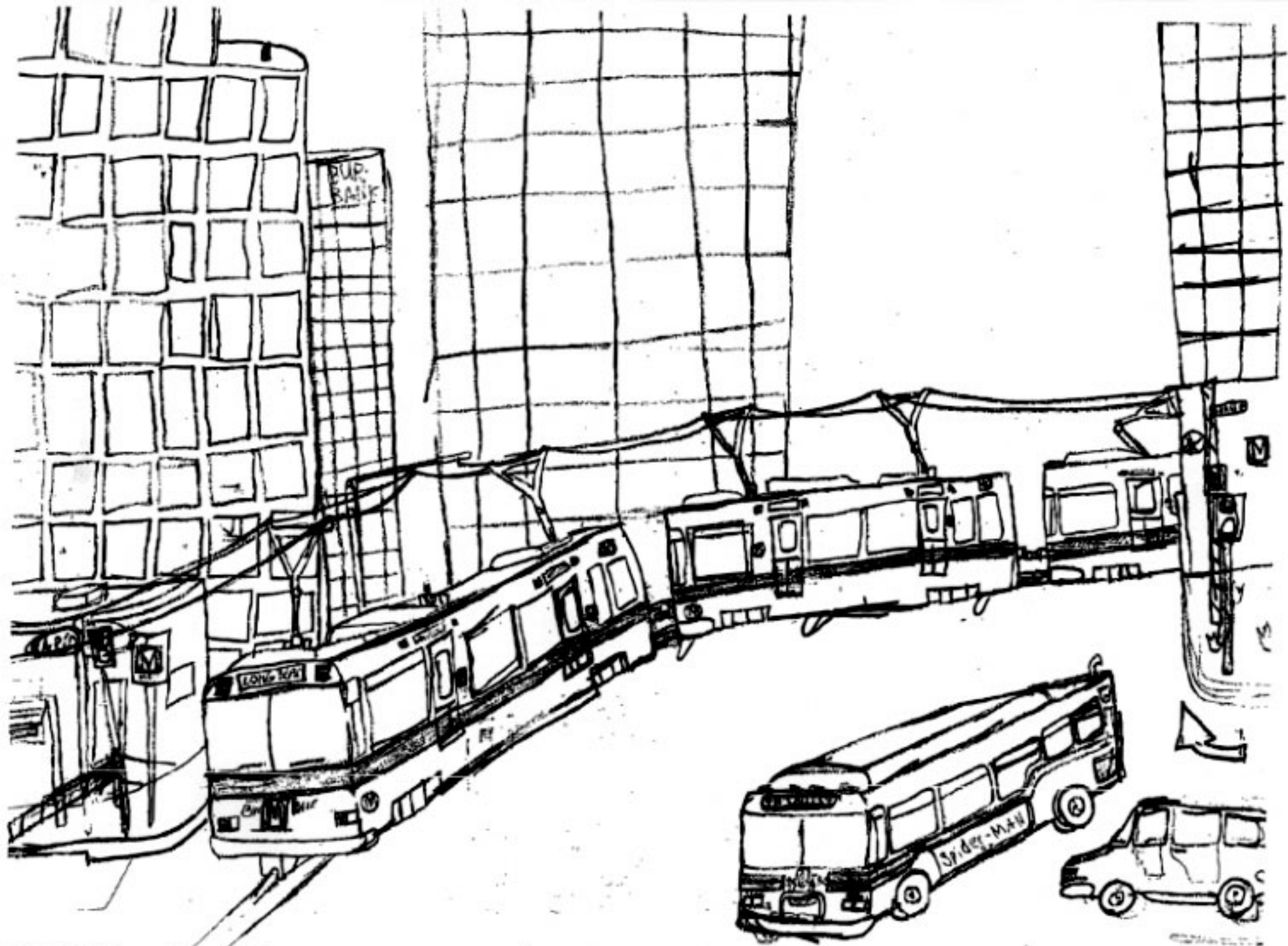


April 27 2005 - Troweling plaster LW at DeSoto Station



April 27 2005 - Mopping plaster LNW at DeSoto Station





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New TV Monitors Will Inform, Entertain Metro Bus Riders

- Surveys show vandalism decreases

By WARREN MORSE

(May 24, 2005) You'll soon be seeing a new feature onboard Metro buses that will both entertain passengers and give them information on Metro services.

Transit TV has been contracted to install, operate and maintain two small video monitors on each bus at no cost to Metro. Fleetwide installation is scheduled to begin in June 2005 and will take about a year to complete.

The monitors will bring riders current news and sports headlines, word games, trivia questions and snippets of vintage television shows. The displays also will include rider information, a line-specific route map and advertisements.

The system has been tested in recent months on several buses at Division 10. Operators there say passengers have responded enthusiastically.

'Riders ask for it'

"Some of the riders are even asking for it, hoping to get on the TV bus," says veteran Operator Hugh Cooper. "They like it a lot."

Some of the programming will have sound. Operators will be able to adjust the volume, but are not required to do so. Automated voice announcements will override sound from the TV monitors.

Transit agencies in Orlando, Milwaukee, Chicago and Atlanta have installed similar systems in recent years.



Metro travel tips will supplement the news and information programming available on bus-mounted TV monitors.

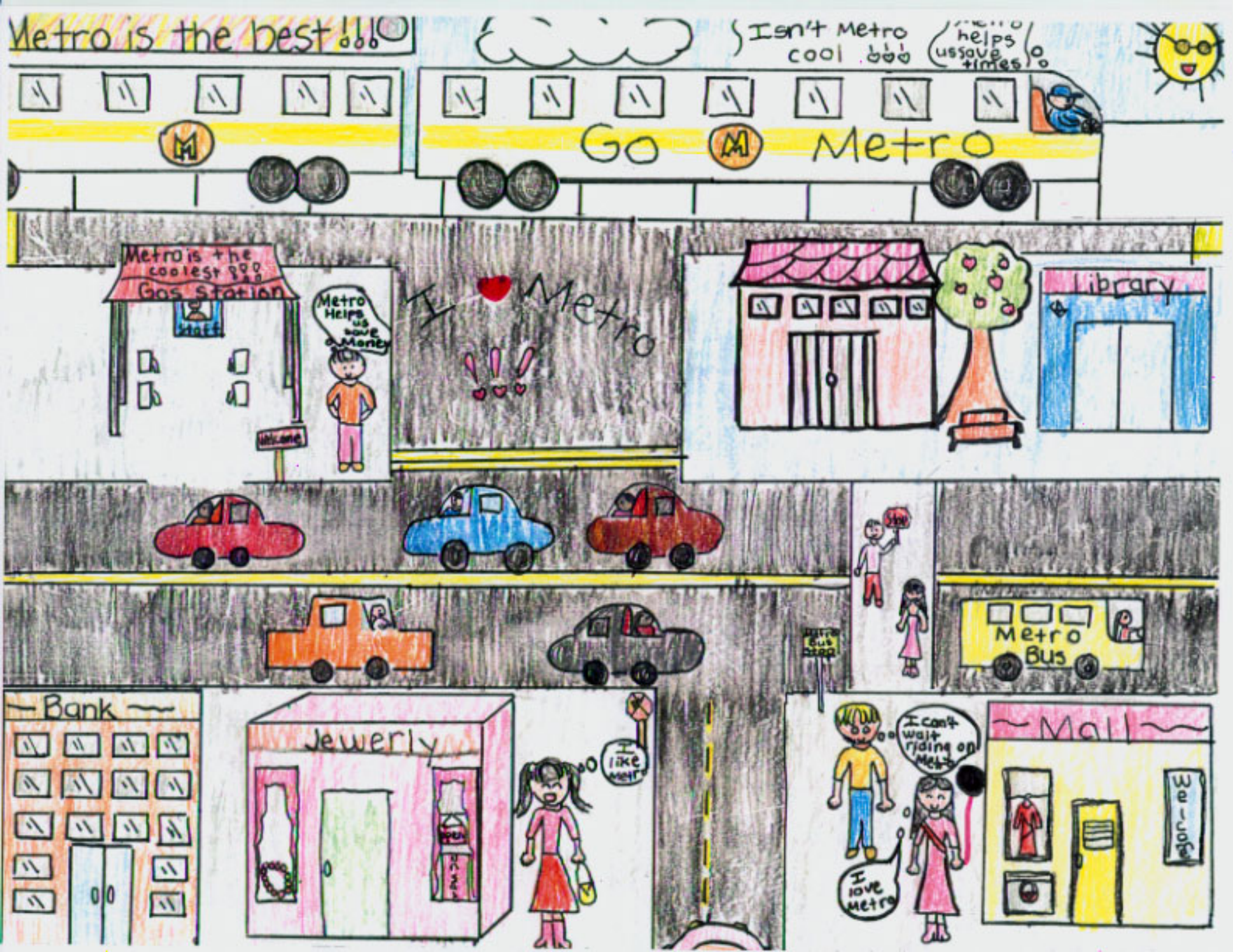
Surveys in those markets have shown that the vast majority of riders -
- more than 80 percent – enjoy the programming, and that vandalism
has decreased on buses outfitted with the monitors.

Metro incurs no cost for the system, and may even profit from it.
Transit TV is paying 100 percent of the equipment, installation and
operating costs, and will pay Metro a percentage of the advertising
revenues.

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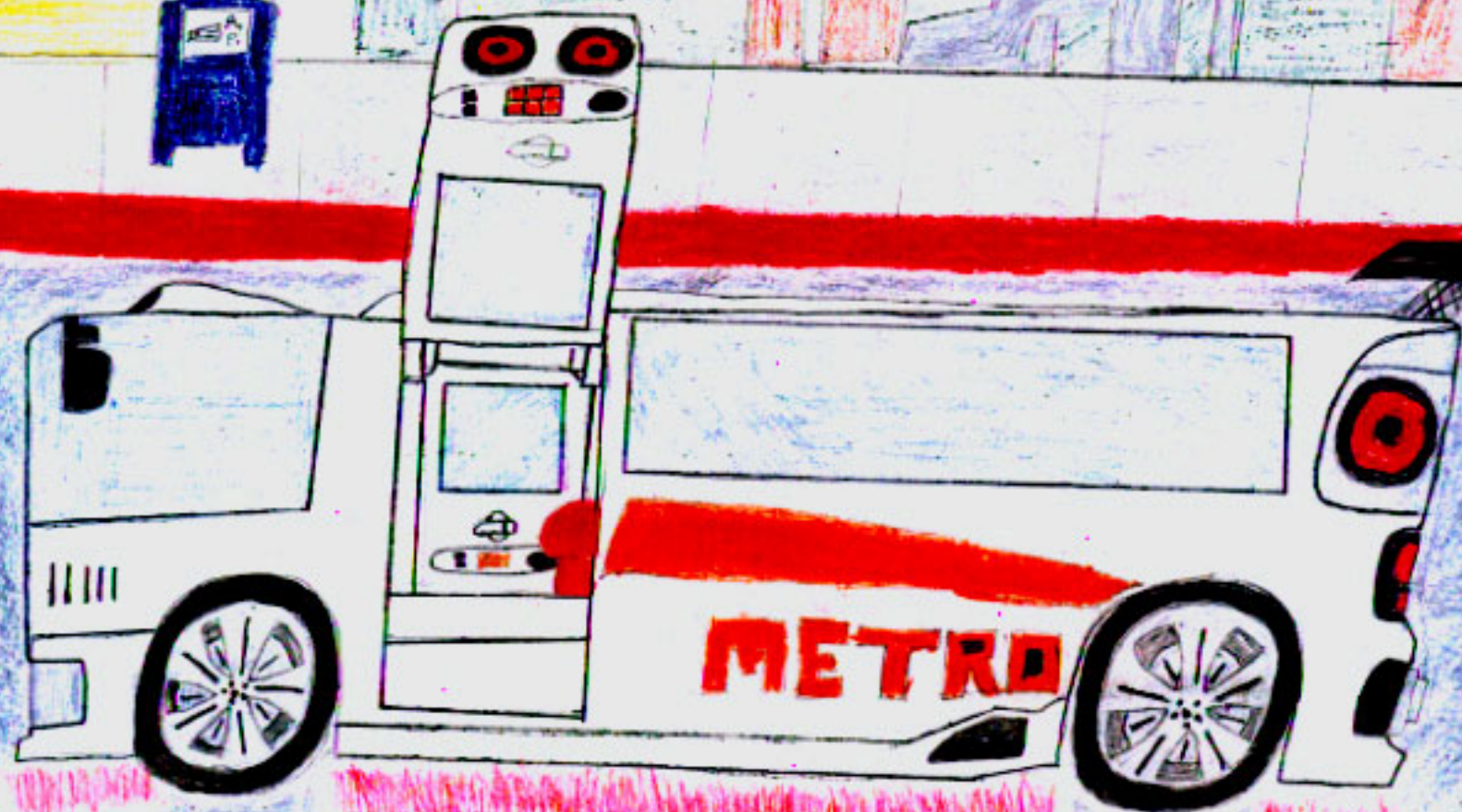








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HIGH**





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Metro helps me more
Metro makes our lives very easy!
It's happy to help people.

Metro saves our money!

TICKET
trains bus
TICKET
trains bus

Metro bus stop

I can't wait to take Metro.

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Editor's Note: The CEO's column indicates contract employees will receive an across-the-board 2.5 percent pay increase along with non-contract employees. In fact, any pay increases for contract employees are based on their collective bargaining agreements. The editor regrets any misunderstanding.

VIEW FROM THE 25th FLOOR

FY 2006: Not a 'Happy Budget,' But It Does Include a Pay Raise

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

This month, it's all about the budget. As I told the Board during our recent workshop, we expect to begin the new fiscal year with a balanced \$2.86 billion budget, but not a "happy budget." It will get us through the fiscal year, as long as everything goes according to plan.

You may be aware that among the painful choices we've made for FY 2006 is to cut 133 positions – a decision that personally affects between 80 and 100 of our employees. That was absolutely the most difficult decision, only one of many cutbacks we'll have to make if we're to go forward into the new year beginning July 1.

I do have some good news, however. The proposed budget includes an across-the-board 2.5 percent wage increase for both contract and non-contract employees. It's a small reward for everyone's good work, and it should help keep pace with inflation. I wish we could have included pay-for-performance for non-contract employees, but I'm afraid that's out of the question this year.

More tax revenues

Also under the good news heading, the state is bringing in more tax revenues and Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed putting \$1.3 billion back into the transportation fund. And the U.S. Senate has voted to add dollars to the federal Transportation Reauthorization bill.

Both of these actions still face many hurdles in Sacramento and Washington. If successful, they would give LA County money for the Eastside light rail project, the Exposition Line, highway improvements and even for some bus purchases.

That's in the future. In the FY 2006 budget, we're dealing with the rising cost of operating our bus and rail systems, paying employees and maintaining equipment and facilities. We also have to cover such extraordinary costs as fuel, which is up 30 percent, and employee health insurance and pension benefits, which have risen 17 percent.

Defer some programs

The budget calls for us to defer maintenance programs and midlife equipment overhauls, as well as to cut back on some capital projects at the operating divisions. We're delaying or canceling these projects because we don't have the money for them.

For the moment, then, we're just treading water. We've been required by the federal Consent Decree to provide more service, but we've realized no increase in revenues from it. I've told the Board there's simply no way to sustain our current level of service at our current level of revenue.

So, having come almost to the end of a difficult year, we're facing another one just as tough. The last three months of struggling with our financial situation have taught us a lot about how to live with this budget and how we can manage our resources better. It will be a challenge, but I believe we can do it.

May 24, 2005

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Board Chairman Frank Roberts, CEO Roger Snoble and *Times in Education* Central Zone Manager Denise Lopez, at left, and Metro Community Relations Manager Marta Mack, at right, flank elementary and middle school winners of the "On the Move" art and essay contest at award presentation May 3 at the Los Angeles Times.



Photos by Ted Roberts/Los Angeles Times

Reading, Writing and Transportation!

- Metro and L.A. Times are "On the Move" in county classrooms.
- [Essays](#): Winning entries from the "Buses, Trains and Carpool Lanes" essay contest.
- [Showcase](#): Winning entries from the "Buses, Trains and Carpool Lanes" art contest.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

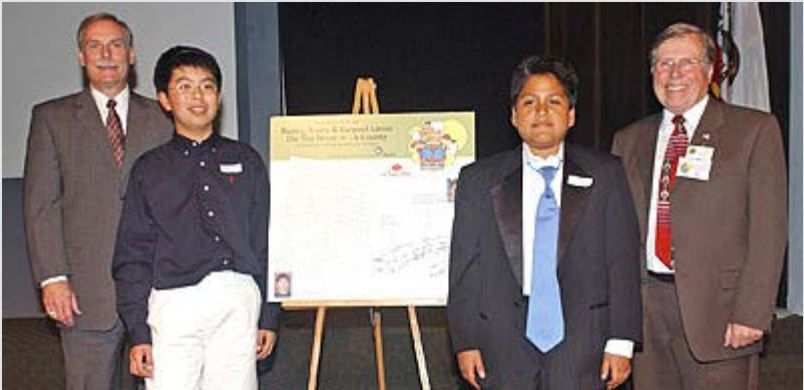
(May 24, 2005) – As the second year of an innovative education program underway at Los Angeles County schools drew to a close, CEO Roger Snoble and Board Chairman Frank Roberts were on the move, handing out awards at a May ceremony held in the Harry Chandler Auditorium of the Los Angeles Times. And, the honors went to 21 elementary and middle school students whose winning essays and artwork earned them top honors in the "Buses, Trains & Carpool Lanes" art and essay contest.

The awards signaled the completion of a six-month education outreach program sponsored by Metro. Appropriately named "On the Move," the program is a transportation curriculum offered free of charge to Los Angeles County schools, grades 4 to 8, in partnership with the Los Angeles Times in Education Program.

Now in its second year, "On the Move" served some 75,000 students in Los Angeles County. Participation increased 12 percent over last year, and 1,240 teachers used the curriculum in 1,860 classrooms, reported project coordinator Marta Mack.

Vice-

chairman
Frank
Roberts,
right, and
CEO Roger
Snoble
with
grand-
prize
winners
Stanley
Yuan
center left,
and Alexes
Macedo.



"Bus, Trains and Carpool Lanes"

Stanley Yuan, a seventh-grader at Dana Middle School and the 2005 grand-prize winner for the "Buses, Trains and Carpool Lanes" essay contest, made the case for using public transportation:

"Most people say that the stress is too immense when they are driving in intense traffic. Every driver has to concentrate on the traffic. Stress can be caused when a driver is focusing too much on driving, which can beget dizziness and tiredness. However, if a person takes the bus, train, or a carpool group, they don't have to worry about driving."

Sorenson Elementary School fifth-grader Alexis Macedo won the art contest with an architectural-style line drawing that showed the Metro Blue Line bound for Long Beach sailing through the traffic of a cityscape.

Showcase - Art contest winners
click on images below to view large format and use your <Back button to return to article

4th Grade

First Place



by Osmar Molina

Second Place



by Sasha Hurtado

Third Place



by Jiehong Chen

Honorable Mention



by Hui Qi Fan

Honorable Mention



by Lan JingZhang

Honorable Mention



by Iad Yee

5th Grade

First Place	Second Place	Third Place
GRAND PRIZE WINNER		



by Alexes Macedo



by Daunte Grooms



by Jesse Gillette

Honorable Mention



by Joseph LeGarreta

Honorable Mention



by Jasmine Sanchez

The winning essay and drawing, along with the photo and name of the grand prize winners, were published in a half-page ad in the May 3 edition of the Los Angeles Times.

Chairman Roberts commended the students prior to handing out the awards. "Thank you for your scholarship, creativity and interest in learning about how Metro works," he said, and encouraged the students to consider a career in transportation.

The program gives Metro an innovative way to deliver mobility, transit safety and anti-graffitti messages," said CEO Roger Snoble.

Noting the program as a great success in reaching "our youngest prospective transit users," CEO Snoble announced that Metro will renew the contract with Times in Education to sponsor "On the Move" for the next school year.

With Metro as the curriculum and the Los Angeles Times newspaper as the textbook, students in classrooms throughout Los Angeles County took part in spirited discussions on public transportation, debating such issues as funding, traffic snarls, and environmental and social concerns.

Showcase - Essay contest winners

First Place

Second Place

Third Place

7th Grade

GRAND PRIZE WINNER
[Why Should People Take Buses, Trains, or Carpool Lanes](#)

by Stanley Yuan

[The Advantages of Buses, Trains, and Carpool Lanes](#)

by Deja Soleil Neblina

[Not only the Car...](#)

by Ruodi Duan

8th Grade

[Traffic and Transportation](#)

by Ashley Romero

[What a Waste](#)

by Tiffany Chang

[Buses and Carpools](#)

by Jeancarlo Gonzalez

"On the Move" is one of several education programs offered by Times in Education and the first in Los Angeles County to focus on transportation issues. The program was launched in October 2003 with

teacher recruitment ads in the Los Angeles Times and brochures and flyers distributed to Los Angeles County elementary and middle schools.

On the Metro side, the project was coordinated by Marta Mack, Community Relations Manager. Community Relations staff, led by Deputy Executive Officer Lynda Bybee, judged the essays submitted by sixth through eighth grade students. The art entries were judged by Metro Art's Alan Nakagawa, senior public arts officer, who reviewed and selected the winning art submissions from fourth and fifth grade students.

"It's important to be aware and understand the pivotal role transportation plays in our everyday life," Snoble told the students prior to handing out the awards. "We *can* ride together. In a car, we miss out on the joy of freedom that comes with traveling with people."

Learning their lessons

The program also gave Metro an innovative way to deliver the anti-graffitti, anti-vandalism and safety education messages.

With Metro as the curriculum and the Los Angeles Times newspaper as the textbook, students in classrooms throughout Los Angeles County took part in spirited discussions on public transportation, debating such issues as funding, traffic snarls, and environmental and social concerns.

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GRAND PRIZE WINNER

Stanley Yuan
Dana Middle School
7th grade

Why Should People Take Buses, Trains, or Carpool Lanes?

There are many reasons why buses, trains, and carpool lanes can decrease traffic. With more people boarding buses and trains and doing carpool to work, there will be less cars on the freeways.

The first reason why people should take buses, trains, and carpool for transportation is to use less money. A typical worker who drives around seventy miles per day can use up to 15 gallons of gasoline in a week. With the gasoline prices up these days, 15 gallons can cost about \$35. A month of work can cost around \$150 and a year of gasoline can cost up to \$1800! However, if one takes a bus or train or be part of a carpool group, one could save a lot of money. A round trip on a Metro bus costs no more than \$3. That would equal \$21 a week, \$84 per month, and about \$1008 a year! One would save up to almost \$700 per year. That could make a drastic change in a person's lifestyle. A train, such as the Metro Link, has a fare of about four dollars for a round trip. Carpool lanes are used so people who go to the same workplace can all ride in one car, instead of several. They could also drive in the carpool lane, which is usually faster than the regular lanes. That would save a lot of time for people who attend carpool groups.

Another reason why people should travel on buses, trains, and carpool lanes is that they lessen stress. Most people say that the stress is too immense when they are driving in intense traffic. Every driver has to concentrate on the traffic. Stress can be caused when a driver is focusing too much on driving, which can beget dizziness and tiredness. However, if a person takes the bus, train, or a carpool group, they don't have to worry about driving, in a bus, train, or carpool, all one has to do is to sit down on a seat and relax. Riding trains, buses, and carpool is a good way to relieve stress.

The last reason why people who are trapped in heavy traffic should ride buses, trains, and carpool is for less pollution. Why should drivers be concerned about the environment? Well, think about it. What is the point of destroying the environment where everybody dwells in? For example, if thirty car drivers all took a Metro bus to

work, that would be thirty cars' less of pollution. True, the bus produces pollution. However, one bus' pollution definitely is not the equivalent of thirty car's worth of pollution.

These are just some reasons why buses, trains, and carpool lanes can diminish traffic. I think that people who can take buses, trains, and carpool lanes should take them. Everybody should be grateful for the convenience of buses, trains, and carpool lanes. And I'm sure that everybody will soon feel indebted to the wonderful city of Los Angeles for its consideration.

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Deja Soleil Neblina
Fremont Middle School
7th Grade

The Advantages of Buses, Trains, and Carpool Lanes

When you think of L.A. County in terms of traffic, you automatically think of rush hour, or backed up freeways. You also notice that there are extremely long lines of cars in front of you, yet there are only one or two people per vehicle. It's ridiculous how many lanes are wasted on almost empty cars...but it's reality! However, there are some traffic innovations made to reduce car problems in Los Angeles County such as buses, trains and carpool lanes. Each have their own individual purposes for cutting down on traffic problems. Whether it's buses and trains (that are capable of long and short destinations), or carpool lanes (which allow fully occupied vehicles to drive smoothly through the freeway), they do contribute to slowing down traffic in some ways. Here are some ways that each innovation helps in their own special way.

Take buses for example; they (most of the time) are able to carry forty to sixty people per stop. If it were a school bus, its capacity would be equivalent to two whole classrooms full of children. That's almost the same as about forty cars at the least! Also, buses are fully competent for driving within the city, or on the freeway.

Although trains run on tracks, not through the freeway like buses, they are capable of traveling through cities and even states! Since trains have several sections, one segment can carry almost the same number of passengers as buses. Not only are trains space-efficient, but also they reduce traffic in the sense that they are smart alternative for driving long distances on the freeway. Plus, sitting back and relaxing while the conductor drives, is a lot better than trying to stay awake on the road while driving.

The last traffic improvement (for the freeway) is carpool lanes. They are designed to help two or more people, in one vehicle, to make their way through the freeway at ease. The only reason why carpool lanes aren't backed up is because, since most of the cars have one person per vehicle, the people whose car's are full, can actually "drive" on the freeway instead of stopping and going every ten seconds.

I think a great way for people to start using these transportation innovations is getting them to see the statistics on traffic in Los Angeles County, and showing them the different ways, such as buses, trains and carpool lanes, they can contribute to cutting down on traffic. It would really make everyone's life easier, as well as their own. By taking buses and trains, people could be reaching their destination faster and with less hassle. Also, if someone is driving to a place with someone else in separate cars, why not go together? It saves gas, and cuts down on traffic. Although some may doubt that doing these little things can't help, they don't realize that if everyone did it, it would make a huge difference on traffic in L.A. County.

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Ruodi Duan

Dana Middle School
7th Grade

Not only the Car...

In the dictionary, the word *car* is defined as *any vehicle on wheels, used for transportation*. There is more meaning to that word other than that it shapes our lifestyle into a convenient theme park. The car, which owning one now stand as a symbol of success in some countries, is partly responsible for the hospitalization of 40,000 children per year in California alone. Car waste eventually turns into ozone, or smog.

It's probably not possible to get rid of pollution completely, but it is possible to reduce the amount dramatically by realizing driving a private car isn't the only way to reach a destination. Perhaps some employee drives his own car to work 20 miles a day at the rate of 5 days per week and the gasoline price is \$2.00 every gallon. That worker's car also uses 25 miles for every gallon. Then it can be figured the cost roundtrip would be \$3.20 and per week \$16.00. If the employee worked 4 weeks a month, the monthly costs would be \$64.

Spending \$64 isn't the only way; you can purchase a monthly metro bus or railway pass for only \$52. Easily, you can save \$12. That amount may do with a rather nice luncheon at a restaurant or a new shirt. Most importantly, it's not the money you save; you also lessened the amount of ozone into the air. The less polluted air, the less materials will be there to trigger asthma attacks or other life-threatening situations. Making this simple decision can save many children from suffering and pain.

Carpool lanes can save time is common knowledge, but it can also provide some entertainment to ease the loneliness of being on the road alone. Now it's possible to play cards or swap stories with fellow carpoolers while on the freeway. Carpooling is not only fast and efficient, like buses and trains, it can reduce ozone pollution.

AQI (Air Quality Index) is the method used for reporting daily air quality. The scale ranges from 0 to 500 while below 50 is good and over 300 is considered hazardous. In the USA, the general standard is 100, in which sensitive people may experience mild effects. The AQI for Downtown L.A. occasionally reaches above the standard. Using other than private cars to get around will help in reaching below the standard. You can take advantage of rideshare programs at work or around Los Angeles. If everyone worked together in harmony with nature, we may save our beautiful planet. It is not too late!

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Ashley Romero
Fremont Middle School
8th grade

Traffic and Transportation

Los Angeles County is a special region with specific needs unlike any other area in the United States. The fact that the large population commutes from one part of the city to another is often challenging. This challenge consumes a part of our lives and affects our daily planning and traveling. For these reasons, buses, trains and car pool lanes have been developed to alleviate commuting obstacles.

Helping drivers traveling conditions takes a variety of approaches. First, to accomplish the solution one must understand the problem. Simply explained, the freeway system is similar to a person having a heart attack. Many of our freeways are congested and stop moving. This stoppage obviously causes a back up and figurative death of the freeway system.

Fortunately, a few measures have been implemented to ease driver's travels and avoid freeway gridlocks on congested streets. Drivers and their passengers choose to use the car pool lanes. These lanes improve the flow of traffic. This is an important advantage to the driver since these lanes typically have less congestion and are faster. Also, trains and buses have the advantage of being cost effective and generally people can get to their destination more quickly than surface streets or freeways.

Buses, trains and car pool lanes have a huge impact on reducing congestion on our highways. They are also great ways for commuters to save on money and time and enjoy a less stressful commute. However, the drivers must be educated on these choices in order for them to be successful. It is important for drivers to understand their options and see how easy and practical they are.

Perhaps people can leave their cars at home by offering incentives. For example, by using one of the three alternatives for 50% of their travels. Yearly car registrations can be waived on their cars. Another is to use miles and offer a tax deduction. Also, drivers can accumulate gas dollars to match their miles using alternatives and use them on their cars later.

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Tiffany Chang
Dana Middle School
8th grade

What a Waste

Everyone knows that pollution is bad for the environment and they don't like it. They also know or should know that it affects our health, safety and "general quality of life." However, not everyone seems to know how pollution is bad.

If people want to reduce the chance of getting sick and save the environment, why not actually do it? Both local and global pollution would dramatically improve if each person who owns or drives a car drives 30% less. If everyone cooperated, traffic in cities would be reduced over the next 3 to 5 years.

Safety always comes first. Long distance driving increases the risk of an accident. In most cases, this would result in property damage and can leave the driver and passengers crippled or dead. Due to weather conditions and unsafe drivers, even the most cautious ones could end up being hurt.

Money is a big issue when it comes to cars. According to the Canadian Automobile Association, the cost of operating a car averages about 36 cents per kilometer including the fuel, insurance, and maintenance. At \$1.50 a gallon, the cost is \$600 million per year. If taking a bus, the transportation could vary between 50 cents to a dollar. By taking a public transit, \$4,300 would be saved per year. Depending on distance, train fares could cost between 5 to 15 dollars. There are no monthly car payments with trains or buses.

Saving room is another case. Most cars driven on the highway are single occupants. A full bus replaces 20 to 40 single-occupant cars on the road. The train can also replace that many people per car. Not everyone can use the car pool lanes when driving to work. If a car must be driven, it should have at least 2 or more people.

Helping the environment is also another important issue that not everyone is involved with. According to the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, taking the transit rather than driving 50 kilometers would diminish the annual emanation of exhausts significantly.

Last but not least, everyone's health is important. If someone wanted to take the bus

or the train, she or he would walk instead of drive there. This would give them their daily exercise and they wouldn't waste time. No one would need two cars, if they took the bus or the train.

If everyone drove cars less frequently, the world would be a better place. Everyone says the word "if before "the world would be a better place." Sometime soon, everyone should say, "Everyone cooperated and it made the world a better place."

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Jeancarlo Gonzalez
Fremont Middle School
8th grade

Buses and Carpools

Have you ever thought of the advantages that we would have if we rode a bus or train to our schools and businesses? There would be less traffic and less pollution. You know how frustrating it is to be stuck in the middle of all the cars with no way out. I will try to persuade you to get in a bus or train. Here are some ideas you might want to think about.

To begin with, I think the reduction of traffic would be very visible. We always try to get up extra early so we don't get caught up in traffic. But we always seem to get in the same spot every day. If we rode one of these buses or trains to wherever we want, it might be faster. The people won't have to worry about being late to their jobs, because the bus driver or the train conductor would have some sort of schedule. What do you think so far?

Also, can you guys think about this for a minute? How much money do you spend each week on gasoline? Well if you ride a bus or train, you won't have to worry about wasting your money each week. You may, but no more than one dollar-fifty. Think of all the neat stuff you can buy when you don't have to buy gasoline. Here is another thing to think about.

Third, we are polluting our earth too much. I think that less of our cars and vans will create less smoke, which means less harm to the atmosphere. There would be less of the black thick smoke, which is what damages our earth. I really do want to live a good healthy life. Don't you? This is making our world time period shorter. If we keep this up we won't be able to end up the two thousands!

Next, I think the prices should be low. I think that a child ages nine and below should enter the bus or train free, and only adults pay. I think it should be like this because a mother or father sometimes walks their children to school and it wouldn't be fair if their children have to pay. I also think that if the customer rides the bus or train for half the month they should get the other half free by showing their membership card.

To conclude, we need to ride buses and trains so we can reduce traffic, to save money, and to save our earth and to get to our jobs and schools for a cheap price. I really want to save my world so it can last for many generations and other people can enjoy it too. You save money and buy a lot of things. What do you think? You should try it!

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Governance Council Members Attend Annual Meeting

- Councils are praised for role in restructuring county's transit; hear reports on Metro's challenges.

(May 25, 2005) Governance Council members from Metro's five service sectors heard a series of reports on the budget and service issues, Monday, and were praised for their leadership role in helping "restructure transit in LA County."

The council members gathered at the Gateway Building for their annual joint meeting. They were joined by CEO Roger Snoble, Deputy CEO John Catoe, the sector general managers and other agency executives.

In addition to a budget update presented by Chief Financial Officer Richard Brumbaugh, the agenda included reports on the Metro Connections project, operations goals for FY 2006, communications and marketing, and governance council successes.

"When I read about a meeting in a service sector where 100 people show up to express support or concerns, or challenge some of the recommendations we've made," Catoe told the group, "I think that's good, because it's getting community involvement and input."

Outlined challenges

Snoble outlined the challenges Metro has faced in responding to Consent Decree service demands, noting that the money invested in additional service has resulted in virtually no new riders.

He said adding Consent Decree service also has prevented Metro from funding other transportation improvements, including upgraded bus facilities or such highway improvements as soundwalls and signal synchronization.

"We're spending less each year on capital resources," he said.

Catoe thanked council members for their leadership in restructuring transit. "When a question about a change comes up, you – as governance council members – can talk about your personal experiences of riding those services. You bring a great deal of depth and knowledge to the process."

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Man Accused of Union Station Assaults Convicted on 11 Counts

- Faces four and a half life terms

(May 25, 2005) A man accused of two sexual assaults and an attempted assault on women at Union Station last year was convicted, Tuesday, on 11 felony counts.

In a letter to Deputy CEO John Catoe, LA County Sheriff Lee Baca said Stephen Jackson now "faces a maximum of four and a half life sentences." He is scheduled to be sentenced, June 17, on sexual assault and weapons charges.

Baca said Jackson sexually assaulted a 20-year-old woman in March 2004 at the Central Library in downtown LA.

In mid-July, he sexually assaulted a young woman in the Union Station parking structure and attempted a second sexual assault about 10 days later. In that incident, the victim was able to fight him off and escaped unharmed.

In August 2004, Jackson committed two more sexual assaults at gunpoint – one at the Library and another at Union Station, Baca said.

On Sept. 2, 2004 a 19-year-old junior college student stopped Sheriff's deputies at the corner of Cesar Chavez and Vignes and reported that she had been sexually assaulted in the parking structure.

She identified her assailant in a photo lineup and deputies arrested Jackson. Detectives used DNA samples to help confirm Jackson's involvement in the incidents.



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Photo by Arlene Lim

Metro's Claudia Casasola Awarded AGA Scholarship



(May 25, 2005) An active member of the LA Civic Center Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants, Metro Assistant Administrative Analyst Claudia Casasola was awarded the AGA National Scholarship to attend this year's Professional Development Conference in Orlando, Fla. The scholarship will cover a five-night stay for two people and the cost of attending the conference. Casasola also received an Honorable Mention in the AGA's Newsletter Editor Contest. Photo by Arlene Lim. (5/25/2005)


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City of Pasadena coordinators Madelyn Robinson and Judi Masuda, center, pick up prestigious Corporate Rideshare Diamond Award for innovative employee transportation program 'Prideshare.' The winners shared the spotlight with Metro Commute Services Manager David Sutton and honored guests actor Corbin Bernson and economist Jack Kyser of the Economic Development Corporation.



PHOTOS: JUAN OCAMPO

Metro Recognizes Local Businesses for Rideshare Achievement

- Pasadena wins top corporate award for 'Prideshare' program

By DAVE SOTERO

(May 26, 2005) Employers in Los Angeles and Ventura counties that have demonstrated outstanding achievement in employee rideshare programs were recognized, Wednesday, at the 7th annual Rideshare Diamond Awards luncheon, sponsored by Metro and the Ventura County Transportation Commission.

The prestigious Corporate Rideshare Diamond Award, this year, went to the City of Pasadena. The award was given in recognition of its wide-reaching transportation management program, "Prideshare."

Besides meeting or exceeding Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR) requirements at its work sites, Pasadena has implemented an ordinance requiring local businesses to also offer rideshare programs, and is recognized by the California Bike Coalition as a bike-friendly city.

Los Angeles area Diamond Award winners are Hilton Universal Hotel, Macy's West (Pasadena), Art Center College of Design, Specialty Laboratories, Boeing Satellite Systems, Raytheon and the Aerospace

Corporation, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Los Angeles World Airports and ABS Computer Technologies.



Southland employers garnered a total 26 Awards: 16 Diamond Awards, six Honorable Mentions, and four California Rideshare Week Sponsor recognitions.

Ventura County winners

Diamond award winners for Ventura County are Robbins Auto Top Company, Waterway Plastics, Shell Solar Industries, County of Ventura and Spatz Laboratories.

Merit Awards were presented to Zenith Insurance Company, Los Angeles County and USC Medical Center, Maguire Properties – West Asset Plaza and the City of Santa Monica.

"The Diamond Awards showcase the best in rideshare programs and ideas in Southern California, and this year is no exception," said CEO Roger Snoble. "The employers we're recognizing today have demonstrated their commitment to helping improve air quality and alleviate our region's traffic congestion through carpool, vanpool, public transit and other alternatives to solo driving."

Nominations for the awards were submitted from employers in four categories: Innovative Rideshare Program or Strategy, Outstanding Marketing Program, Individual or Group Achievement and Shoestring Program.



Metro Commute Services hosted the 7th Annual Rideshare Diamond Awards and Luncheon. Pictured, back row, from left, are Al Rangel, Sarah Zadok, Norma Elston-Adams, Aileen Landau, Manager David Sutton, Donna Blanchard, Teresa Milliken, Mary Ann Garcia, Jill Smolinski, and Valerie Rader.

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Board Adopts Metro's \$2.86 Billion Budget for FY 2006

- Includes elimination of 133 full-time positions; \$1 billion for buses; \$613 million for rail; \$519 million for streets and highways

By MARC LITTMAN

(May 26, 2005) The Board of Directors adopted a \$2.86 billion budget, Thursday, for FY 2006.

The spending plan is \$153 million less than the FY 2005 amended budget, despite rising fuel, insurance, security, Worker's Compensation and other costs. General and administrative spending has been reduced to absorb these increases, including the elimination of 133 related full-time positions.

This is offset, in part, by the need to hire 98 union employees next year, mostly operators and mechanics, as Metro begins operating the Metro Orange Line and also complies with federal Consent Decree orders to continue adding more service on Metro Bus lines.

"In the year ahead, Metro again will be straitjacketed by financial constraints on many fronts and, yet, we will still push forward on major transit projects that will offer commuters and others new ways to beat traffic and the high price of gas," CEO Roger Snoble said.

Metro fares will remain the same. To help balance the operating budget, Metro will use \$77 million in "one-time" revenues such as sale/lease-back revenues and railroad right-of-way lease revenues from property owned by Metro.

Projects funded in the FY 2006 budget include:

- The 14-mile Metro Orange Line, which will open this fall.
- Three new Metro Rapid lines, which will debut in late June to serve Fairfax Avenue and Beverly and Lincoln Boulevards.
- Four Metro Rapid lines, which will begin service on Western Avenue, Santa Monica Boulevard, Long Beach Boulevard/Santa Fe Avenue and Reseda Boulevard.
- The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension project, where twin boring machines will be lowered into the ground to begin tunneling in Boyle Heights.

It is also possible in FY 2006 that Metro could break ground on the Exposition light rail line first phase to Culver City.

More than \$1 billion for buses

Nearly half the budget -- \$1.295 billion or 45.3 percent -- is earmarked for Metro Bus operating and capital expenses and support for municipal bus operators and paratransit programs countywide.

Metro will take delivery of 176 new buses in the next fiscal year including 170 new 60-foot buses. Additional buses may be ordered in FY 2006 but delivery probably will not take place until FY 2007.

Metro Rail funding

The second biggest slice of the budget pie -- \$613 million or 21.4 percent -- will go for Metro Rail operating, construction and capital costs. This includes major construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Another \$57.9 million -- 2 percent -- is LA County's subsidy for the Metrolink commuter rail network that serves LA and four outlying counties.

Funding for streets and highway

The next biggest portion of the budget -- \$519 million or 18.1 percent -- is for highway and other regional transportation programs, such as construction of freeway carpool lanes, freeway sound walls, street widening, better traffic signal coordination, grade separations at railroad crossings, bikeways, ride-sharing incentives, shuttles, and other local transportation programs.

Major projects under construction in FY 2006 will be:

- Interstate 5 carpool lanes in both directions from Route 14 to Route 118.
- Route 14 carpool lanes in both directions from Pearblossom to Avenue P-8.
- Interstate 405/US 101 interchange connector gap closure (Northbound 405 to Eastbound 101)
- Interstate 405 southbound auxiliary and carpool lanes from Waterford to Interstate 10 in West Los Angeles

The budget also includes funding for the Metro Freeway Service Patrol.

Debt service up slightly

Metro's debt service next year will be \$309.7 million -- 10.8 percent of the budget. That's up \$4.1 million from this year for planned debt issuance primarily to support the Metro Eastside Extension and the Metro Orange Line.

Rounding out the FY 2006 Metro budget are expenditures for other governmental programs such as transportation planning, capital projects, legal and other expenses. These expenditures total \$64.7 million or 2.4 percent of the budget.


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Veteran of Two Wars Remembers Fallen Comrades and Relatives on Memorial Day

By RICH MORALLO

(May 26, 2005) Metro's Jes Godinez will be thinking about Colonel Gonzalo R. Castro, Marine Lance Corporal Alejandro R. Godinez and Army Sergeant Vincent Lucio when he mounts his motorcycle for the 45-minute ride from Pomona to the Riverside National Cemetery on Memorial Day.

"They're relatives who died in action in Vietnam and Korea, and who served in the Pacific during World War II," says Godinez,

His father-in-law, Col. Castro, was a WW II guerilla freedom fighter in the hills of the Philippines. Sgt. Lucio, an uncle, died in Korea; and Lance Cpl. Godinez, another uncle, fell in battle in Vietnam.

"I remember and thank them every day," says Godinez.

An assistant manager for revenue equipment maintenance, Godinez himself is a master sergeant in the Air Force Reserves.

Active and reserve time

"I was in the Marines for two years, 12 years on active duty in the Air Force, and 15 more in the reserves," says Godinez, who served in both Vietnam and Desert Storm.

"I come from a large military family," the Metro manager says, explaining that 12 other relatives have served or are currently serving in the Armed Forces. "My daughter is in the Air Force assigned to Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas."

Another uncle, 1st Sgt. Jesus M. Lucio, was awarded the Silver and Bronze Stars, and a mother-in-law, 1st Lt. Jane Rundall, served in the Marines as a procurement officer both during WW II.

Christopher Chilles, a nephew in the Army Reserve, was wounded in action in Iraq and has recently returned home.

Commemorative program

On Memorial Day, Godinez will join hundreds of other veterans and community residents for the annual Riverside program, staged on a 740-acre green landscape solemnly dotted with head stones.

Besides offering silent thanks and prayers for fallen comrades and relatives, Godinez will also salute a grateful nation.



Metro manager and Air Force Reserves Master Sgt. Jes Godinez.

"America has started to appreciate service members and their sacrifices," he says. "People stop and shake your hand when they see you in uniform."

"They say real men don't cry, but I tell you it is an awesome feeling when they fire the 21-gun salute and play taps," says Godinez. "You'll see veterans with tears in their eyes saluting their friends under white crosses."

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Also! [South Bay Riders take on 'Bike to Work Day' Challenge](#)

Metro Employees Participate in 'Bike to Work Day'



From left, Richard Beltran, David Gloss, Scott Page, Robert Hartert, Russell Homan, Rodney Brandon, and Thomas Rodriguez were among the more than 50 Metro employees who registered to ride their bikes to work on "Bike to Work Day" May 19. Cyclists gathered on the West Plaza for a bikers' breakfast and prize drawing.



Bicycle riding may be its own reward, but these Metro riders scored prizes for showing their support for "Bike to Work Day."

At left, Thom Mattocks, Central City Division 1 asst. transportation mgr., won the deluxe portable air pump. Below, Ilda Licon, Regional Transportation Planning, pictured here with Transportation Planning Manager Scott Page, won a bicycle lock. Other winners: Jose Tacaraya, West Hollywood Division service attendant, won a cable lock and hex keys; Rob Hartert, printing services supervisor at Gateway, a survival bag, and David Gloss, regional service planning intern, a 12-function tool and case.

Photos: Irma Rivera



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South Bay Riders take on 'Bike to Work Day' Challenge

By Rich Morallo



Metro South Bay Schedule Maker Steve Tontz, left, and Transportation Planning Manager Scott Greene.

It was warm and he was tired. His rear tire went flat. And he was out of shape - the last time he rode his bike a long distance was 25 years ago.

"But I'd like to bike to work again," remarked schedule maker Steve Tontz, who biked seven miles to Metro South Bay's Torrance office from Long Beach during Bike to Work Day.

When he noticed his rear tire had collapsed, Steve looked into the day pack he brought along with him. "I carried various bike tools and a cell phone, and I'm glad I also had an emergency flat repair kit there, too," Tontz said.

Tontz explained that he decided to participate in Bike to Work Day because he enjoyed the exercise, didn't want to pay the high gas price, and wanted to save his car from wear and tear.

"I'm glad Scott talked me into this," Tontz said, referring to transportation planning manager and co-worker Scott Greene who himself biked in 15 miles from Playa del Ray.

"It was a good ride but I worried about getting to work on time," said the schedule maker, who made the trip in 40 minutes. "Nonetheless, I recommend biking to all as long as they are prepared with the right equipment in case of problems," Tontz said.


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Metro Store Now Online and Receiving Orders for Logo Items

- Access the store from the Metro.net Internet web site
- More! [Metro's Online Store an Immediate Success](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 27, 2005) The Metro Store has joined the online shopping world with logo products ranging from lapel pins to coffee mugs to note cards – and it's all available at the click of a mouse.

Members of the public and employees can access the store's web site from Metro's Internet home page at www.metro.net. The user-friendly site includes photos of the various products, sizes, colors and prices. It takes the customer step-by-step through the order and purchase process.

To reach the web site, a customer can click on the rotating Metro Store banner on the Internet home page, click on the "Shop the Metro Store On Line" link, or can type www.metro.net/metrostore in the address line at the top of the home page.

The online store has links for security information, customer service, customer's account status and other information. The customer service link provides credit card and tax information, the return and exchange policy, and an explanation of order processing.

Credit card payment

Customers may pay via a secure online transaction with either a Visa or MasterCard through Bank of America. Another company, Serrahost, will assume that service in July. Customers can set up a secure account for payment of future orders.

"Unfortunately, there's no mechanism at this time for giving employees the 20 percent discount online," says Danielle Boutier, executive manager, Communication Services. The discount is still available to employees in the Metro Store, located on the plaza level of the Gateway Building.

In-stock orders will be shipped within 10 business days or sooner. If an item is not in stock, the customer will receive an e-mail or phone call to confirm the order. Shipping is by UPS ground service and is available only within the United States.

Shipping and handling

A chart of shipping and handling charges shows rates ranging from a minimum of \$4 for an order of \$10 or less to a maximum of \$18 for an order of \$100 or more.

Boutier's research shows a growing trend among transit agencies around the country – New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere – to sponsor stores, including online operations.

"I think we'll see the online store grow and become a large portion of our total sales, really rivaling our sales in the physical store," she says. "There's definitely a market here among transit enthusiasts, employees, retirees and even tourists who want Los Angeles souvenirs."

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New Consent Decree Order Requires Service Policy Revisions

- Special Master emphasizes impact on transit-dependent riders
- Order doesn't require buying new buses or adding service hours

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 27, 2005) The Special Master overseeing the federal Consent Decree has issued a new order requiring Metro to revise its Transit Service Policy and to submit by July 31 a report describing the changes and showing how they will benefit transit-dependent riders.

The order was issued following a review of whether the agency had met the Special Master's guidelines for bus service reductions. The review covered service modifications on 13 specific Metro Bus lines. It does not order Metro to purchase more buses or add service hours.

Under the order, Metro must incorporate into its Transit Service Policy standards and a process that take into account how service cuts affect the transit dependent.

They must include specific benefits from service changes, show whether there is an "overall net positive benefit" to the transit dependent, and whether the changes will result in reductions in the agency's budget for bus service.

The standards and process developed for the Transit Service Policy should "guide all upcoming service modifications," the order says.

In a footnote, Special Master Donald Bliss recognizes that Metro "must have the ability to adopt a budget that is consistent with its legal and contractual obligations and is responsive to the transportation needs" of LA County, but he added that the Consent Decree "establishes certain legal and contractual obligations to which the MTA must adhere."

Metro 'needs flexibility'

He noted, however, that Metro "needs the flexibility to implement service changes that improve system efficiency and that are responsive to rider demand."

In the report due July 31, Metro must "define and evaluate" any adverse impact service modifications might have on the transit dependent, provide for specific actions to remedy any impacts, and prove that any service changes will result in an "overall net benefit" to the transit dependent.

The agency must describe additional steps it plans to take by the end of calendar year 2005 to mitigate any adverse impact to the transit dependent from service changes on the 13 bus lines under review. The order also includes other measures concerning line performance and

mitigation strategies.

Comments on Metro's report must be filed with the Special Master by Aug. 31. The agency will have until Sept. 20 to reply to comments.

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