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Employees Welcome: Metro Bus Rodeo, Saturday, at Santa Anita

- Familiar names dominate bus operator competitors; 10 division maintenance teams ready for challenge

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(July 26, 2005) Familiar names from past bus operator competitions dominate the top five slots leading up to the 2005 Metro Bus Rodeo, scheduled this Saturday at Santa Anita Park's Gate 6 parking lot in Arcadia.

A total of 30 operators and 10 division maintenance teams will compete, this weekend, for the honor of representing Metro at the APTA International Bus Rodeo this September in Dallas.

All employees, their families and guests are welcome at the Rodeo, which will include family entertainment, a classic car show, a continental breakfast and a barbecue lunch with soft drinks and dessert.

Preliminary leaders

Based on preliminary rounds completed last week, Division 9's Mark Holland, with 625 of a possible 650 points, leads the pack. Holland has won the local competition five times. Just behind him, with 620 points, is Division 1's Sam Morales, a two-time Metro Rodeo winner.

Operator Juan Navarro of Division 3, last year's runner-up, is in third place, while the 2004 winner – Luduvico Castro of Division 9 – is in fourth. Standing in fifth place is Division 1's Marcus Mejia-Portillo, who placed third in last year's local event.

Rounding out the top ten are operators Joe Acosta, Division 3; Francisco Escareno, Division 10; Maximiliano De Angelis, Division 1; Juan Romo, Division 7; and Ricardo Martinez, Division 9.

2005 Metro Bus Rodeo

Location: Santa Anita Racetrack , Gate 6 Parking Lot (Off I-210 on West Colorado Place)

Schedule of events: 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

- Maintenance Competition
- Bus Operator Competition
- Classic Car Show

Awards Ceremony - 1:30 p.m.

In the maintenance competition, last year's champs – Division 18's Luke Logan, Javier Soria and Mina Ros – will be defending their trophy in 2005. The 2004 runners-up were Doug Creveling, David Klinkenborg and Saul Sanchez of Division 10, followed by Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde of Division 5.

Maintenance team qualifiers

In addition to those teams, the other maintenance competitors for 2005 are Division 1, Fred Hines, Gustavo Sanchez and Sergio Barron; Division 3, Tim Wong, Francisco Sepulveda and Cristobal Hurtado; and Division 6, Naren Desai, Jesus Guerra and Jose Ramirez.

Also, Division 8, Anthony Simiele, Dave Sweany and Yoon Oak; Division 7, Baldemar Gonzalez, Christopher Valenzuela and Eric Benjamins; Division 9, Omar Nomuro, Armando Martinez and Darrell Bishop; and Division 15, Kirk Langmayer, Brad Pardo and Ray Hilton.

In previous years, the maintenance event was conducted in an isolated area. This year, the contest will be more centrally located so spectators can watch the action. Competing teams will not be allowed in the area until they've finished their turn.

The maintenance competition will begin at about 7 a.m., Saturday, and will last until about 1 p.m. The operator's event will begin at 8 a.m. and will conclude about 1 p.m., in time for the 1:30 p.m. awards ceremony.

Bus operator qualifiers

Also qualifying to compete in the 2005 Metro Bus Rodeo are, in order of their preliminary scores, operators Loencio Sia, Division 9; Carlos Araneta, Division 9; Mariam Pereira, Division 15; Ramiro Mota, Division 2; Leyverth Rodriguez, Division 15; Ruben Flores, Division 1; Richard Lopez, Division 9; Hugo Mercado, Division 1; and Alberto Hinojos, Division 9.

Also, Felipe Patlan-Gutierrez, Division 1; Mario Madrid, Division 9; Juan Serrano, Division 8; Rene Caldera, Division 10; Juan Medrano, Division 9; Francisco Gomez, Division 10; Jose Sanchez, Division 2; David Hemion, Division 15; Joe Barbosa, Division 9; Jesus Valdez, Division 10; and Jesse Cervantes, Division 9.