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## Metro's Team Places 2nd at APTA Rail Rodeo



Metro Rail's maintenance team of Eric Czintos, Ronnie Burt and Rafaele Mastrangelo, shown here with Instructor Russell Homan (at left), finished only 12 points out of first place. Below, Operators Ruben Ramirez and Tu Phan, pictured with Instructor Esther Pippins (center), took third place at the International Rail Rodeo. Photos: Bill Heard



- Have to be 'fast on your feet' and watch 'every little detail'

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 15, 2005) "Each year, the events are getting harder," said Rail Maintenance Specialist Ronnie Burt, thinking back to the APTA International Rail Rodeo, held June 4, in Pittsburgh.

Burt and his teammates, Eric Czintos and Rafaele Mastrangelo took second place in the maintenance competition. Only 12 points separated them from that event's winners, the Maryland Transit Authority team.

Czintos estimated that the maintenance event is 50 percent knowledge and 50 percent quick thinking. "If you're fast on your feet thinking, you're bound to do well."

Rail Operator Tu Phan, attending his sixth international event, and his partner, first-timer Ruben Ramirez, finished third behind the Santa Clara Transportation Authority and Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) teams.

SEPTA won the overall International Rail Rodeo competition, with Los Angeles Metro placing second.

Tu Phan found the most difficult part of this year's event was getting used to different equipment and a strange system. "There's always something new, different and challenging. None of the Rodeos are the same."

Tu Phan scored 100 percent on the customer service portion of the contest, but the operators' team lost 50 points when they reported a mechanical problem 15 seconds too soon.

"They put a lot of challenges on the course and you have to keep in mind every little detail," he said. "That was one of the little details."

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