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Sheriff's Deputy Susan Bodrazka and rescue dog Hero are deployed to Mississippi to search flooded areas for survivors of Hurricane Katrina.



PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

Deputy Bodrazka and Hero Will Search for Katrina Survivors

(Sept. 1, 2005) Sheriff's Deputy Susan Bodrazka had only a few hours' notice when she was ordered to pack her bags and get her rescue dog, Hero, ready for a minimum two-week deployment to storm-ravaged Mississippi.

By 1 p.m., Wednesday, she was to meet with other members of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's California Task Force at the Orange County Fire Department headquarters in Irvine.

Bodrazka, a member of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau, and Hero then boarded a chartered bus along with other FEMA rescue workers for the long road trip to Mississippi.

A U.S. Army Reserve military policewoman who participated in Desert Storm, Bodrazka, 41, has been a Sheriff's deputy for some 15 years and a dog handler for the past two years.

On arrival in Mississippi, Bodrazka and Hero will be assigned to search flooded areas for survivors of Hurricane Katrina. This will be the first such deployment for the canine rescue team.

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Hurricane Katrina Takes Her Toll on 3 Metro Employees

- Byron England's daughter is missing in New Orleans
- Sharad Mulchand and family escape rising waters
- Deputy Bodrazka and dog, Hero, deploy to Mississippi

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 1, 2005) Metro's Byron England hasn't heard from his daughter, LaShea, -- a student at Xavier University in New Orleans -- since Monday. He is praying that she is one of the evacuees.

Sharad Mulchand, a Metro transportation planning manager, and his family barely escaped before flood waters spawned by Hurricane Katrina overwhelmed the storm-damaged city. His daughter, Radha Mistry, was in New Orleans to begin her freshman year at Tulane University. [Get the story:](#) *Metro's Mulchand and Family Narrowly Escape Hurricane Katrina*

Meanwhile, Sheriff's Deputy Susan Bodrazka and her dog, Hero, were deployed, Wednesday, as part of a Federal Emergency Management Agency response team. A member of the Transit Services Bureau, Bodrazka and Hero will search for storm survivors in Mississippi. [Get the story:](#) *Deputy Bodrazka and Hero Will Search for Katrina Survivors*



Byron England, pictured here at the Allen Station of the Metro Gold Line on New Year's Day, 2005.

"Things aren't going too well," England said with frustration in his voice, Thursday morning, as he attempted to book a flight to Dallas or Houston -- any city he could reach that would be close to the disaster area. "I've been watching the newscasts and getting the same old story."

LaShea arrived in New Orleans from her home in Atlanta in mid-August and was preparing to begin the fall semester at Xavier, where she plans to study medicine. She had been living with a cousin and two others in a house, but had moved into a local Day's Inn for shelter when the storm hit.

England, the Metro Blue Line transportation division manager, last spoke with 18-year-old LaShea on Monday evening. He had planned to fly to New Orleans on Friday for a surprise holiday weekend visit.

"I called the Day's Inn corporate office and was told they weren't sure what's going on, but the guests had evacuated to the Superdome," said England, who still hasn't been able to confirm that information.

"I may just come back to work," he said. "Because there's nothing I can do here."

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Sharad Mulchand and his family, in New Orleans to help daughter Radha move to college dorms, narrowly escaped Hurricane Katrina.

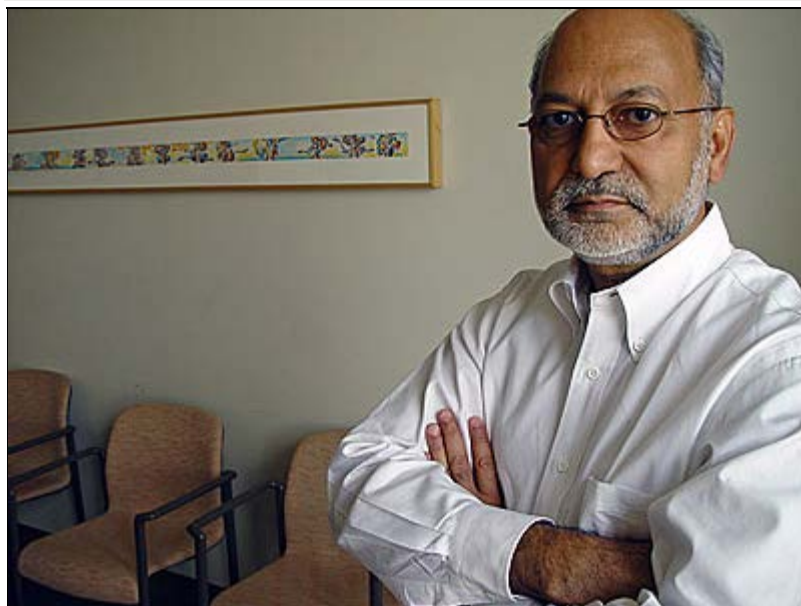


PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

Metro's Mulchand and Family Narrowly Escape Hurricane Katrina

- Family motorcade skirted flooded areas in search of safety

By BILL HEARD and PERRY WILLIAMS

(Sept. 1, 2005) A former New Orleans resident and veteran of Gulf Coast hurricanes, Metro's Sharad Mulchand wasn't especially worried as Hurricane Katrina approached the historic city. And he felt relief when the powerful storm began to veer away to the east.

He, his wife, Madhuri, and five members of his extended family were in New Orleans to move his daughter, Radha Mistry, 18, a freshman architecture student, into the dorms at Tulane University.

Saturday was moving day. "She was all excited," said Mulchand, "you could see it in her eyes."

But, with the hurricane approaching, Mulchand and family members also took the precaution of boarding up his sister's house. "We didn't think it would be a big deal, we'd been through it before. We even bought groceries."

He also turned in his rental car that day. "I'm glad I returned the rental car, because I knew someone would be able to use it to get out of the city."

Family took a vote

Then, the family took a vote on whether to ride out the storm or evacuate. Since only one member favored evacuating, they all settled down for the night.

But, at 2 a.m. on Sunday, Mulchand's brother-in-law became worried about the rising storm. By 4 a.m., the family had made a collective decision to pack up and leave.

They piled into two family cars, then drove to the airport. All flights had been cancelled, so most of the family headed out for Baton Rouge on Interstate 10 – only to learn that the freeway was blocked. His sister, Vasu, drove north to Natchez, Miss.

A detour got them out of New Orleans, but evacuee traffic was bumper-to-bumper, even though authorities had opened both incoming and outgoing lanes to cars leaving the city.

'It was surreal'

"We were moving at 10 miles per hour out of the city," Mulchand recalls. "All along the road were news cameras and crews with lights on us as we evacuated. It was surreal. You would have thought we were on a movie set."

Four hours and 70 miles later, the family motorcade reached Baton Rouge. All the stations along the road were swamped with motorists needing gas.

"All the pumps, except supreme, were out of gas," said Mulchand. "Without hesitating, I immediately pulled up and told the attendant to fill it up"

Cramming back into the family cars, the group continued on to Beaumont, Tex., arriving about 6 p.m., Sunday. They had dinner and then pushed on to Houston, arriving at 10:30 p.m. – ending a 16-and-a-half-hour journey.

Calls from relatives

The family then scattered, some going to Natchez, Miss., some to Austin, Tex., Little Rock, Ark., and the rest to California. Concerned relatives and friends in England, Canada and India have called to check on them.

Now, back home in Los Angeles, Mulchand has no idea how Katrina may have damaged his two sisters' New Orleans home. "I regret not getting photos from the '30s and '40s that my dad took," he says. "How I wish I had grabbed that box."

The family also has to find another college for Radha, who will arrive in LA from Austin on Saturday. Luckily, she has been accepted at USC and the Southern California Institute of Architecture, but no decision has been made.

Despite their narrow escape from the storm and resulting flood, Mulchand is upbeat, saying he's "positive that the city of New Orleans will function again...and it will be back!"



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Board Approves Millions to Upgrade Metro Rail Security

- [Exposition Line Memorandum of Understanding](#)
- [Renewed group insurance plans](#)
- [New cafeteria vendor](#)
- [Big rig tow demonstration project](#)
- [New vehicle purchases](#)

(Sept. 2, 2005) The Board of Directors approved motions at its August meeting that will provide millions in funding to upgrade Metro Rail security and will help move the Exposition Line construction project ahead.

Other Board actions included renewal of group insurance plans for non-contract and AFSCME employees, approval of a new cafeteria vendor and vehicle purchases.

Items 33 and 34, Metro Rail Security. The Board approved a motion establishing a \$3 million budget (Item 33) for surveillance systems and personnel to upgrade Metro Rail security. A second motion (Item 34) authorizing the CEO to spend \$2.2 million for installation of surveillance cameras on Metro Rail cars also was approved by the Board.

Using this funding, Metro plans to install surveillance cameras on all subway and light rail platforms. The cameras will be monitored from the Rail Operations Center, where the current bank of small CCTV screens will be replaced by large, flat-screen monitors.

The system will be capable of recording real-time information on all cameras, will be able to tilt, pan and zoom the cameras, and will hold the video for later review. The staff of CCTV observers will be increased by four people who, along with the current staff, will be trained to handle the upgraded system.

Surveillance cameras also will be installed on Metro's current fleet of 225 rail cars. In addition to real-time security monitoring, the system will be able to store video for prompt retrieval by incident investigators. The wireless system will be able to "self-initiate" live monitoring and recording of the passenger compartments.

Item 32, Exposition Light Rail MOU. The Board approved a motion by Supervisors Yvonne Burke and Zev Yaroslavsky that directs the staff to develop, no later than Sept. 29, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Exposition Light Rail Construction Authority that would allow Metro staff to continue working on the project and that would detail the reimbursement for staff time and costs, while providing a

framework for collaboration and cooperation between the two agencies.

The motion also directs the staff to implement a plan that would transfer funds budgeted for the Exposition Line project in FY 2006 to the Construction Authority as soon as possible.

Metro Construction Chief Rick Thorpe last month was appointed Interim Chief Executive Officer of the Construction Authority, with the understanding that he would continue his current Metro duties, including completion of the Metro Orange Line and the Eastside Light Rail project.

The motion approved by the Board also anticipates that other Metro staff members who have been working on the Exposition Line may be loaned or seconded to the Construction Authority to continue that work.

Item 11, Group Insurance Plans. The Board approved a motion renewing group insurance policies for Non-Contract and AFSCME Group Insurance Plans, including medical, dental, vision, life, accidental death and dismemberment, and long-term disability coverage, which becomes effective Jan. 1, 2006.

Non-contract and AFSCME employees will contribute 10 percent of the annual premium cost for the medical and dental plans. Monthly employee contributions will rise between \$3 and \$10 for Blue Cross PPO coverage, depending upon plan chosen; between \$3 and \$8 for Blue Cross HMO coverage; and between \$2 and \$5 for Kaiser HMO coverage. No increase is scheduled for Delta Dental PPO, Dental Health Services or Deltacare coverage.

Item 26. New Cafeteria Vendor. The Board approved a motion awarding a five-year contract with five one-year options to ARAMARK Services, Inc., to operate the cafeteria at Metro Headquarters and at the Regional Rebuild Center beginning Oct. 1.

ARAMARK food service plans include a HotZone, SaladZone and GrillZone, each with core menu items that would change weekly. Service would include weekly specials, promotions, home meal replacement and seasonal items, as well as online catering service within the Gateway Building and at the RRC.

Item 25. Big Rig Tow Demonstration Project. The Board approved a motion authorizing the CEO to award a three-year, \$2.5 million contract to U.S. Tow, Inc., to conduct a heavy-duty big rig tow demonstration on the I-710 Long Beach Freeway.

The demonstration project, similar to the Freeway Service Patrol for motorists, would be in operation beginning Oct. 1 from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, on an 18-mile stretch of the I-710 from the Pacific Coast Highway to just north of the I-5 Santa Ana Freeway.

Items 23 and 24. Vehicle Purchases. The Board approved motions authorizing the CEO to purchase 36 SUVs for use by transportation operations supervisors (Item 23) and to buy five tow tractors for use in vehicle maintenance (Item 24).

The 36 SUVs will be used by transportation operations supervisors to

carry supplies, signs and sometimes stranded patrons. Each will be equipped with ATMS technology for bus operations management.

The five tow tractors will be used for moving buses and equipment at maintenance shops and at the Regional Rebuild Center. The tow tractors will replace five of the current fleet of 16 owned by Metro.



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Funeral Services Set for Metro Retiree Art Garcia

(Sept. 2, 2005) Funeral services have been scheduled for retired Metro Mechanic Leader Art Garcia, who died Aug. 30 at his home in Palmdale.

A viewing will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 8, at the Rose Hills Mortuary, Gate 1, 3888 South Workman Mill Road, Whittier. Phone 562-699-0921. The funeral is scheduled at 11 a.m., Friday, Sept. 9 in the Hill Side Chapel at Gate 17.

Garcia, 68, retired in 1995 after 34 years service at Metro. He started at North Los Angeles Division 3 maintenance, then moved to South Park, and then to the Regional Rebuild Center's transmission and electrical shop.

Garcia is survived by his wife, Angie, and sons, Jesus and Alex Garcia, daughter-in-law, Marie, and grandchildren.



Art Garcia

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Jake's Adventures

(Sept. 2, 2005) Round One in the battle with a family of raccoons may have gone to Jake, but Mother Nature's woodland creatures are nothing if not persistent. And, Ray the Exterminator's cash register keeps ringing as the costs of peaceful living continue to mount. -- *Bill Heard, Editor*

They Came From the Canyon: A Homeowner's Horror Story, Part II

By JAKE SATIN-JACOBS

I stood in the middle of the kitchen, my good ear turned toward the ceiling. I really believed I was listening.

"Do you hear that?" my wife asked. "It's very loud."

The voice of denial is louder. "I don't hear anything." I wasn't lying. In the middle of a flashback one can go quite deaf.

My wife does not practice denial, nor does she tolerate it in others. "Do you have your hearing aid in?"

"Yes."

"Listen again." Her tone was not pleasant. "It sounds like elephants in the ceiling, for crying out loud."

"It could be mice. Y'know, I think the drywall could magnify the sound."

Patti just stared at me. She had THAT look – the one that cuts through denial like a guillotine. I heard the sounds – the nasty, snarling, intrusive noises that are made by the only creature on the planet inherently more disgusting and lacking in redeeming qualities than Anna Nicole Smith: a raccoon.

"What are we going to do?" asked Patti. Paralysis kept me from responding. "What are we going to do about the raccoons?"

"I think we should leave them alone," I said. "Then, when the babies are all grown up, they'll go out hunting and I'll seal up the place

where they came in."

"I think that's a bad idea. I don't know why," she said. "I just think it's a bad idea."

'Live and let live'

"Look at what happened last time," I told her. "We trapped the mother . . . the screaming babies . . . Ray the exterminator . . . the ceiling. It cost us almost \$200 to get rid of them. I say, 'Live and let live.'" And then I asked the question that continues to resonate today: "What harm could it do?"

Patti seemed unconvinced. But, after I reiterated my position about five times, she finally, reluctantly, agreed to the *Jacobs Plan for Peaceful Coexistence*.

The Plan did not go quite as well as I had envisioned.

It was like the two-bedroom you lease to a "lovely young couple." You expect them to take care of the house you love, but you find out there are six people, two dogs and seven cats in the place and some guy named Bull who repairs his motorcycle in the living room.

I expected a momma raccoon and a couple of babies and, for a while, it seemed that was the case. Then papa arrived. From the sounds of the greeting, I suspect dad was returning from a two-week bender, had run up the credit cards pretty badly and smelled heavily of cheap cologne. I don't know who got the worst part of the domestic squabble, but I know someone took a pretty bad and almost continuous whuppin'.

For us, it was a little like living in a raccoon tenement. Several times, I came home to find Patti standing in the middle of the kitchen, slapping the ceiling with a spatula and screaming, "Would you two shut the *%&&\$#\$ up!!" Maybe I'm just a little too New York, but I expected one of the nasty creatures to lean down through one of the light fixtures, flip Patti the high sign, and insult her mother!

And then our friend Ellen came to visit. She was in the kitchen and we heard her say, "I think you should come in here. I think you should come in here now."

Hairy alien hand

I entered to find that a small, hairy alien hand had breached the barrier that was essential to the *Jacobs Plan for Peaceful Coexistence*. I lunged for the knife drawer, grabbed the first sharp implement I could find and began stabbing at the ceiling.

"Stop it!" Patti screamed. "Stop it! You want dead raccoons in the ceiling?"

"I want dead raccoons everywhere!!" I responded. It took the two of them to hold me back. I finally calmed. I got duct tape and sealed the hole where the raccoon had tried to enter and we sat down to make another plan.

I admitted to having made a bad decision. Patti admitted to having sat by quietly while I made that bad decision. We decided it was time to evict. I called Ray the Exterminator.

Ray's plan was simple: Trap the mother. If the babies were old enough to follow her out on her nightly hunting trips, they would be somewhere near the trap. If they were not, Ray would, gladly, joyfully, destroy another ceiling and remove the babies. There were, of course, costs. There was a set-up fee of \$100 to place the traps.

\$100 Cha ching!

No love lost

Each animal trapped would cost – and I will never comprehend the exactness of this figure -- \$47.50. I told him I would pay \$50, maybe even \$53.25, if he would personally torture each one of them before sending them to the raccoon rescue place. Ray assured me that they would be treated humanely – the party line – but I sensed from the weird look in his eye that he had no real love for the critters either. I was starting to like Ray.

The first night, they trapped Papa who, apparently drunk and disoriented from a night of hard partying, had wandered into one of the traps for a little midnight snack before returning home.

\$47.50 Cha-ching!

A few nights later, Mama made a bad menu choice and found herself imprisoned.

\$47.50 Cha-ching!

When Ray arrived to pick her up, he found two of her babies wandering in the street in front of the house.

Cha-ching!

Cha-ching!

\$95.00

A possum.

\$47.50 Cha-ching

And two more babies.

Cha-ching!

Cha-ching!

\$95.00

In order to avoid paying \$200, we had endured weeks of screaming and scratching, the unpleasant odor of raccoon urine and destruction of our ceiling – and ended up spending \$432.50. But, at least it was over.

Oh, really?

- Next week – Conclusion

Jake Satin-Jacobs is the operations performance analysis manager in the Service Performance Analysis Department.



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Blue Line's Anthony Precie Got Out Just in Time

- Boarded one of the last flights out of New Orleans
- Also: [Byron England's Search Ends Happily – LaShea is Safe](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 6, 2005) While Byron England was frantically trying to contact his daughter in New Orleans, Metro's Anthony Precie and his wife, Robin, her brother and sister-in-law, managed to board one of the last airline flights out of the stricken city.

Precie, a Metro Blue Line assistant manager, had traveled to the Crescent City for a reunion with former shipmates of the USS Brooke, who had served together during the Vietnam War.

The reunion group was staying at the DoubleTree Hotel, next to Harrah's casino on Canal Street, when they were advised by friends who were veterans of Florida hurricanes to leave the city as quickly as possible.

So, on Sunday morning, a group of eight Brooke shipmates and two World War II veterans packed into a large van and headed for Louis Armstrong Airport.

Luckily, Precie and his family were booked on Southwest Airlines. Delta Airlines and other carriers already had cancelled flights.

Precie feels lucky that he and his party were able to fly out ahead of the storm.

"It was pretty hectic," he says. "The people left in the airport were moved to the Superdome because they thought the airport would be underwater."



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Byron England's Search Ends Happily – LaShea is Safe

- Rescued from New Orleans hotel, she's flown to Houston
- Also: [Blue Line's Anthony Precie Got Out Just in Time](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 6, 2005) After five anxious days when he didn't know whether his daughter, LaShea, had survived Hurricane Katrina, Metro's Byron England got the welcome news last Friday night – LaShea was safe!



Byron England breathed a sigh of relief when he learned his daughter escaped New Orleans floods.

Sept. 1 > [Byron England's daughter](#) is missing in New Orleans

The 18-year-old Xavier University freshman, her aunt and a cousin – Jessica Cooper, a student at Dillard College – were rescued by military personnel from the hotel where they had sought shelter from the storm that devastated New Orleans, flooded homes and may have killed as many as 10,000.

The young women were taken to a nearby airport and flown out to Houston. Melvin Henry, a former colleague of England's at DART in Dallas, met them at a local church and drove them to his home.

Reached this morning at a Houston hotel, England was greatly relieved to have his daughter in a safe place – LaShea and Jessica were in the pool – and happy that she hadn't been placed in either the Superdome or the Astrodome.

LaShea and Jessica plan to fly to San Diego on Wednesday. England isn't sure where his daughter, who was in her second week at school, will attend college this fall.

"Right now, I'm trying to get her rested and make sure she's OK physically," he says.

As for himself, England plans to stay a couple more days in Houston to get some rest after his troubling ordeal and visit with friends at Houston Metro.

But, he says, "Everything worked out just fine. Thank everybody at Metro for their prayers and their support."

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Sign of the Times > Metro Orange Line on board Oct. 29.



Photo by Juan Ocampo

Oct. 29 Set as Official Opening Date Set for Orange Line Opening

- Free public rides, community festivities planned for opening day weekend
- Volunteers will be needed for crowd control each day

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 6, 2005) Heralding a new era in transit service for the San Fernando Valley, Metro plans to officially open the Metro Orange Line Saturday, Oct. 29 to free public rides and festive community celebrations.

"The opening of the Metro Orange Line represents a milestone for the citizens of the San Fernando Valley, who have waited decades for an innovative transportation solution to help relieve some of the most congested freeway corridors in the country," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "I urge all Angelenos to join me in riding the Metro Orange Line and the entire Metro Bus and Rail System whenever possible."

The public will get their first opportunity to ride the new 60-foot Metro Liners on the 14-mile transitway on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 29-30.

"I and many San Fernando Valley citizens have dedicated the better part of the last seven years to bringing this transit project to a successful conclusion," said Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. "This is an LA solution to an LA traffic problem. When the Orange Line succeeds — as I know it will — it will serve as a regionwide model that offers commuters a quick, reliable, flexible and inexpensive alternative to

gridlock."

Community celebrations planned

On Saturday, community celebrations are planned between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. at several stations along the route, including the North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Balboa, Pierce College and Warner Center stations. No community events are scheduled on Sunday.

Metro employees will be asked to volunteer to assist with crowd control during the two-day opening period, according to Danielle Boutier, director, Communication Services, who is coordinating the opening events. Details and sign-up forms will be available soon.

"The Metro Orange Line will bring quicker, more efficient bus service to Valley commuters and easier access to the expansive, countywide Metro Bus and Rail system," said Roger Snoble, CEO of Metro. "We encourage everyone to jump on board and experience the Valley's new shortcut for themselves."

Construction on the Orange Line, the first-of-its-kind-transitway project in Southern California, began in January 2003. Ridership on the line is expected to reach an average of 22,000 boardings per day by 2020.

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Metro's Citizens' Advisory Committee Chair Wants More Members

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 7, 2005) Roger Christensen's job keeps him busy on evenings and weekends. "That's when I manage a theater in Hollywood."

Christensen's movie inventory, budget and staffing keep him engaged, but he still has free time during the day, an opportunity he has taken to get involved with transit.

"I started attending Metro's Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC) meetings in the '90s because I wanted to learn more about the subway," says Christensen. "I remember those meetings as the best way to secure hard facts and to get an education in transit."

Christensen is the newly-elected chair of the CAC. The advisory unit was created in 1992 when Metro was formed with the merger of the LACTC and the SCRTD.

CAC assists the Board

"The Citizens' Advisory Group basically gathers information and assists the Board in matters of interest to transit and the community," he says. Each Board director can nominate four public members to the group.

At the August 25 Board meeting, during CEO Roger Snoble's report, Christensen asked the Board to appoint new members to the CAC, which currently has 19 members and holds two meetings a month.

"The CAC, by legislation, should reflect a broad spectrum of interest and all geographic areas of the county," explained Christensen.

In an effort to promote the CAC, he plans to send out news releases about CAC activities and use industry, community and email contacts to spread the word in the public.

"I'd like to see the CAC more closely involved in Board issues and conduct a major outreach for new members," says Christensen. "The life blood of the CAC is its membership."

PHOTO BY RICH MORALLO



Citizens' Advisory Committee Chairman Roger Christensen and Metro CEO Roger Snoble



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Families visiting the Sherman Oaks Galleria find there's room enough for everyone onboard the Metro Liner.



PHOTOS BY DAVE SOTERO

Metro Liner Previews at Sherman Oaks Galleria

BY DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 7, 2005) Members of the public and business groups got a sneak peek of the Metro Liner as Metro joined the Sherman Oaks Galleria and others, last week, to display the Metro Orange Line vehicles.

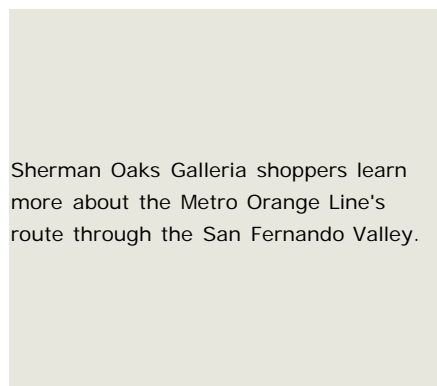
The event, hosted by the Galleria and the Economic Alliance of the San Fernando Valley, brought together a group of community and business organizations, including the Valley Alliance of Neighborhood Councils, United Chambers of Commerce and the Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA).

Members of the community and media inspect the interior of the Metro Liner.



Organizers set up Metro Orange Line signs festooned with orange balloons to attract people to the Metro Liner at the corner of the Galleria. Industry group representatives handed out Orange Line information packets to passersby.

At the news conference, Bruce Ackerman, CEO of the Economic Alliance, said "Metro should be congratulated for putting forth a first-class effort to bring this technology to the San Fernando Valley. The timing of this opening couldn't be better. The skyrocketing cost of gasoline has added unforeseen benefits to this modern, comfortable transit alternative for Valley residents and business."



Sherman Oaks Galleria shoppers learn more about the Metro Orange Line's route through the San Fernando Valley.

Katherine Defever, Galleria general manager, said the Galleria was setting an example by using its central location to stage the preview, which could help inform Galleria visitors, tenants, employers and local community groups.

The Metro Orange Line is scheduled to open Saturday, Oct. 29, with free rides and weekend community festivities.

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Jefferson High School junior Stephanie Jimenez is happy her campus is now in a Safe School Zone.



Photos by Rich Morallo

Mayor, Officials Launch 'Safe School Zone' at 10 Area Schools

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 7, 2005) High school junior Stephanie Jimenez clapped with joy as Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa led school and city officials in unveiling a sign near the school's main entrance, Sept. 1, that declared Jefferson High School a "Safe School Zone".

Jimenez was even more elated when she learned that two of the signs had been installed at nearby Metro Bus stops on 41st Street at South Central and Compton avenues.

"I feel so much safer now," said Jimenez, who often rides Metro Line 55 to school. "People will know they will be punished for whatever bad they do."

The black and white signs, about four-by-three feet, proclaim that the neighborhoods around 10 schools are Safe School Zones. Persons who commit crimes there are subject to increased penalties.



Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, LAUSD officials and others gathered at Jefferson High to announce the Safe School Zone program.

Schools, bus stops safer

The zones cover areas within 1,000 feet of a school or within 100 feet of a designated bus stop during regular school hours, or within an hour before or after school activity.

Signs are posted both on and off campus in locations where students and the community have said they feel unsafe. Schools participating in the program, in addition to Jefferson High, are Fremont, Jordan, Locke Washington Prep, Van Nuys High, Gardena High, Belmont High, Los Angeles High and Markham Middle School.

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the City of Los Angeles partnered to launch the model neighborhood program.

South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and Sheriff's Lt. Mike Parker of the Transit Services Bureau participated in unveiling the program that drew applause from parents, students and residents in the community.



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VIEW FROM THE 25th FLOOR

Responding to Hurricane Katrina; How We Can Help

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE

- **Preparing 35 reserve fleet buses if needed for the relief effort**



CEO Roger Snoble

Much of my Labor Day weekend was spent watching TV as the tragic story of the recovery from Hurricane Katrina unfolded in New Orleans. As I'm sure many of you did, I thought about ways I could help, as well as how our agency might be of assistance to the people of that devastated city.

Let's first be thankful that several Metro employees or their family members managed to escape from the storm and are in good health. Byron England's daughter, LaShea, made it to safety in Houston. Sharad Mulchand and his family, and Anthony Precie and his wife, Robin, got out of New Orleans just in time.

Let's also keep Sheriff's Deputy Susan Bodrazka and her dog, Hero, who normally patrol Metro Rail, in our thoughts as they work with survivor rescue parties in Mississippi.

As the situation along the Gulf Coast became clear last week, we learned that the American Public Transportation Association was planning to coordinate an effort among its members to provide buses to areas where they might be needed for evacuation.

I asked San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt to get things in motion for us should Metro be called upon to provide vehicles. Last week, a group of mechanics from Fleet Management and Support Services began readying some 35 diesel buses in the reserve fleet. If they're needed for emergency service, they'll be ready to roll.

Hurricane relief fund

APTA also has launched a relief fund to help transit workers and their families who are hurricane victims. Tax deductible contributions can be made online at www.apta.com or by sending a check payable to the APTA Relief Fund at 1666 K Street, 11th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20006.

I'm also aware that employees at a number of Metro operating divisions are collecting donations or have plans for fund-raisers. Because of official policies, Metro – as an organization – is prevented

from leading charitable activities, but I applaud our employees' generous spirit and desire to help those who have lost their homes, possessions and even family members.

I also can recommend an Internet web site, www.networkforgood.org, which provides donation links to several dozen disaster relief organizations, such as the American Red Cross, Charity Hospital in New Orleans, Feed the Children, the Salvation Army, and even the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

In the meantime, Metro would like to offer jobs to those who come to LA from the hurricane impact areas and who would be eligible to work as bus operators. If you know someone who might be eligible, please pass along the word.

It will take many months for the Gulf Coast to recover from Hurricane Katrina. But, when disaster strikes, it's inspiring to see Americans and Metro employees responding with open hearts to the misfortunes of their fellow citizens.

September 8, 2005

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Metro, Caltrans to Close El Monte Busway, I - 10 HOV Lanes for Renovation

- Project will affect nighttime busway and HOV access from Sept. 8 to Oct. 13

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 8, 2005) Metro and Caltrans will close the El Monte Busway and the I-10 Freeway HOV lane for several weeks, beginning tonight, to perform bus station enhancements at the Cal State LA and County USC Medical Center.

During the station closures, construction crews will renovate the bus station, replacing the enclosure on the pedestrian bridge over the HOV lane, repainting, and upgrading lighting and tile work.

From Sept. 8 to Sept. 21, the agencies will close the HOV lane from Alameda Street to the I-710 Freeway between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. The I-10 Freeway will remain open to regular traffic.

From Sept. 8 through Oct. 13, the USC Medical Center and Cal State LA bus stations will be closed between the hours of 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Daytime bus service and HOV-lane access will not be affected.

Bus lines rerouted

Metro Bus Lines 484, 485 and 490 will be temporarily rerouted during those time periods. Commuters should use Line 70 to reach those stops, boarding at:

- Spring Street between 7th Street and Cesar Chavez Avenue in Downtown LA,
- Cesar Chavez Avenue at Alameda Street,
- Marengo Street at State Street (LA County/USC Medical Center),
- Ramona Boulevard at Campus Road (Cal State LA), and the
- El Monte Busway Station

Signs announcing the nighttime bus station closures will be posted at the medical center and on the university campus.

Cal State LA will shut down all electrical power at the south end of campus, including the Metro Bus station on Sunday, Sept. 18, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The elevators on the east and west ends of the station will be out of service during those times.

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James Rojas on the cornfields project: "It's a creative outlet for the city."



PHOTO BY ARLENE LIM

LA's Cornfields Project Yields Bumper Crop for Planner's 'Field of Dreams'

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 8, 2005) Transportation planner James Rojas stands shoulder-deep in a cornfield, enveloped in rows of green cornstalks that wink at passengers aboard the Metro Gold Line as it wends its way past the Chinatown Station.

Behind him, some 30 volunteer farmers with hoes toil under wide-brimmed straw hats in the harsh midday sun, tilling the soil and tending to 32 acres of corn planted last spring by the "Not a Cornfield" public art project.

In order to prepare the rocky and mixed terrain for the installation, Rojas said, artist Lauren Bon organized the cleaning of 32 acres of brownfield (a term for contaminated soil that requires toxic clean-up) and brought in some 1,500 truckloads of earth before planting 1 million seeds in tidy rows. The project expects to harvest some 2 million ears of corn come October.

"The cornfield is actually cleaning the toxic soil and preparing the site for public use as a state park," says Rojas.

PHOTOS: GAYLE ANDERSON

A spiral path encircles the earthen mound, a central space for community gatherings and a drumming circle.



Don't expect tortillas, popcorn, or cornbread at harvest time, Rojas warns. The crop, grown in toxic soil, can't be eaten and must be relegated to manufacturing uses.

As richly green and precise as any bumper crop from a Midwest farm, the rows of corn that march across the 32-acre field between Chinatown and the Los Angeles River stand in bucolic contrast to the city's signature skyline.

Along the way, Metro Gold Line passengers watch farmers tend their crops just north of the Chinatown Station.



Originally a cornfield at the turn of the 20th century, then a railroad yard, Rojas says the abandoned site was pegged for industrial use when it was rediscovered in the late '90s. But plans to develop the site into an industrial park were trumped by Chinatown Yards Alliance, a determined group of civic-minded community activists, including Rojas, who saw the stretch of land as a rare opportunity for open space.

In 2000, the alliance blocked construction of an \$80 million industrial park. The preservation effort triumphed in mid-2001, allowing the state to purchase the site for development as a park.

During the interlude between plans and funding, "Not a Cornfield" -- an interim public art project described by artist Lauren Bon as a "living sculpture in the form of a cornfield" -- now occupies the site.



A bike path circles the perimeter.

Bon describes the project on the "Not a Cornfield" website (www.notacornfield.com) and includes a calendar of events held on the site during the agricultural cycle. At harvest time, the corn will be moved to another site where it will be dried and then displayed and eventually used for the production of biodegradable containers, says the website.

As Rojas exits the cornfield, he wonders what new experience will take hold on the site when the corn is shucked and the rows of corn disappear once more.

"It's really a creative opportunity for the city," he says, envisioning a series of interim projects that toy with open space and tweak the collective psyche of Angelenos.

But, for now, there's plenty to enjoy in this interim park. Rojas often rides his bike from his Spring Street loft to the gravel bike path that circles the cornfields. And, he rarely misses the popular Friday night drumming and community gathering around the firepit.

With a little planning, he thinks, the fate of LA may be open space, after all.

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'Fill the Boot' Event for Hurricane Katrina Victims This Weekend

- Division 9 leading fundraising effort in San Gabriel Valley
- Other divisions collecting donations of cash, supplies

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 8, 2005) Volunteers from San Gabriel Valley Division 9, the El Monte Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's and Fire departments will join, this weekend, in a fundraising effort for survivors of Hurricane Katrina.

Coordinator Richard Lopez, an acting transportation operations supervisor, says about 75 volunteers will be needed for the two-day "Fill the Boot" charity event. He invited Metro employees to volunteer for the fundraiser.

From 11 a.m. until 1 p.m., Saturday, and again from noon until 2 p.m. on Sunday, Lopez said volunteers will be stationed at four street corners in El Monte and Rosemead to receive monetary donations to the American Red Cross.

Volunteers will be stationed at the intersections of Valley and Rosemead, Valley and Santa Anita, Garvey and Rosemead and Garvey and Santa Anita. No food or clothing will be accepted.

For more information about the "Fill the Boot" fundraiser, employees can contact Lopez at 626-454-3022, 922-6409 or at 626-454-3042.

Divisions accepting donations

Meanwhile, a number of Metro operating divisions are accepting contributions of money, clothing, food and water. Among them are:

West Valley Division 8 Maintenance, which has been selling candy and collecting donations for the American Red Cross. Transportation division employees have been placing water, clothing and other non-perishable items that can be used by hurricane survivors in a large bin for donation this weekend.

At Central City Division 1, maintenance and transportation employees have donated more than \$900 which will be presented to the American Red Cross on Friday, according to coordinator Linda Jackson.

Cash contributions from transportation and maintenance employees are piling up in a collection box at Venice Division 6. The money will be counted on Friday.

West Hollywood Division 7 Transportation employees are contributing cash for Hurricane Katrina victims, while across the yard, Maintenance employees are stacking donations of water and other supplies on a pallet for donation to the relief effort.



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Funeral Services Set for Retiree Calvin Louie

(Sept. 9, 2005) Funeral services are scheduled, Saturday, for Calvin Louie, a senior administrative analyst who died on Tuesday, Aug. 30.

A viewing is scheduled from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., today, at SkyRose Chapel, Rose Hills Memorial Park (Gate 1) in Whittier. The funeral is set for 3 p.m., Saturday, at the same location. For information, phone 562-699-0921.



Calvin Louie

Louie, 65, joined Metro in April 1982 and retired in May, 2003 after 21 years' service. He most recently had worked in Transit Operations Support Services.

A native of Hong Kong, he is survived by his wife, May, and his brother, Marvin.



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Google Search Engine Now Featured on Metro’s Intranet

- Linked from Intranet home page
- Can search all departments and formats for information

(Sept. 9, 2005) MyMetro.net presents a brand new feature, today, that Intranet users will find especially helpful in tracking down previous news articles and any other content posted on department web pages.

It’s the Google search engine – the same superfast information source so popular on the World Wide Web. The Google link is now available on the Intranet home page.

Using Google, readers can search all .html web pages and Microsoft Office formats, and can pull up information located in .pdf files, PowerPoint presentations and Excel spread sheets. It will even search the daily news clippings provided by Media Relations.

“It turns the entire Intranet into a set of library shelves for our employees,” says Matt Barrett, Dorothy Peyton Gray Library administrator. “It’s a virtual library.”

For the past year or so, the Library has been upgrading the Board of Directors’ policy archives using Google as the primary search tool. The Library was able to expand its contract with Google to include the Intranet.

Includes a spell checker

Like the familiar Internet Google search engine, the Intranet version includes an English word spell checker and will suggest alternative words if a search word appears to be misspelled.

Google features an Advance Search link that gives the user more search options. The Help link provides assistance and a number of suggestions for locating the exact document a user is seeking.

Google presents its search results based on a formula that takes into account a number of factors. It will rank highest those documents that have other documents linked to them and that have the search words in the exact order the user entered them.

Noting that the Intranet has been online at Metro since early 1999, Barrett says, “There’s a ton of information that’s been input over those six years and this will help employees find it.”

“The Google search engine sets a new standard for Intranet readers’ ability to find information on our web pages,” says Bill Heard, Intranet content manager and news editor. “I want to thank Matt Barrett and

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Google features an Advance Search link that gives the user more search options.

the Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library for providing this great new reader service."

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Metro Releases Monthly Passes to the Dream Center

(Sept. 9, 2005) In cooperation with the Los Angeles City and County Emergency Response Task Force, Metro today released 500 monthly passes and customer information packets to the Dream Center for use by Hurricane Katrina victims.

CEO Roger Snoble released the passes under his authority. They will be used to provide transportation options for hurricane victims relocated to Los Angeles.

Metro is working with the American Red Cross and local officials to support the effort. In addition to passes, Metro has vehicles at the ready for deployment locally or to be used at the disaster site.

Human Resources is also preparing employment packets to assist with Metro job placement.

To date, approximately 200 people have been relocated to the Dream Center. The expectation is that up to 1,500 more people may be relocating to Los Angeles over the next several weeks.

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Metro Clean crew leader Charles Grantham supervises a clean-up at a Metro Bus Line 38 stop.



Spic and Span

Metro Clean Crews Banish the Dirt at Bus Stops

- Metro works with local groups to keep neighborhoods tidy

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 9, 2005) Metro's Charles Grantham took a closer look at the bus stop at Jefferson Boulevard and Crenshaw Avenue.

"We were just here a couple of weeks ago and look at all of that dirt and grime already back on the pavement," said Grantham, a member of the Stops & Zones Metro Clean team. "I wouldn't want to wait for the bus at this stop under these conditions."

Within moments, Grantham's pressure-wash crew had unpacked a four-foot spray gun, unwrapped the hose and started shooting heated water onto the black-marked pavement around the Line 38 bus pole.

"The Metro workers are doing

PHOTOS BY RICH MORALLO



A Metro Clean crewmember uses blasts of steam from a powerwasher to rid a Jefferson Avenue bus stop of accumulated dirt and grime.

FOR THE RECORD

In July, Metro Clean crews cleaned more than 4,000 bus stops, an average of 134 stops a

great. A lot of people use this stop to wait for the bus," said Michelle, a passing Metro rider who takes the bus to travel to Vermont Avenue.

day, throughout Los Angeles County. The crews also pressure-washed 114 stops and collected 5,300 bags of trash.

Cleaning 18 bus stops

That Saturday, Grantham's staff and two other Metro Clean crews were cleaning the 18 bus stops along Jefferson Boulevard between Western and Crenshaw Avenues as part of a neighborhood cleanup project.

"We had asked Metro to be one of our partners in keeping our community clean," said Sharon Anderson, president of the 2nd Avenue Block Club. Anderson and 60 local families joined forces to sweep sidewalks, paint houses and pull weeds that day, and they welcomed Metro Clean to their campaign.

"Unsanitary, littered bus stops reflect negatively on Metro and discourage new riders from trying our service," said Pete Serdienis, the Facilities Maintenance manager who heads Metro Clean.

He noted that, while Metro only owns the bus stop post and sign, the public and bus riders think the transit agency also owns the bus shelters, benches and trash receptacles.

Trash left by customers

"In fact, these amenities are owned and maintained by municipalities or their franchised vendors," Serdienis said. "We recognize that the majority of the trash left at bus stops is attributable to our waiting customers."

In order to make using public transit a more pleasant experience, and to maintain a good rapport with surrounding neighborhoods, Metro Clean sends out crews of unpaid workers who have been referred by the courts to perform community service work. They work alongside municipalities to clean some 18,000 bus stop locations every day, according to Serdienis.

Whenever possible, Metro Clean participates in events like the 2nd Avenue Block Club Clean Up. And community residents, such as Sharon Anderson, and bus riders appreciate Metro's efforts to enhance the cleanliness of their neighborhoods.

"We'll be out cleaning neighborhood bus stops again this coming Saturday," said Serdienis, noting that the 10th Council District has scheduled another cleanup project for the area.

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Filling the Boot> From left, fund coordinator Richard Lopez, an acting transportation operations supervisor at Division 9; Dereck Andrade, San Gabriel Valley representative of the Red Cross; San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig; LASD Capt. Dan Finkelstein; Metro volunteers and volunteers from the El Monte Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's and Fire departments raised nearly \$70,000 for Katrina survivors.



Photos by Luis Inzunza

Volunteers Collect Almost \$70,000 for Hurricane Katrina Victims

- Cash donations filled a 55-gallon drum on Saturday

(Sept. 13, 2005) Some 80 Metro volunteers joined with volunteers from the El Monte Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's and Fire departments, last weekend, to raise almost \$70,000 for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Fanning out to cover four intersections in El Monte and Rosemead, the volunteers asked passing motorists to "Fill the Boot and Fill the Farebox" to help the hurricane survivors.

On Monday, the group presented a check for \$62,000 to the American Red Cross and expected to contribute \$5,000 to \$6,000 more once all coins had been counted.

Richard Lopez, an acting transportation operations supervisor at Division 9, and El Monte Officer Ed Navarratte coordinated the fundraising event.

"If it weren't for the volunteers and residents of El Monte and Rosemead, this wouldn't have happened," said Lopez. "It was a remarkable effort."

Outpouring of generosity

Postcard from El Monte



On Tuesday, Lopez was still expressing astonishment at the outpouring of public generosity during the hurricane fundraising effort, which covered only two-and-a-half hours each weekend day.

Money contributed by local residents on Saturday filled a 55-gallon drum, Lopez said. The drum was about three-quarters full on Sunday. The volunteers collected more than \$7,000 in change; \$15,700 in \$1 bills; and the remainder in \$50s, \$20s, \$10s, \$5s and checks.

One woman wrote a \$1,000 check to the Red Cross. A man pulled two \$100 bills out of his glove box. Children contributed money from their piggy banks. A homeless man insisted on giving 50 cents.

By midnight Sunday, 15 El Monte police officers had counted only \$55,750. The count had reached \$62,000 by mid-morning on Monday when a check was formally presented to Dereck Andrade, San Gabriel Valley representative of the Red Cross. The rest of the money will be donated when the count is final.

Lopez thanked LA County Fire Capt. Richie Salisbury of Station 166 in El Monte, El Monte Police Chief Ken Weldon, Transit Services Bureau Deputy Gary DeBondt and Division 9 Transportation Manager Dan Frawley as being key to the success of the fundraiser.

"I was expecting to get a lot of red tape, but everybody's response was, 'Sure, we'll do it,'" said Lopez. "It was two thumbs up all the way through the project."




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Non-Represented Employees' 2.5% Raise Due Sept. 30

- Separate 'retro' checks also will be issued

(Sept. 13, 2005) Non-represented employees eligible for a 2.5 percent pay hike for FY 2006 will see the salary increase in paychecks of Friday, Sept. 30, along with a separate "retro" check to cover the raise from July 1 to Sept. 10.

Employees eligible for the full 2.5 percent raise must have been employed at Metro the entire 2005 fiscal year; must be on active status as of Sept. 30; must receive an overall rating of effective, commendable or outstanding; and must not be on probation.

The pay increase will be pro-rated for those hired during FY 2005. The increase will be effective from the first day after the employee completes the required probationary period.

Employees not eligible for the 2.5 percent pay increase include those hired on or after July 1, 2005; interns and as-needed employees; AFSCME and other represented employees.

Pay raise guidelines

Human Resources has established several pay raise guidelines for employees who are within, at or above their maximum pay range.

The full 2.5 percent will be added to the salary base of employees who will remain within their pay range after the raise.

For those who will go over their maximum pay range when the 2.5 percent is applied, only the portion of the raise that brings the employee to the range limit will be added to base pay, according to HR Director Stefan Chasnov.

The remainder will be paid to the employee in equal amounts over the rest of FY 2005. These employees will receive a retro check.

Individual circumstances

HR will follow up with employees who currently are over their maximum pay range. Each will receive correspondence discussing his or her individual circumstances and explaining how the raise may be calculated.

In those cases in which the 2.5 percent or some portion of it applies to those over the pay range maximum, it will be paid out in equal amounts over the remainder of the fiscal year's pay periods, says Chasnov.

The HR director also notes that the Payroll Department will not accept revised W-4 forms, this year, for the retro checks. Last year, so many

employees filed revised forms that they overwhelmed the payroll system.

"Taxes will be deducted from the retro checks at the same withholding rate currently on file for each employee," says Chasnov.

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Winner's Circle> Arthur Winston Division Mechanics Team - from left, Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde - advance to international competition after regional win.



Metro Maintenance Team Wins 1st Place at Regional Bus Roadeo

- Division 5 team leads by 220 points, operator takes 3rd place
- Metro team to compete in International Finals, Sept. 24

(Sept. 13, 2005) In its first competition of the year against rival transit properties, Metro's bus maintenance team – mechanics Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde – took top honors, Sept. 10, in the Southern California Regional Bus Roadeo.

The Arthur Winston Division 5 mechanics, along with Central City Division 1 Operator Sam Morales, who placed third in the drivers' competition, will travel to Dallas later this month to represent Metro at the APTA International Roadeo Finals, Sept. 24.

At the regionals, Warren, Vargas and Forde scored a total of 1,250 points in the five-event maintenance competition, a whopping 220 points ahead of mechanics from the Orange County Transit Authority and OMNI Trans of San Bernardino, who tied for second.

"The key to our win was hard training and dedication and help from the

Instruction Department," says Warren, maintenance team captain. "We're going to go to Dallas and continue what we're doing. We want as good a showing there as we had at the regionals."



Central City Division 1 Operator Sam Morales placed third in the drivers' competition.

In the drivers' competition, Morales scored 579 points to place third behind defending regional champion Ron Dickey of Riverside Transit, who finished first with 630 points, and second-place Raj Patel of OCTA, who scored 584 points.

Hosted by OCTA, the Regional Bus Roadeo was patterned after the APTA finals with such maintenance events as a bus inspection, ABS brake board and power train. The drivers' competition included an obstacle course similar to the Metro Bus Roadeo.

Mechanics Warren, Vargas and Forde are veteran bus roadeo competitors who represented Metro at the APTA International Roadeo Finals in Salt Lake City in 2003. Morales has carried Metro's banner at three previous APTA finals.

"There will be a lot of good drivers from the U.S and Canada at the Finals," said Morales, who hopes to get in a couple days of practice before the international event. "But, we should do OK."

The Metro Bus Roadeo team's final outing, due to a change in APTA convention scheduling, will be at the International Finals planned for Anaheim in April 2006.



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The way we were: Construction frames the East Portal in December 1994.



Brief Program and Birthday Cake to Mark 10th Anniversary of Gateway Building

- Ten years ago on Sept. 15, Metro employees had a new headquarters and transit in Los Angeles came back home to historic Union Station.

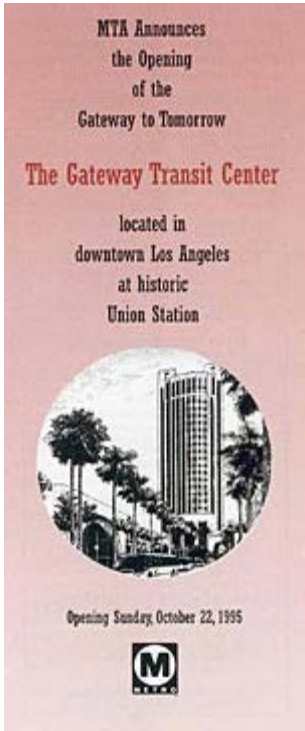
By GAYLE ANDERSON
(Sept. 14, 2005) Ten years to the day when employees began relocating to new headquarters, General Services will mark the anniversary of the Gateway Building with a brief ceremony at 3 p.m., Thursday, in the lobby of the Metro headquarters.

The program will begin with remarks by architects, builders, interior designers, and former Board members who were instrumental in the construction of the Gateway Transit Center.

A display of photos and memorabilia from the dedication and construction of the building will revisit the time when employees were preparing and actually moving into the skyscraper at historic Union Station.

Guests and employees are invited for refreshments following the cutting of the ceremonial cake outside in the west patio.

Hailed as the "future of transportation in Los Angeles," the Gateway Building was the centerpiece of a regional transportation center



Although the Gateway Building opened on Sept. 15, the official dedication of the Gateway Transit Center was held at the entrance to the East Portal on Oct. 22, 1995.

that featured the East Portal entrance to Union Station and a landscaped public plaza.

On Sept. 15, 1995, the 26-floor headquarters became home to some 1,900 Metro employees, among them administrators, planners, engineers, office workers and a full-force Transit Police Department.

For the first time since the merger of the SCRTD and LACTC, Metro employees had a new headquarters and transit in Los Angeles was back home at historic Union Station.

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A massive section collapsed from the four-lane I-5 freeway in the 1994 Northridge Earthquake.



Photo: Robert A. Eplett/OES CA | courtesy of California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

Be Safe!

September is National Preparedness Month

- [Download your Family Disaster Plan card.](#)
- [Check your Emergency Preparedness List.](#)

(Sept. 14, 2005) With images of Hurricane Katrina and the southeast Asia tsunami still fresh in our minds, it's important to remember that September is National Preparedness Month.

This month, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the American Red Cross are urging all Americans to take simple steps to become better prepared for emergencies.

Both agencies have web sites with lots of information on emergency preparedness and advice on making survival kits, evacuation planning and emergency evacuation.

Here are 10 tips from the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services that will help you and your family prepare for any of the emergencies – earthquake, fire, flooding, landslides – that are common to Southern California.

1. Identify Your Risk

Do you live near a flood plain, an earthquake fault, or in a high fire danger area? Are you prepared for a human-made disaster? For more information contact your local Office of Emergency Services.

2. Create a Family Disaster Plan

Your family needs a plan that tells everyone where to meet if you have to evacuate, who you've identified as an out-of-state family contact, how to get emergency information in your community and how to take care of your family pets.

Each family member should carry a Family Disaster Plan card listing the local Office of Emergency Services phone number, an emergency meeting place outside your home, a meeting place outside your neighborhood, and the name and phone numbers, both daytime and evening, of a family contact.

3. Practice Your Disaster Plan

Start by having family members meet at a designated spot outside your home. Know how to respond in the event of any disaster — whether to stay indoors, or whether to evacuate your neighborhood. Know the proper evacuation procedures and routes.

4. Build Disaster Supply Kits For Your Home and Car

Put together a kit of emergency supplies that will allow you and your family to survive for at least three days in the event of an emergency. The Red Cross web site has a complete list of recommended supplies.

5. Prepare Your Children

Talk to your kids about the risks and what your family will do if disaster strikes.

6. Don't Forget Those With Special Needs

Infants, seniors and those with special needs must not be forgotten.

7. Learn CPR and First Aid

Contact your local chapter of the American Red Cross for training in basic first aid and CPR. Your training could save the life of a loved one or neighbor following a disaster.

8. Eliminate Hazards in Your Home and The Workplace

You must secure the contents of your home or office to reduce hazards, especially during an earthquake or an explosion.

9. Understand Post 9/11 Risks

Disaster preparedness must now account for man-made disasters as well as natural ones. Knowing what to do during an emergency is an important part of being prepared and may make all the difference when seconds count.

10. Get Involved, Volunteer, Bear Responsibility

Donate blood, join a local Community Emergency Response Team, educate your neighbor, or volunteer with your local American Red Cross.

Emergency Preparedness Checklist

Complete this checklist to ensure that you and your family are prepared for emergencies.

- Post emergency numbers by phones (fire, police, ambulance, etc.)
- Teach children how and when to call 911 or your local Emergency Medical Services number.
- Show each family member how and when to turn off water, gas and electricity at main switches.
- Check whether you have adequate insurance coverage.
- Teach each family member how to use a fire extinguisher and show them where it's kept.
- Install smoke detectors on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms.
- Conduct a home hazard hunt.
- Stock emergency supplies and assemble a disaster supplies kit.
- Take a Red Cross first aid and CPR course.
- Determine the best escape routes from your home, including two ways out of each room.
- Find the safe spots in your home for each type of disaster.
- Test smoke detectors monthly and change batteries at least yearly.
- Learn how to help any elderly or disabled persons in your family.
- Decide how to care for your pets in an emergency.

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While one man, left, clasps his hands in prayer, a representative of an Oxnard Buddhist Temple distributes Metro donated-goods to tsunami victims in Sri Lanka.



Valley Divisions' Donations Reach Tsunami Victims in Sri Lanka

- 3 tons of clothing and \$600 distributed to townspeople

By ARLENE LIM

(Sept. 14, 2005) Late last year when a tsunami hit the shores of Sri Lanka - devastating a nation - Metro's West Valley Maintenance division 8 held a clothing and funds drive to help those in need halfway across the world.

The month-long clothing drive at Division 8 and East Valley Division 15 amassed everything from pants to high heels and everything in between – some of which while fashionable, would not be useful in Sri Lanka.

"Can you imagine someone wearing heels in six inches of mud," joked Jag Wijegunawardena, Division 8 equipment maintenance supervisor.

A man kneels in appreciation for the donations he received.



All in all, almost three tons of clothing and approximately \$600 were collected. All of the donations were sorted - the useful things sent to the Oxnard Buddhist Temple and the rest to a local church.

The temple used the money to pay for the containers used to ship the clothing collected by Metro and others to Sri Lanka.

Clothing was distributed

A few months after the fundraiser, the clothing has finally reached Matara, a small town in Sri Lanka. There, a representative from the Oxnard Buddhist temple distributed the clothing to the townspeople.

A resident of Matara, Sri Lanka, receives an armful of donations.



Division 8 is again extending a helping hand, this time to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The division is collecting donations and selling candy.

“We have a large spectrum of people – different ages and ethnic groups – who work here and all have good hearts,” commented Mechanic Scott Lanksi as he thought about all the effort everyone has

put in to help those in need.

So far division 8 employees have already collected and donated \$2,200 to various charities. The candy, which sells for \$20 a piece, has raised just about \$750 to date.

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500 Volunteers Needed to Staff Metro Orange Line Opening

- Deadline for volunteering is Friday, Oct. 7

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 14, 2005) Metro employees will have an opportunity next month to participate in one of the agency's most exciting events this decade – the opening of the Metro Orange Line.

Five hundred volunteers will be needed both Saturday, Oct. 29, and Sunday, Oct. 30, to provide crowd control, ensure safety of guests and employees, and to staff special events planned for the debut of the 14-mile transitway linking North Hollywood and Warner Center.

The deadline for volunteering is Friday, Oct. 7. Copies of the [employee volunteer form](#) will be available at all operating divisions and can be downloaded from the [myMetro.net](#) homepage.

Volunteers will be expected to work both days of the opening weekend opening, according to Danielle Boutier, director, Communication Services. Each will receive two Orange Line staff T-shirts and a staff cap to wear as the opening event uniform.

Volunteers will be scheduled to work one of three eight-hour shifts on Saturday – 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Two shifts are scheduled on Sunday – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Indicate a preference

"We're asking volunteers to indicate their preference and we'll try to accommodate them as best we can," says Boutier.

Although volunteers will be placed at all Orange Line stations, most will be located at the five "event stations" – North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Balboa, Pierce College and Warner Center.

Volunteer training sessions will be scheduled in October. If possible, volunteers will have an opportunity to visit one or more Orange Line stations, otherwise they'll see a comprehensive presentation about the transitway and planned events.

Represented employees who volunteer for the opening event will be paid according to the terms of their collective bargaining agreements.

Non-represented employees classified as hourly, non-exempt workers will receive compensatory time off in lieu of compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours. The compensatory time will be counted as time-and-a-half hours worked over 40 per week.

Exempt employees will have straight time added to their TOWP hour

bank. All employees must have their supervisor’s permission to volunteer for the Orange Line opening.

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U.S. Congresswoman Lucille Roybal, City Councilwoman Jan Perry and CEO Roger Snoble are among officials presenting key ideas for a walkable urban corridor on First Street in downtown Los Angeles.



Officials Unveil Master Plan for 'Walkable' Downtown Corridor

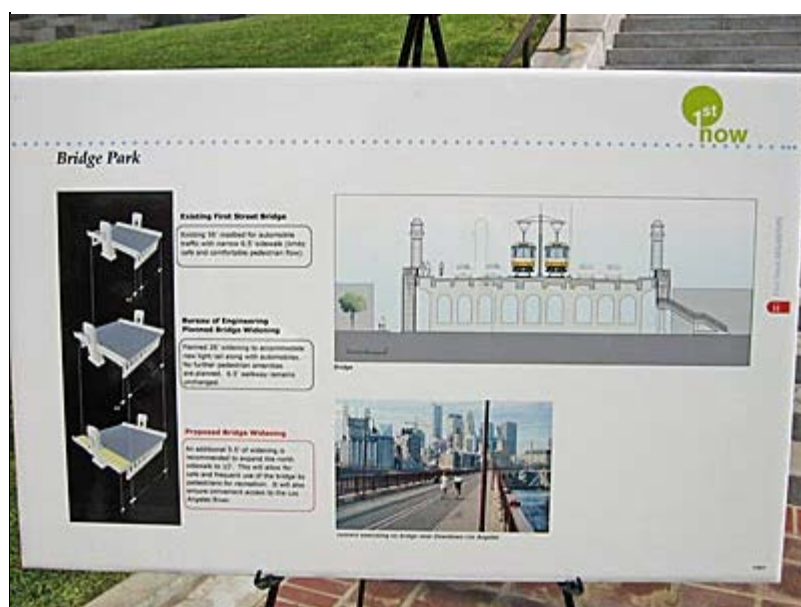
- "1st Street Now" would provide pedestrian link between downtown, East LA

BY DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 15, 2005) CEO Roger Snoble joined Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, City Councilwoman Jan Perry and "Project Restore" team members, recently, to unveil a bold master plan linking areas along First Street in downtown LA and East Los Angeles into a pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented street.

The plan, dubbed "1st Street Now," calls for a walkable urban corridor attractive to pedestrians that will benefit developments along the two-mile stretch of First Street through the Civic Center and Little Tokyo, over the LA River, and onto Mariachi Plaza in Boyle Heights.

"The First Street Now project will re-establish the corridor as an important transportation link for Los Angeles," Snoble said at a City Hall press conference. "From one end of this project to another, the Metro System will play a crucial, starring role."



The 1st Street Now Master Plan calls for widening the 1st Street bridge, where the Metro Gold Line will travel, to accommodate more pedestrians activity.

At the western end of the project is the Metro Red Line, which provides easy transit access to the downtown area.

At the eastern end, Metro is planning extensions of the Metro Gold Line that will have three stops along the improvement corridor – Little Tokyo and the Arts District, Pico/Aliso and Mariachi Plaza.



Diego Cardoso shows Metro CEO Roger Snoble details of the 1st Street Now plan.

Metro worked closely with the Project Restore Team, dedicating \$75,000 and the resources of its Countywide Planning & Development Department to the plan.

Other funding partners included Project Restore, Community Redevelopment Agency, and Civic Center Public Partnership.

The plan was developed by LA-based firms Suisman Urban Design, Campbell & Campbell, and Rios Clementi Hale Studios to produce solutions that highlight the area's distinctive neighborhood identities and build on current developments underway along First Street.

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Operator Harry Fradejas, Assistant Manager Ralph Gray and Operators Efrain Gomez, Mandeep Sagoo, Sudershan Nunna and Shiv Bhardwaj take a break before serving and enjoying the Indian food.



Festive Meals Promote Indian Culture at Division 8

By ARLENE LIM

(Sept. 15, 2005) It was an annual effort to bring Indians from different parts of the world together and familiarize their West Valley Division 8 co-workers with Indian culture.

The Desiboyz Club of Division 8 - with the help of UTU Local1608 – recently bought, prepared, and served Indian cuisine at a special breakfast and lunch to their co-workers.



Desiboyz Club members Richard Jajja, Sundershan Nunna and Mandeoo Sagoo serve up a plate of Indian food to Operator Laura Soberanes.

Started by operators Mandeep Sagoo and Richard Jajja, the Desiboyz Club has celebrated Indian Heritage once a year since 2000. Sagoo and Jajja, along with other Indian co-workers contributed much of the labor and funds needed to create all the food.

Operators Sudershanam Nunna and Norma Uribe were on hand to help on the day of the event, while Operator Avtar Chattha provided the musical entertainment.

For breakfast, pakora – a mix of various vegetable and herbs with pea flour – was served with Indian tea.

Lunch brought a more elaborate spread of goat curry, chicken curry, garbanzo bean curry, palawo (rice cooked with beans), naan (Indian bread cooked in a special oven), salad and yogurt. For desert, rice pudding and rasguls were served.

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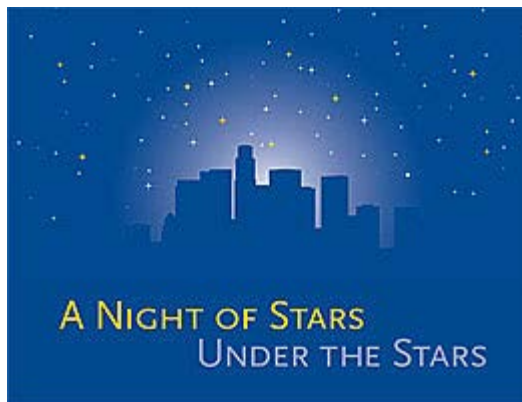
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- Annual event is Friday evening at Westin Bonaventure

134 Transit Operations Employees to be Honored at 'Night of Stars'

(Sept. 15, 2005) One hundred thirty four Transit Operations employees will receive awards honoring their outstanding performance, Friday, at the annual "Night of Stars" banquet.

Honorees were chosen for the Five-Year Awards based on performance that "exemplifies the agency's mission and core values." Seven employees will receive a special "Spotlight Award" for exceptional performance.

The Night of Stars event, set for the Westin Bonaventure Hotel at 5th and Figueroa in downtown LA, will begin at 6 p.m. with dinner and awards presentations to follow at 7 p.m.

CEO Roger Snoble will be master of ceremonies, introducing the evening's speakers and awards presenters. Supervisor Gloria Molina and Duarte Councilman John Fasana, both members of the Board of Directors, will speak, along with Deputy CEO John Catoe.

The Five-Year Awards and Spotlight Awards will be presented by general managers David Armijo, Gerald Francis, Alex Clifford, Dana Coffey, Richard Hunt, Jack Gabig and Deputy Executive Officer Milo Victoria.

Each Night of Stars honoree will receive a commemorative medallion and a lapel pin, along with a color photo of the award presentation.

Invitations to the event admit one honoree and one free guest. Additional guests may attend for \$35 each. No children under 14 will be admitted.

Those planning to attend Night of Stars are encouraged to park at Union Station and use the Metro Red Line. Hotel parking will be available at a discounted rate.


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Chinese Delegation Visits Metro's Human Resources Dept.

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 16, 2005) Human Resources Director Stefan Chasnov connected immediately with his Chinese visitors.

"I have a brother who is a professor at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and I have traveled there and to Mainland China several times," Chasnov said, during the 19-member delegation's Sept. 13 visit.

With the icebreaker out of the way, Chasnov explained the role HR plays at the agency. The Chinese government managers had traveled to Los Angeles to learn how Metro employees contribute to the agency's mission and goals.

During the hour-long meeting, Chasnov discussed the structure of Human Resources, how it supports the agency's business units, how his staff of 50 administers employee programs, and employment recruiting, interviewing and testing.

He also described the agency's Strategic Performance Plan and the goals and values that guide employee activities.

Screen 1,000 to get 100 recruits

"In Human Resources this fiscal year, one of our main goals is hiring and training additional bus operators," Chasnov said, as he explained the challenge of screening 1,000 applicants to get to 100 successful recruits.

Another goal for the department is to deal with the agency's leave of absence issue.

"At any given time, up to 10 percent of our workforce may be out due to medical or military leave, family illness or other reasons," he said. "Through hard work of many departments, we have cut that percentage down to six percent and still have some more work to do in this area."

"Ten to 15 years ago, our organizations only recruited people," remarked Yao Hongjie, director-general of Beijing's Bureau of Enterprise Remuneration. "Today we are visiting Metro to learn how employees can develop the company."

Following the Chinese delegation's visit to Metro, the group flew to New York to visit human resources departments there.

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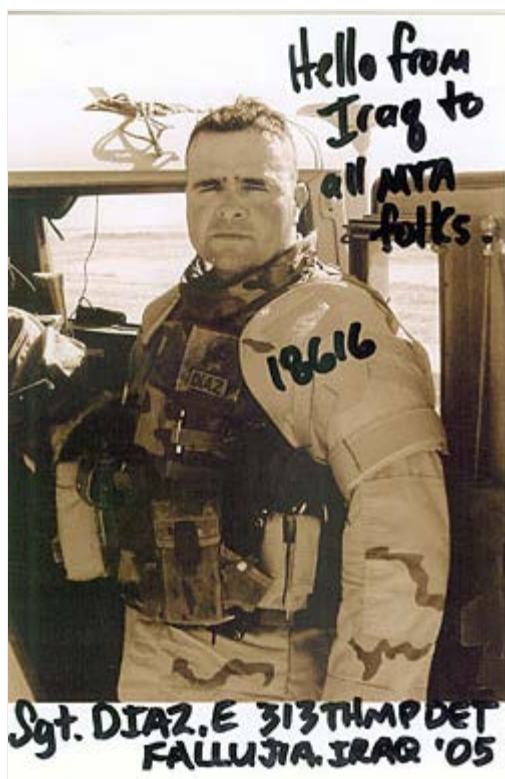
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EDITOR'S NOTE: (Sept. 16, 2005) This letter from Army Reserve Sgt. Erick Diaz was addressed to Metro Media Relations, but is intended for all Metro employees. Diaz, 40, joined Metro in June 1991 as a bus operator and is assigned to Gateway Division 10. In September, 2004, he was called to active duty with a military police unit and now is serving in Fallujah, Iraq, a town located about 40 miles northwest of Baghdad. He expects to be released at the end of his two-year period of service in October, 2006. Sgt. Diaz is a native of Los Angeles who now lives in Alhambra. He welcomes any correspondence from Metro employees.



Sgt. Diaz serves in Fallujah, Iraq, a town located about 40 miles northwest of Baghdad.

August 15, 1005

Fallujah, Iraq

To MTA Employees:

I hope you're doing well at home.

Iraq has been an eye-opening experience. Unfortunately, there are no MTA bus lines nor rail lines here...Ha, Ha.

But, there's plenty of insurgents to go around. But, most people here want stability and growth, but still a few make it terrible for all of us here and the people.

Fortunately, I'm with a good, well-trained unit that looks out for one another.

Well, finally my UTU, UTA and management family... I hope you all stay safe and keep moving Los Angeles forward...

Your brother in Iraq,

Sgt. Erick Diaz
313th MP Detachment
504th MP Battalion
PST EAM One
APO AE 09364



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Program marking the 10 anniversary of the Gateway Building was attended by individuals instrumental in accomplishing the construction of the region's foremost transit center. From left, Laurie Fox and Tony Gonzales, the interior design team from ACG Environments, now HNTB; Thomas Verti, President of Charles Pankow Builders, Ltd., the building's construction contractor; Marvin Holen, chairman of the SCRTD Board that authorized construction, former SCRTD Board Member Gordana Swanson; Brian Soto, director of General Services, and Nick Patsaouras, former chairman of the SCRTD Board and president of the building project corporation.



10-year Anniversary

Metro Headquarters Builders Look Back with Pride

- Building helped unite two separate agencies
- USG complex called 'A legacy to the city'
- [What's next](#) for the Headquarters building?

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 16, 2005) Ten years ago Thursday, after two years of construction that would begin the transformation of a former industrial site into a bustling transit center, the first Metro employees began moving into their new headquarters building at Union Station Gateway.

For former SCRTD employees, who had survived years in a dilapidated jumble of buildings on the fringe of Skid Row, the building was a marvel. For former LACTC employees, it was a move to a newer building, but one away from the central downtown location of their

Patsaouras Plaza is named after former SCRTD Board Chairman Nick Patsaouras. His effort is commemorated with a sculpture in the north end of the turnaround.

headquarters at 7th and Figueroa.

For both groups, perhaps, the building represented a permanent fusing of two once separate agencies now united as one.

During Thursday afternoon's ceremony, which also featured the ceremonial cutting of a "birthday" cake on the Plaza, those who built the new Metro headquarters looked back at the challenges they faced and their accomplishment, and were pleased with what they saw.

Nick Patsaouras, who chaired the building project corporation and for whom the bus plaza is named, recalled the pressure put on the agency either to rent downtown space or, at least, not to build at Union Station.

'Thriving intermodal transit center'

But, he said the determination to complete the \$145 million complex at its current location was the correct decision and sparked "a thriving intermodal transit center."

"In a few years," he said, "the MTA will burn the bond certificate and will reside here for generations to come. It's a legacy to the city...that will stand the test of time."

Marvin Holen, chairman of the SCRDT Board that authorized construction, declared, "This is a building of beauty and function, located in the right place. Not to have built it...would have diminished the treasure that is Union Station."

"It was built with very great care for taxpayer money and it's a landmark building for Los



Building Blocks

An impressive amount of materials and labor went into the construction of the 26-story Metro Headquarters, Patsaouras Plaza and the East Portal, a complex calculated at more than 2 million square feet:

- 1,000-plus workers employed during construction.
- 430,000 cubic yards of earth removed from a 4-story deep excavation.
- 150 million gallons of water at a rate of 18,000 gallons per hour pumped from the excavation for almost a year.
- 3,000-plus concrete columns and beams manufactured on-site.
- 26 million-plus pounds of steel reinforcing bars.
- 19 million pounds of structural steel.
- 200,000 cubic yards of concrete.
- 25 types of stone from 8 countries used in the lobby.
- 500,000-plus special British bricks for the Plaza roadway.

And, said Tom Verti, president of Charles Pankow Builders, the project was built on-time and on-budget with no claims or delays. "What you'd call the project of a lifetime."

Icing on the Cake

Angeles," he added. "Everyone is proud of it."

Acting as master of ceremonies was Brian Soto, director of General Services, who helped shepherd the Headquarters building through from construction to move-in and continues to oversee its operation and maintenance.

'Holding up great'

"After 10 years of being occupied, the building is holding up great," he said following the ceremony. "The employees who work in it and who maintain it seem to really enjoy it."

The most significant change Soto recalls from the building's original plan is the conversion of what was to have been a restaurant on the southeast ground floor to space for an HR employment office, Records Management and the Security Department.

The most exciting moment, Soto says, was the spectacular January 2001 fire that damaged a portion of the roof and caused water damage to some 25th floor executive offices. "It was a slight setback, but we were able to get back on track and since then we've had no problems."

What's next for the Metro Headquarters building?

Consolidation, new carpeting

Soto plans to consolidate some departments whose offices are spread over several floors of the building. He hopes to get capital funds to replace the 10-year-old carpeting in the next couple of years, and some major equipment will have to be replaced.

The cafeteria also will see some mostly food quality and aesthetic upgrades when the new food vendor takes over next month.

During his remarks in closing the ceremony, Soto thanked a number of employees who were involved in the construction phase: Robin Blair, Michael Holguin, Michelle Jackson, Velma Marshall, Phyllis Meng, Siu Ming Siu, Steve Noonan, Kelly Patton, Joe Sanders and Gary Spivack.

"Ten years ago today," said Soto, "the move-in was certainly a challenge, but with the employees' incredible teamwork, the task was



Marvin Holen, Gordona Swanson and Nick Patsaouras cut a cake decorated with an overview photo the Gateway Transit Plaza at the time of its completion.

Slices from six large cakes, including this "ceremonial cake" with an aerial view of Metro Headquarters, were placed on tables in the Plaza for VIPs and employees to enjoy following Thursday's 10th anniversary event. Made by special request, they ranged from strawberry and carrot to chocolate mousse and even angel food for those with dietary needs. "The cake is excellent," said Human Resources Supervisor Scott Lloyd. "I guess you can say it's the icing to the cake of the ceremony."

-- From Perry Williams

Photos: Gayle Anderson

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Jake's Adventures

(Sept. 9, 2005) Round Two in the battle with a family of raccoons seemed to end satisfactorily, but Jake was out \$432.50 and his house was in a shambles. Life was getting back to normal, until his cat got the rips. Bill Heard, Editor --
Bill Heard, Editor

CONCLUSION:

They Came From the Canyon A Homeowner's Horror Story

By JAKE SATIN-JACOBS

Polly the cat never seemed to mind the raccoons. I thought that she might be disturbed by the animal noises coming from the ceiling. She wasn't.

The raccoons had been evicted, the holes in the ceiling had been patched with duct tape, the entrances had been sealed and the ceiling repair job had been placed on my list of honey-dos. Everything seemed right with the world. And then Polly got weird.

Polly always liked to drink from the running water in the bathroom sink. I bought her a water fountain of her own from one of those catalogs that people in the third world never comprehend -- the ones that sell air conditioners you wear around your neck and bug zappers shaped like badminton rackets. It was extravagant, but she loved it and it kept her out of my bathroom sink.

Then one day, soon after the departure of the evil ones, Polly returned to the bathroom to drink. She wouldn't go near the fountain in the laundry room.

And she developed another strange habit. She has always been howling, ankle-biting and insistent at mealtime. But a few days after the departure of the upstairs neighbors, she became Polly the Patient. While I fixed her food, she sat quietly outside the kitchen door and waited.

Was it a brain tumor?

When she sensed I was beginning to move toward the laundry room where she gets fed, she would bound through the kitchen, barely touching down, suck her food down in three gulps, and dive through

her cat door like *La Femme Nikita* hitting the laundry chute. I was thinking brain tumor.

I was about to make a vet appointment when I noticed a flea on the kitchen counter. For some reason, I thought to look up. A flea landed on my glasses. I looked down at my white socks. They were covered with fleas. I began hopping around like the ingénue in a West Hollywood all-male production of *Giselle*, making the kind of sounds you hear at a pre-adolescent girls' slumber party.

It seems that, when the raccoons departed, they had failed to take everything with them. Polly was not sick, just smart. She knew fleas were falling from the ceiling and living in the carpet upon which sat her food and her fountain. She wanted no part of them.

I bombed the kitchen, the living room and the upstairs. It didn't help. I exploded a second series of flea bombs. Polly sat near the kitchen door shaking her kitty head in disgust. I removed the lights from the light fixtures and set bombs directly under the sockets, discharging them into the ceiling. The fleas kept coming. I considered going nuclear.

King of the flea killers

And then a fellow employee recommended a particular product that she said would "kill any \$%&* thing." She winked when she said it. She's been widowed twice under mysterious circumstances. It seemed like a good recommendation. It was to be pump-sprayed directly into the primary flea residence. I blasted some through the light fixtures and I thought it went pretty well.

So once again, the nightmare seemed to have ended, until one day Patti came home and found thousands of flies dead in front of each of the doors and windows. She cleaned them up and, within an hour there were thousands more. I arrived to find her crying on the porch. I called Ray the Exterminator.

Ray recommended Ernie, who charged \$55 to tell me that there was something dead somewhere and that the flies would keep coming till the dead whatever had completely decayed. He implicated the raccoons, but recommended against opening up the ceiling. He was willing to set off a bomb for another \$50. I told him I thought I could handle the job. Eventually, the flies were all gone.

The various insecticides cost about \$45, but I think our house is now toxic enough that we can apply for EPA superfund money. I will fill out the application.

Sweet little robbers?

I know there are those among you who believe that we can, in fact, "all just get along" and that raccoons are cute with their sweet little robber masks, their precious little hands and their nifty "food washing" behavior.

Well, pal, you're just wrong.

They have little robber masks because they're relentless, immoral, incorrigible thieves. Using their "cute little hands," they can rip the aluminum siding off your house to gain entry. And believe me, they don't wash anything. They're filthy, vile, nasty pigs.

I offer some simple advice: If your home is ever invaded by raccoons, remove your valuables, your precious photographs, and your pets. Then burn your house to the ground, walk away and never look back.

Jake Satin-Jacobs is the operations performance analysis manager in the Service Performance Analysis Department.

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Funeral Services Set for Maintenance Specialist Ruben Baez

(Sept. 20, 2005) Services for Maintenance Specialist Ruben Baez, who died Sept. 14, are scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday at Holy Family Church in Artesia.

The Rosary will be held at 8 p.m., Wednesday, and a Mass will be celebrated at 9 a.m., Thursday. Holy Family Church is located at 18708 South Clarkdale Ave., Artesia.



Ruben Baez

Burial following the Mass will be at Forest Lawn Cemetery, 4471 Lincoln Ave., Cypress.

Baez, 62, joined Metro in January, 1970 and was assigned to the old Division 16 in Pomona. He retired in February, 1993, but rejoined the agency and was assigned to the Regional Rebuild Center as a maintenance specialist.

"Ruben was a great friend and will be missed for his personality and willingness to always help and teach anyone whenever they requested his assistance," wrote his friend, Maintenance Specialist Leader Jim Avila.

Avila noted that Baez was instrumental in modifying and repairing bus and rail heat, ventilation and air conditioning systems. "His expertise will be greatly missed," he wrote, adding that the agency "has lost one of its best technicians and hardest workers."

Baez, a resident of Ontario, is survived by his wife, four children and several grandchildren.

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The evening's keynote speaker, Supervisor Gloria Molina, 1st vice chair of the Board, called on Metro's management and labor unions to strive to "strengthen our working relationship."

Metro's Transit Operations 'Stars' Honored at Annual Banquet

- 134 are praised for their professionalism
- Molina calls for 'harmony' between management and labor
- [List of Honorees, 2005](#)
- 7 Employees Named '[Spotlight Award](#)' Winners
- [Credit roll](#): 'Night of Stars' committee

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 20, 2005) The stars of Metro were shining brightly, last Friday night, as the agency honored its very best Transit Operations employees during the annual "Night of Stars" banquet at the Westin Bonaventure in downtown LA.

Called to the stage by service sector, the 134 transportation and maintenance employees received their honors from CEO Roger Snoble and Board Member John Fasana. Seven employees, whose actions this past year were especially noteworthy, were designated "Spotlight Award" winners.



Board Member John Fasana and CEO Roger Snoble presented medals to some 134 transportation and maintenance employees.

The honorees are "stars in the eyes of hundreds of thousands of Metro customers," Snoble said. "You are also 'stars' to those of us who have the privilege and pleasure of working with you."

He praised the maintenance employees and bus and train operators for their efforts "to provide the highest quality of service for our customers."

In his remarks, Fasana said, "The great service you provide will build a constituency for greater use of bus and rail transportation."

He saluted the honorees “on behalf of all our Board members for the great job you do and for the professionalism you bring to your work.”

Molina was keynote speaker

The evening’s keynote speaker was Supervisor Gloria Molina, 1st vice chair of the Board, who will take the gavel, next July, from the current chairman, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

Molina said Metro relies on its transit operators and maintenance employees to make the organization “the best it can be. We have to work closer together...to get stronger every single day. Why? Because we have a whole region that is relying on us to do the best we can.”

She recalled that it had often been a struggle over the years to obtain state and federal funding, but added, “We’re building confidence among the area’s leaders and transit riders.” That, she said, is a key to getting needed funding.

With negotiations for the next labor contracts scheduled to begin soon, Molina called on Metro’s management and labor unions to strive to “strengthen our working relationship.”

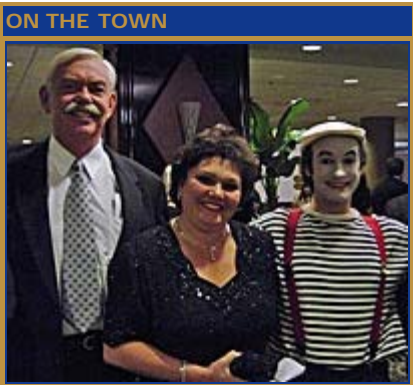
She described how the disruption of a work stoppage can create hardships for employees, their families, commuters, the transit dependent and the community.

Met with Labor Federation chief

The supervisor said she had met just that morning with Martin Ludlow, newly elected secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

She had told Ludlow that Metro and its labor leaders “need to find a way we can work in a harmonious manner” at the bargaining table to hammer out issues, create better working conditions and better opportunity for represented employees.

“Working together and building together is the way this organization is going to grow,” Molina said. “Hopefully, everyone is going to have the confidence to say, ‘I’m going to ride the bus.’”



Grant Myers, West Hollywood Division asst. transportation manager, and Maria Reynolds, West Valley Division transportation manager.



Sketch artist Grant Pominvilla captures the likenesses of Cypress Park Division Bus Operator Colon Gomez and wife, Diana.



West Valley Division Bus Operator Roger Miles and wife, Michelle, greet Los Angeles City Councilman and Board Member Bernard Parks.



Paparazzi get a shot of Gateway

This, she said, will help convince the state and federal governments to fund transit improvements in LA County.

Division Asst. Maintenance Manager
Jim Fulkerson and wife, Wanda.

'NIGHT OF STARS' COMMITTEE

Committee Chair: Fran Curbello

Committee Vice Chair: Jennifer Salamanca

Committee Members

Mory Bonakdar, Rail

Larry Cosner, San Gabriel Valley

Carolyn Drummond, Rail

Suzanne Handler, Westside/Central

Barbara Harris, Rail

David Hershenson, Gateway Cities

Lorene Kelley, San Fernando Valley

Derick Mahome, Westside/Central

Anthony Precie, Rail

Gary Shiroishi, South Bay

George Williamson, Central Maintenance



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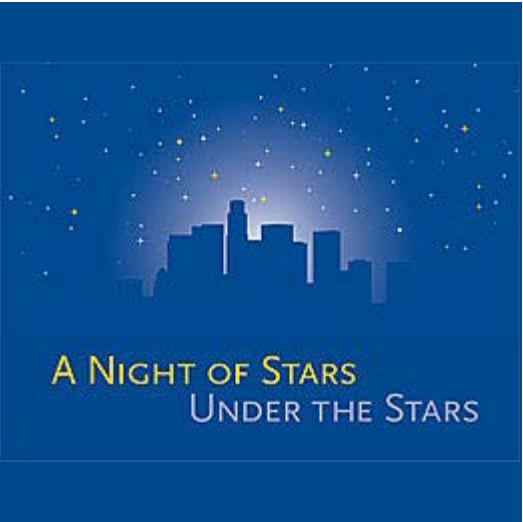
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'Night of Stars' Honors
134 Operations Employees

(Sept. 20, 2005) Gold medallions caught the light as, one-by-one, 134 Transit Operations employees trooped across the stage to be honored during the annual "Night of Stars." Called to the stage by service sector, each received his or her award from their general manager. This year's winners are listed by sectors.



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TRANSPORTATION
Louis Arthur
Donald Autry
Melvin Braxton
Jesus Canaza
Rodolfo Cortez
Manuel Garcia
Emmett Gates
Samson Gessesse
Rene Gomez
Evan Hale
Ivy Hollingquest
Mohammad Islam
Elroy Johnson

San Gabriel Valley

EQUIPMENT
MAINTENANCE
Richard Duff
Aurelio Guerrero
Hien Mao
Antonio Rojas
Danny Tsai
San Gabriel Valley
TRANSPORTATION
Jesse Carrasco
Vladimir Carrasco
Michael Chin
Albert Gallardo
Gabriel Garcia
Herman Gavia
Colon Gomez
Manuel Guzman
Richard Lopez
Juan Navarro
Andres Padilla
Angel Romo
Daniel Stacks
Billie Underhill

Gateway Cities

EQUIPMENT
MAINTENANCE
To Chau
Annette Goodlett-Owens
Hsiao-man Sun
Gateway Cities
TRANSPORTATION
Zacarias Bravo
Cherian Brown
Paul Demazeliere
Jerry Garcia
Edwin Mejia
Baltazar Montes
Samuel Morales
Edward Tanner
Elaine Woodard
Spotlight Award Nominees
Dung Ly
Jose (Leroy) Perez
David Rojas
Juan Villalba (winner)
San Fernando Valley
EQUIPMENT

Donald Lee	Sixto Valadez	MAINTENANCE
Lorenzo Morrison	SPOTLIGHT AWARD NOMINEES	Thomas Hockenbury
Armando Peralta	Jesus Gonzalez (winner)	Kenneth Munroe
Charlie Phillips	Rail	En Ngo
Spotlight Award	EQUIPMENT	Ryszard Scislowski
Nominees	MAINTENANCE	TRANSPORTATION
Melvin Braxton (winner)	Ramon Alatorre	Shiv Bhardwaj
Anthony Meeks	Gerardo Bautista	Ramiro Flores
Oscar D'Agostino	James Bergdoll	Martin Fuentes
South Bay EQUIPMENT	Keith Brittingham	Ricky Harris
MAINTENANCE	Ronnie Burt	Adalberto Lara
Darryl Cheaves	Tadeo Cubero	Roger Miles
Kim Hearn	Lula Foster	Javier Reynoso
Peter Hong	Francisco Gapuz	Efrain Serrano
Juan Marquez	Carlos Hernandez	Leslie Vance
Robert Nelson	Gordon Lancaster	SPOTLIGHT AWARD NOMINEES
William Sullivan	Robert Matthys	Vincent Franco (winner)
Archie Trotter	Rifaat Nakhla	Thomas Hockenbury
Arthur Winston	Quynh Nguyen	Kirk Langmayer
South Bay	John Tena	Benny Rios
TRANSPORTATION	Wesley Tomikoshi	Central Maintenance
Ignatius Arellano	Joseph Tong	Leonardo Alfaro
Xavier Chacon	Steven Yakemonis	Hean Chhith
Emiliano Chavez	Rail	Max Duran
Luis Diaz	TRANSPORTATION	Mark Hamasaki
Emmanuel Gladden	Edgar Alvarez	Robert Kang
Marjorie Jackson	Aaron Cain	Gloria Largaespada
Jerry Jenkins	Rogelio Chacon	Roger Serrano
John Mitchell	Joel Gibson	Tom Sintoplertchai
Douglas Park	Ralph Lee	Randy Sueda
Willie Reyes	Rosario Lopez	Ralph Victorin
Gary Thomas	Robert Nidetz	SPOTLIGHT AWARD NOMINEES
Gregorio Vargas Olvera	Tu Phan	Minh Le (winner)
Ernie Vasquez	Rosendo Reyes	
Ronald Wicks	David Singer	
Naim Yazdani	Wilbert Vander-Ploeg	
Edward York	SPOTLIGHT AWARD NOMINEES	
SPOTLIGHT AWARD NOMINEES	James Hazelitt	
Carl Johnson (winner)	Patricia Rozema	
	(winner)	
	John Tena	

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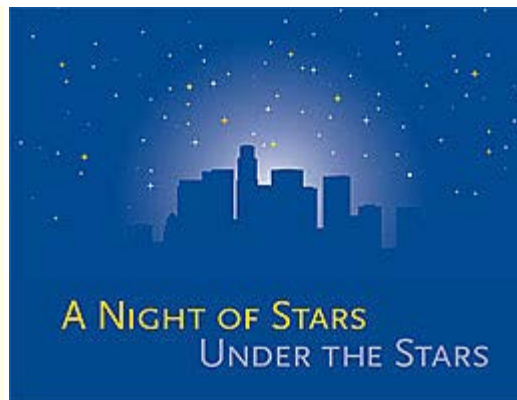
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• 7 Employees Named 'Spotlight Award' Winners



(Sept. 20, 2005) Seven Transit Operations employees, whose outstanding performance this past year merited special consideration, were named as "Spotlight Award" winners during the "Night of Stars."

Here's the list of this year's Spotlight Award winners:

Westside/Central

The Westside/Central sector's Operator Melvin Braxton has spent his entire 35-year career at Venice Division 6. Considered a "go-to guy" by fellow operators, he has maintained exemplary safety and attendance records, said General Manager David Armijo. The Division 6 team is motivated by his positive and productive attitude and look to him to give them valuable advice.



Rail Transportation Operations Supervisor Patricia Rozema with Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis.

Metro Rail

Rail Transportation Operations Supervisor Patricia Rozema was Metro Rail's Spotlight Award winner. General Manager Gerald Francis described how, while working as a rail controller, Rozema's quick thinking thwarted an attack on a train operator. Her authoritative response over the radio to the operator's call frightened the assailant, who fled without harming the operator.

Gateway Cities

The Gateway Cities honoree was Mechanic "A" Leader Juan Villalba, a 23-year Metro veteran. His duties at Crossroads Depot Division 2 include

ensuring that morning and afternoon rollouts are successfully completed. General Manager Alex Clifford said Villalba played a key role ensuring that Division 2 provided extra buses, earlier this year, when Division 1 was being renovated.

Central Maintenance

Mechanic “A” Minh Le, assigned to Non-Revenue Division 4, strives for a level of professionalism all mechanics should try to emulate, said Deputy Executive Officer Milo Victoria. Le “exemplifies what a superior mechanic he is on a daily basis. His “dedication to the agency is absolutely outstanding” and he is always willing to help others get the job done right.”



South Bay Mechanic “A” Minh Le and Deputy Executive Officer Milo Victoria.

South Bay

General Manager Dana Coffey commended Operator Carl Johnson for his “caring attitude, his compassion and dedication to his job and his community.” Last summer, Johnson became concerned about an elderly woman who appeared to be lost. He helped her aboard his bus and alerted the Bus Control Center. The woman had been reported missing. “His alertness and actions resulted in her being reunited with her loved ones.”



Operator Carl Johnson and South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey.

San

Fernando Valley

West Valley Division 8 Operator Vincent Franco has trained fellow operators on the new Metro Liners slated for the Metro Orange Line. General Manager Richard Hunt said he also has become an ambassador for the Orange Line at many special events in the Valley, and is especially effective in the Hispanic community. He has received numerous passenger commendations.



San Gabriel Valley

San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt and West Valley Division 8 Operator Vincent Franco.

The San

Gabriel Valley sector’s choice, Mechanic “A” Jesus Gonzalez, began his 24-year career as a service



Mechanic "A" Jesus Gonzalez and San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig.

attendant. Now a mechanic relief leader at Division 9, he is a skilled bus mechanic who thinks on his feet and has "earned a great level of respect" from both supervisors and management, said General Manager Jack Gabig. He is admired for his reliability and leadership.

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check it out later at
www.sixflags.com/parks/magicmountain

Magic Mountain Ticket Sell-Out Prompts Metro Store to Get More

- Metro Store has 200 more tickets available for the Nov. 19 'Private Party.'

By ARLENE LIM

(Sept. 21, 2005) There was no denying the popularity of Magic Mountain among employees. The Metro Store sold all 300 tickets for a private party at the amusement park the very day they went on sale.

Now, those who were unable to purchase tickets the first go-around have a second chance. The Metro Store has 200 more of the \$21 tickets for sale for the Nov. 19 event.

"I have not seen this sort of fast ticket sales since we sold the tickets for the Opening Day to the Dodgers, last spring," says Danielle Boutier, director, Communication Services.

Before the store opened its doors, Sept. 12, a line already had formed. Within half an hour, almost half of the tickets were already sold. By noon, only 33 remained.

The special party tickets entitle Metro employees and their guests to enter the park between 7 p.m. and 1 a.m., Nov. 19, and to free parking. Employees are limited to buying eight tickets.

Those who attend the party will be able to enjoy all Magic Mountain rides and amenities – minus the long lines. Only about 6,000 people from Metro and several other companies will be in attendance.

Temporary Store Hours

Effective Wednesday, Sept. 21, the Metro Store hours will be from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The store is closed between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. for lunch.



The Revolution - The world's first 360 degree looping coaster debuted at Six Flags Magic Mountain in 1976.

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With the Metro Orange Line about to bloom, day and night bus testing begins and residents are cautioned to strictly adhere to traffic signs and signals. Here, a new Metro Liner heads east past the newly sprouted Woodley Station as a team of Sheriff's Deputies on horseback patrol the intersection.



Photo by Gary Leonard

End-to-End, Day and Night Testing Begins on Orange Line

- Valley residents reminded to use caution at Orange Line intersections

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 21, 2005) Metro has begun day and night bus testing on the Metro Orange Line and is reminding pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists to use caution at intersections along the entire right-of-way between North Hollywood and Woodland Hills.

Operators may access the transitway at any time to test-run Metro's new 60-foot 'Metro Liner' buses. The testing will increasingly mimick regular scheduled service during preparations for the official October 29 transitway opening date.

Metro is strongly urging San Fernando Valley residents to remain alert and strictly adhere to all clearly marked signs and signals, both on the transitway and at street intersections. Trespassing on the transitway for any reason is strictly prohibited.

To help ensure public safety, Metro provides these five safety tips:

- Always be alert at intersections.

- Never turn right on a red arrow.
- Stay out of 'Keep Clear' zones at intersections.
- Proceed with caution at intersections.
- Be mindful of the flashing BUS sign.

"Following these important steps will help ensure everyone's safety as Metro works to bring this major new transit service to the San Fernando Valley," says East Valley Division 15 Transportation Manager Gary Spivack, who is coordinating the operator training.

The agency is working closely with law enforcement agencies to increase traffic enforcement during testing on the Metro Orange Line. Transit Services Bureau deputies and LAPD will patrol the transitway and street intersections and will issue citations for violations.

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THIS IS ONLY A DRILL - SWAT team takes aim at animal rights activists, who exploded bombs and wounded passengers and law enforcement officials during simulated terrorist drill Wednesday at the Metro Green Line Marine station.



Photos by Jose Ubaldo

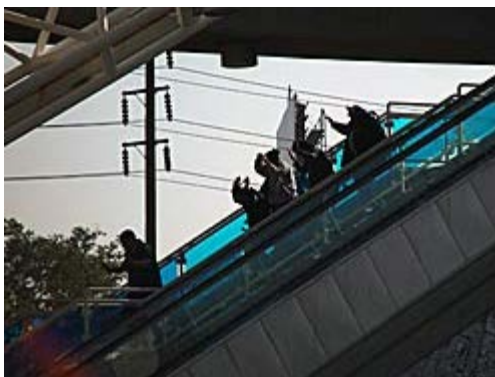
'Terrorist Attack' Drill on Metro Green Line Station

- Anti-terrorist exercise was a learning experience for area police and fire departments

(Sept. 22, 2005) Militant "animal rights activists" armed with automatic weapons took control of the Metro Green Line's Marine Station, Wednesday morning, exploding two bombs and seriously wounding 10 police officers and 15 passengers during a 45-minute shooting spree.

Had it been an actual terrorist attack, it would have been a tragedy – instead, the training exercise conducted for Metro by the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau was a learning experience for the members of the 10 area law enforcement agencies and three fire departments participating.

One of largest anti-terrorist drills every held on the Metro system, it included some 40 employees and others playing the part of passengers, while four members of the Metro Security



Deputies and police officers tossed smoke grenades and fired their weapons at the four animal rights activists, who took a heavy toll on the officers and passengers before being "killed" in a hail of simulated gunfire.

Department took the role of masked, gun-toting animal rights activists.

Responding to the threat, deputies and police officers tossed smoke grenades and fired their weapons at the four “terrorists” who took a heavy toll on the officers and passengers before being “killed” in a hail of simulated gunfire.



‘Very challenging problem’

“It was a very challenging problem,” says Sheriff’s Sgt. Andrew Bodogne, event PIO. “We learned a lot trying to deal with tactical issues presented by very aggressive terrorists at a station where they held the high ground and could cover both entrances.”

The purpose of the drill at the station in Hawthorne was to foster cooperation, build working relationships and develop strong communications among first responder agencies near the Green Line.

“Because the transit system extends into so many jurisdictions, we want to make sure we can communicate with each other,” says Bodogne. “We had excellent response from local law enforcement and fire departments.”

A video crew taped the exercise for further study as the law enforcement agencies develop new anti-terrorist tactics. A SWAT team monitored the drill, evaluated the tactics and participated in the debriefing following the exercise.

The Marine station was closed to service during the exercise. Customers were advised to use the Douglas or El Segundo stations. Metro operated shuttle vans from the Douglas station to Redondo Beach and Marine avenues.



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Bus Operator Charged with Vandalizing Fareboxes

- Damages total \$60,000 for five 'smart card' fareboxes

By PAMELA MURANO

(Sept. 22, 2005) A Metro Bus operator charged with five felony counts of vandalizing fareboxes – with damages totaling \$60,000 – surrendered, Wednesday, to Sheriff's deputies.

Operator Luano James, 45, a 21-year employee assigned to East Valley Division 15, was arrested on a probable cause (Ramey) warrant obtained by the Transit Services Bureau following an investigation by Investigator Cliff Ladage of the Metro Special Investigations Unit.

James was charged under section 594 (A) (1) of the California Penal code. He was booked at Los Angeles County Jail where bail was set at \$20,000.

The operator is accused of vandalizing five of the new "smart card" fareboxes aboard the buses he was assigned to operate by pouring coffee or other liquid in the fareboxes and also by stripping the sensors from the farebox currency receivers.

Cameras and digital video recorders in the buses documented the vandalism, which rendered the fareboxes inoperable. The replacement cost for each farebox is \$12,000.

The warrant was issued Sept. 16, but James was on vacation and failed to attend a Sept. 21 administrative hearing at Division 15. Attempts to serve the warrant at his home were not successful.

Legal counsel for James contacted Sheriff's detectives, Sept. 20, and made arrangements for a voluntary surrender, Sept. 21.

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Board Authorizes Purchase of 200 New Buses

- Buy includes 60-foot articulateds, 45-footers and hybrids
- Bus buy will exceed Consent Decree orders

By MARC LITTMAN

(Sept. 23, 2005) The Board of Directors authorized the purchase of 200 new buses, Thursday, all but six of them high-capacity CNG vehicles that will be assigned to the busiest bus lines.

The new bus procurements include 94 articulated buses – the 60-foot Metro Liners, with 45 percent more seating capacity – and 100 45-foot buses with 15 percent more seating.

In addition, Metro is purchasing six hybrid 40-foot coaches that will run on gasoline and electricity.

The bus procurements will cost more than \$100 million, although the final purchase price will be determined once bids for the 45-foot coaches are received.

The Board also adjusted the FY 2005 budget to add a new pilot line, Express Line 577 X, which will connect the El Monte Transit Center, Cal State Long Beach and the Long Beach Veteran's Affairs Medical Center via the carpool lane on the 605 Freeway.

Finally, the Board adopted changes to Metro's Transit Service Policy to factor in Consent Decree compliance and determine the net benefit to transit dependent riders of proposed service changes.

Exceeds Consent Decree

With the purchase of the 200 new buses, Metro will far exceed recent orders under the federal Consent Decree.

In the past two years, Special Master Donald Bliss has ordered Metro to buy buses with seating capacity equivalent to 660 standard 40-foot buses (26,400 total passenger seats). Including recent procurements, Metro is buying the equivalent of 730 standard buses (29,198 seats).

"Many of these larger buses already are in service," noted CEO Roger Snoble.

Altogether, Metro has purchased more than 2,000 new buses since the Consent Decree was signed nine years ago.

Metro Bus service has expanded by more than 25 percent during peak hours, and new service such as Metro Rapid has been implemented along with a series of pilot lines.



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New Canon Copiers to be Installed in Metro Offices

- 180 new machines will replace older models

(Sept. 23, 2005) Newer, faster, better – that’s the word on the 180 new Canon imageRUNNER photocopy machines now being installed in offices throughout Metro.

The high-speed machines, which will replace the older Canon models, can copy at speeds of 35, 45 and 55 pages per minute, depending upon the model.

The model installed in a given office will be based on the history of a department’s usage, says Thomas Rodriguez, Printing Services supervisor.

The copier swap-out began Friday and should be completed within a week. Every office that currently has a Canon copier – including the operating divisions, Regional Rebuild Center and the Rail Operations Center – will get a new model.

Thirty-five of the 180 copiers will have a wider range of capabilities that include scanning, faxing, e-mail and printing. Installed at Metro Headquarters, in the service sector offices and at other key locations, those 35 units will be networked into the e-mail system.

Although the new copiers will be faster than the older models, it will still be cheaper to send large projects to the Copy Center, says Rodriguez, noting that the Copy Center’s costs are less than the per-copy charge on the new Canon machines.

In August, the Board awarded a \$2.15 million, five-year contract to Canon Business Solutions for the copier replacement project.



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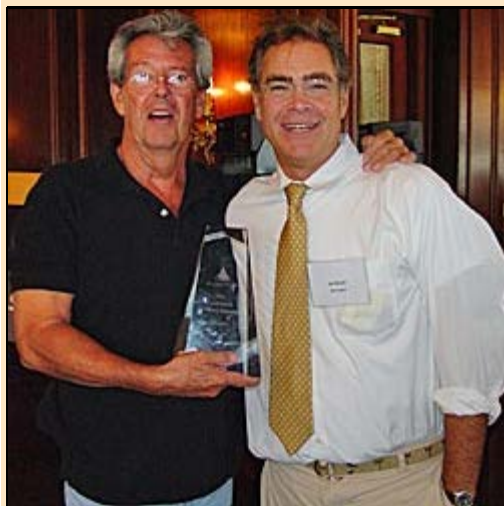
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Photos: Gayle Anderson



Director of Metro Commute Services David Sutton, at left in top photo, sets the stage for presentation of the 2005 Golden Pylon awards at the annual traffic reporters luncheon held this year at Maggiano's 'Little Italy' restaurant in The Grove. And the winners are: Top left: KFWB traffic reporter Jeff Baugh and KCAL's Jon Bruno. Top right, Baugh with KRTV 101's Chasta Mullings. Not pictured: CHP Officer Rebecca Estrada, Air Watch traffic reporter Brandi Lanai and KIIS FM traffic reporter Ginger Chan.

Six Traffic Reporters Receive 'Golden Pylon Awards' from Southland Transit Agencies

- Ceremony kicks off annual Rideshare Week, Oct. 3 – 7

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 29, 2005) Transit agencies throughout Southern California presented

coveted Golden Pylon Awards to six TV and radio traffic reporters, Wednesday, recognizing them for dedication to keeping Southland traffic moving.



Air Watch reporters, from left, Angel Martinez, Lori Ryan, Sabina Mora and Sharon Reardon. The reporters promote "Rideshare Thursday" on the air waves and encourage listeners to help fight traffic congestion.

The awards were presented during a luncheon in Los Angeles by Metro, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission, San Bernardino Associated Governments and Ventura County Transportation Commission.



A rideshare van plows through 125 empty gallon containers of gasoline to demonstrate amount of money one could save by ridesharing just one day a week for 50 weeks. By today's gas prices, the amount saved would total \$367, reported event organizer Robbyn Lystrup, Johnson-Ukropina creative marketing firm director.

Honored for their fast, accurate road condition reports that help thousands of commuters avoid traffic snarls each day, were:

- Rebecca Estrada, California Highway Patrol Officer, Fox 11, Univision 34, KFRN Family Radio, Radio Mexico
- Brandi Lanai, KDAY, KSPA, KDL
- Ginger Chan, KIIS-FM, KLAC (XTRA Sports 570), KTDD,KTMS, KIXA
- Jeff Baugh, KFWB-AM
- Chasta Mullings, K-EARTH 101
- Jon Bruno, KCAL, KHTS

The "Golden Pylon" awards luncheon kicks off the Annual Rideshare Week Oct. 3 – 7. Rideshare Week is a statewide campaign to reduce solo driving on the state's congested streets and freeways.

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Streamlining Student Fare Card Process Boosts Sales 45%

- **No application, no photo or fee required**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 27, 2005) Since Metro streamlined its Student Fare Card application procedure earlier this year, sales of monthly student discount stamps have soared 45 percent.

In July 2004, kindergarten through senior high school kids bought 19,914 of the \$20 stamps. In July 2005, a total of 28,867 stamps were sold – an increase of 8,953 or 45 percent.

Given the success of the program, April McKay, Metro's director of Customer Programs and Services, has ordered 50,000 student discount stamps for distribution this school year.

"By making it easier," says McKay, "it's clearly had an impact on sales."

With the change in procedure, a student no longer has to file an application, provide a photo or pay a fee. Kids can get a free Student Fare Card at any of Metro's four Customer Centers or from school administrators in the LAUSD and Pasadena Unified School District systems.

ID may be required for some

With a fare card in hand, all a student has to do to buy the monthly stamps is to print his or her name on the front, sign the back and present the card at the point of sale.

Students in grades 9 to 12 may have to show a photo ID or school ID to buy stamps. Parents buying stamps for their children must be accompanied by the child or show proof of the child's school enrollment.

Students can buy the discounted monthly stamps at a Customer Center or at any Metro pass sales outlet. At least six LAUSD schools also are selling stamps.

Previously, the Student Fare Card procedure could take 20 days or longer. The photo ID cards were sent to an outside printer, then returned to Metro before they were distributed to the applicants.



It's that easy! Metro brochure spells it out for students.

“People complained that it took too long and was too difficult to get a student fare card,” says McKay. “Now, all you have to do is to ask the school for a card or go to a Customer Center.”

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State Fines Metro Contractor for Violating Prevailing Wage Laws

- Inspector General’s investigation caught the violation

(Sept. 27, 2005) A construction company hired to upgrade air conditioning systems at Metro operating divisions 7, 9 and 18 has been fined some \$7,100 for violating state wage laws.

An investigation by the Office of the Inspector General determined that HNK Construction of Los Angeles failed to pay the area’s prevailing wage, as required by state law, to a laborer and an electrician for work performed from mid-2004 to early 2005.

The laborer was owed \$25,265, but was paid only \$6,363 for 652 straight work hours and 96 overtime hours. The electrician was owed \$12,702, but was paid only \$4,156 for 260 straight work hours and 15 overtime hours.

The workers were paid at rates substantially less than those reported to Metro on certified payroll records, according to Deputy Inspector General Mimi Strauss.

Acting on the OIG’s investigation, the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement of the state Department of Labor Relations ordered HNK to pay a total fine of \$7,145.98, including \$320.98 that went into a workers’ training fund.

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Streamlining Student Fare Card Process Boosts Sales 45%

- **No application, no photo or fee required**

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 27, 2005) Since Metro streamlined its Student Fare Card application procedure earlier this year, sales of monthly student discount stamps have soared 45 percent.

In July 2004, kindergarten through senior high school kids bought 19,914 of the \$20 stamps. In July 2005, a total of 28,867 stamps were sold – an increase of 8,953 or 45 percent.

Given the success of the program, April McKay, Metro's director of Customer Programs and Services, has ordered 50,000 student discount stamps for distribution this school year.

"By making it easier," says McKay, "it's clearly had an impact on sales."

With the change in procedure, a student no longer has to file an application, provide a photo or pay a fee. Kids can get a free Student Fare Card at any of Metro's four Customer Centers or from school administrators in the LAUSD and Pasadena Unified School District systems.

ID may be required for some

With a fare card in hand, all a student has to do to buy the monthly stamps is to print his or her name on the front, sign the back and present the card at the point of sale.

Students in grades 9 to 12 may have to show a photo ID or school ID to buy stamps. Parents buying stamps for their children must be accompanied by the child or show proof of the child's school enrollment.

Students can buy the discounted monthly stamps at a Customer Center or at any Metro pass sales outlet. At least six LAUSD schools also are selling stamps.

Previously, the Student Fare Card procedure could take 20 days or longer. The photo ID cards were sent to an outside printer, then returned to Metro before they were distributed to the applicants.



It's that easy! Metro brochure spells it out for students.

“People complained that it took too long and was too difficult to get a student fare card,” says McKay. “Now, all you have to do is to ask the school for a card or go to a Customer Center.”

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Arthur Winston, a service attendant leader at Division 5, meets his colleagues, from left, Metro Blue Line service attendants Alfred Morgan, Geoffrey Springer and Andre Thomas.



Photos by Rich Morallo

Arthur Winston's Visit Inspires Metro Blue Line Employees

- 99-year-old 'icon' is making the rounds before retirement
- Departments can [schedule a visit](#) from Arthur

By RICH MORALLO

(Sept. 28, 2005) A month ago, Rail Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Ronald Green was in his office listening to complaints from two staff members when he thought about Arthur Winston, Metro's 99-year old service attendant leader.

"I had these two employees grumbling about work and it suddenly occurred to me that if they could talk to Arthur, who's been so loyal and committed to Metro for the past 71 years, we all could learn something," said Green.

Three weeks later, responding to Green's request, Winston visited the Metro Blue Line Fleet Services night shift in Long Beach and shared stories about his life and career.

"I started with Metro in 1924 and earned less than 50 cents an hour," said the smartly dressed and perennially smiling Winston. "The cost of



living was low, and a house cost about \$2,500 then."

Arthur Winston, at 99, and a "junior" employee, 70-year-old Julio Regalado, a Metro Blue Line maintenance specialist.

Winston also said he often worked two full shifts and decided not to own a credit card. "I learned to do without."

The Metro icon followed his talk by answering questions.

Secret of his long life

What's the secret of your long life? "It's in your mind. I don't think about how old I am and I don't worry about it."

How do you keep fit? "I do a lot of walking and stay on my feet. The worst job is one where you have to sit all day."

What were your earlier jobs? "I picked cotton," said Winston, who was born in Oklahoma in 1906, a year before statehood.

An attentive audience of Metro Blue Line Fleet Services employees listens during a talk by Arthur Winston.



Seated in the audience, Maintenance Specialist Shawn Goff remembered hearing about the legendary Arthur Winston from co-workers for the first time 10 years ago.

"They were talking about some guy who's been here at Metro since the trains were pulled by horses," laughed Goff.

Winston, who turns 100 on March 22, 2006, is interested in visiting other divisions before his centennial birthday and planned retirement.

He visited Venice Division 6 on Wednesday and is scheduled to visit San Gabriel Valley Division 9 and Customer Relations at Gateway Headquarters after that.

Metro departments and operating divisions interested in scheduling a visit by Arthur Winston should call South Bay Community Relations at 310-225-6040.

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Sector Councils Schedule October Meetings

By RICK JAGER

(Sept. 28, 2005) Metro’s service sector Governance Councils will hold public meetings in October to discuss various transportation issues as well as proposed Metro Bus service changes.

The following is a list of Metro governance council October meetings:

- Westside/Central Service Sector, Tuesday, Oct. 4, 6:30 p.m., La Cienega Tennis Center, Sunset Room, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills.
- San Fernando Valley Service Sector, Wednesday, Oct. 5, 6:30 p.m. , Kaiser Hospital, 5601 De Soto Ave., Auditorium A, Woodland Hills.
- San Gabriel Valley Service Sector, Tuesday, Oct. 11, 5 p.m., San Gabriel Valley Sector Office, 3369 Santa Anita Ave., El Monte.
- Gateway Service Sector, Thursday, Oct. 13, 2 p.m., The Gas Company, 9240 Firestone Blvd., Downey.
- South Bay Service Sector, Friday, Oct. 14, 9:30 a.m., Carson Community Center, 801 E. Carson, Carson.

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Future patrons get a taste of the Orange Line at Warner Center Ride Fest event June 9.



Photo: Juan Ocampo

200 Volunteers Needed to Staff Metro Orange Line Opening

- Deadline for volunteering is Friday, Oct. 7

(Sept. 28, 2005) About 200 employee volunteers are still needed to provide crowd control and to staff special events during the opening of the Metro Orange Line on Saturday, Oct. 29, and Sunday, Oct. 30.

The deadline for volunteering is Friday, Oct. 7. Copies of the volunteer form are available at all operating divisions. The form also is posted online at myMetro.net.

Volunteers will be expected to work both days of the weekend opening. Each will receive two Orange Line staff T-shirts and a staff cap to wear as the opening event uniform.

Volunteers will be scheduled to work one of three eight-hour shifts on Saturday – 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. Two shifts are scheduled on Sunday – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Volunteer training sessions will be scheduled in October.

Represented employees who volunteer for the opening event will be paid according to the terms of their collective bargaining agreements.

Non-represented employees classified as hourly, non-exempt workers will receive compensatory time off in lieu of compensation for hours worked in excess of 40 hours. The compensatory time will be counted

as time-and-a-half hours worked over 40 per week.

Exempt employees will have straight time added to their TOWP hour bank. All employees must have their supervisor's permission to volunteer for the Orange Line opening.

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The Labor and Employee Relations Department has scheduled a cake and punch farewell event for Arbitration Specialist Denice Findlay from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Friday, in the Windsor Room, 15th floor. Findlay is retiring after 32 years at Metro. Photo by Bill Heard.



Denice Findlay's Long, Successful Journey – A Metro Career

- From information agent to arbitration specialist in 32 short years

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Sept. 29, 2005) When Denice Findlay joined Metro as a customer information agent in October 1973, she was a mere slip of a girl, 19 years old, and just starting what would become a long career in transportation.

Now, 32 years later with retirement at hand, the Labor Relations arbitration specialist can look back on a series of jobs of increasing responsibility – both union and non-union – that have included stints in operations, rail construction and human resources.

Findlay also counts personal achievements that include bachelor's and master's degrees in business management.

And she's not done yet. Although Findlay is leaving Metro, she takes her experience in labor arbitration to the Orange County Employees Association, where she will be the manager of employee labor relations.

"Every position I've had was a building block that prepared me for the next thing I did," she says. "I've always felt really fortunate that I was

able to do that.”

Hours with colored pencils

When Findlay joined the SCRTD those many years ago, customer information agents trained for 10 weeks, learning every bus route and familiarizing themselves with timetables. There were no computers, but she was given a brand new Thomas Guide and spent hours with colored pencils marking out bus routes on the pages.

When a customer asked for directions, she flipped to the appropriate pages and traced the route through the Guide, supplementing the directions with timetable information.

After 18 months on the phones, Findlay took a job as a ticket agent selling bus tickets at a park and ride lot located at a drive-in theater in Canoga Park. A decision to move to monthly passes soon ended that job, however, and she was back in customer information.

When a job as an equipment records specialist working the graveyard shift at Division 2 opened up in 1975, she put in a bid through her union, the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks (BRAC) – later the Transportation Communications Union (TCU).

At first, Findlay didn’t get the job. Instead, the supervisor told her, “A young thing like you working graveyard would be unsafe, so I thought I would give it to a young man.”

Insisted on the job

She was promised the next opening on the day shift, but realizing that she would lose seniority bidding rights, Findlay insisted on taking the job – and the supervisor reluctantly agreed.

It was while working as an assignment coordinator and Vehicle Maintenance System instructor that she met and married her husband of 20 years, Jim Findlay, since retired from his job as an SCRTD maintenance manager. The Findlays live in Irvine, and Jim works part-time for the Orange County Toll Roads.

Following positions as an office supervisor for SCRTD’s rail construction group and as staff assistant in Human Resources, Findlay transferred to the Labor and Employee Relations Department.

In her current position as an arbitration specialist, her responsibilities include preparing arbitration cases and participating on arbitration panels with County Counsel. She also mentors five new labor relations representatives.

‘Keep your integrity’

Looking back at her career, Findlay advises new employees to “build relationships, make good on your promises, keep your integrity, identify your internal ‘clients’ and recognize that your role within the organization is to serve.”

And she always tried to have fun – no matter the job, no matter the responsibility.

“I’ve loved everything I’ve done at Metro,” Findlay says. “And, if this new position in Orange County hadn’t been offered to me, I wouldn’t be retiring, because I love what I do!”

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Outgoing Metro Cafe staff bid farewell to Metro after completing food service contract held by Sodexho since 1995.



Back row: Nicolas Carcano, Veronica Diaz, Pablo Ortega, Luis Olvera, Eladio Puc, Jose Medina, Isaac Garcia. Middle row, from left: Carlos Hernandez, Luis Gavidia, Julia Camacho, Wilfredo Ayala. Front row: Maria Pacheco, Linda Sanchez, manager Timikel Sharpe and Chef Rafael Vazquez. Photo: Gayle Anderson

Aramark begins contract to manage Metro Cafe on Monday

- Sodexho moves on but five members of the staff are retained by new management.
- Check it out at www.aramarkcafe.com/metro. Aramark's online website features the daily menu, the catering menu, café news and contact information. Employees can still download and view or print a pdf version of the menu from the Metro Café link on the Intranet homepage.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

Metro Café will close at 1:30 p.m., Friday, as employees of Sodexho Dining Services make way for a new food service provider.

Sodexho has managed the dining facility since Metro Headquarters opened in 1995, but on Monday, Oct. 3, the Metro Café will open under new management, Aramark, an international company with regional headquarters in Irvine.

Aramark is a regional presence in the Southland, managing cafeteria and dining room services for the Los Angeles Times, Boeing, LAUSD, the Los

Angeles Convention Center, Union Bank and the Shrine Auditorium, among others. Its international division manages food services for the Olympics, a tall order to be sure.

Metro Café customers will have a new menu, a new serving of Aramark's trademark presentation and some familiar faces behind the counter.

Chef Ubi Martins, a native of Brazil and a graduate of several culinary institutes, will head a staff of 13. Martins is leaving his post at the Union Bank Corporate Center in Monterey Park for his new assignment at Metro Café.

Aramark's food service plans include a HotZone, SaladZone and GrillZone, each with core menu items that will change weekly. Service will include weekly specials, promotions and seasonal items, as well as online catering service within the Gateway Building and at the Regional Rebuild Center.

Immediate changes offer a new look and new style for the cafeteria, including fresh paint and décor, a made-to-order pizza station, new vending machines and a fashionable look for the crew, who will be outfitted in colorful new uniforms.

A week-long grand opening, expected later in October, will formally welcome Metro Café customers to the new service.

The transition will be smoothed by familiar faces: Aramark has retained five members of the Sodexho staff. They are Luis Gavida, who currently manages the RRC café; cashiers Julia Camacho and Maria Pacheco; Luis Olvera, who serves up perfect over-easy eggs from the breakfast grill, and the salad chef, Carlos Hernandez. The rest of the crew has been reassigned to other Sodexho venues.

The Board approved a motion, Aug. 25, awarding a five-year contract with five one-year options to Aramark Services, Inc., to operate the café at Metro Headquarters and at the RRC beginning Oct. 1.



Aramark Chef Ubi Martins will head a staff of 13.

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Orange Line rising at Winnetka Station.



Photo by Ned Racine

Metro Orange Line Construction Reaches Substantial Completion

- Transitway represents several 'firsts' for LA County

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 30, 2005) Metro marked the substantial completion of the Metro Orange Line, Friday, with a media preview of the San Fernando Valley's new 14-mile transitway, due to open to the public, Oct. 29.

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Board member Pam O'Connor, CEO Roger Snoble and Deputy CEO John Catoe, local reporters and camera crews got an authentic passenger experience as a sleek Metro Liner drove the line at full operational speeds, pausing at the 13 stations between North Hollywood and Woodland Hills.

Since 2003, construction crews have worked to convert the old Southern Pacific railroad right-of-way, making major street and intersection improvements and building pedestrian and bicycle paths.

The new transitway represents several firsts for Los Angeles County: it is the region's first right-of-way built exclusively for buses. It is the Valley's first major transit service since the opening of the Metro Red Line in 2000. It is also the first time that Metro Liner buses will be placed into revenue service.

'Region-wide model'

"When the Orange Line succeeds – as I know it will – it will serve as a region-wide model that offers commuters a quick, reliable, flexible and inexpensive alternative to gridlock," said Yaroslavsky.

More than 20 Metro local and Metro Rapid Bus Lines will connect with the Metro Orange Line, as well as some Burbank Bus, Commuter Express and Santa Clarita Transit lines. Ridership on the line is expected to reach an average of 22,000 boardings per day by 2020.

The transitway will incorporate a host of innovative construction and design features. Five park & ride lots at Van Nuys, Sepulveda, Balboa, Reseda and Pierce College Stations will provide more than 3,200 parking spaces.

The project includes eight miles of new bicycle and pedestrian paths and California native landscaping.

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Metro Orange Line

COUNTDOWN

**Metro Orange Line
COUNTDOWN**
Photos by Ned Racine
9/30/2005
Photos taken along the route
of the Metro Orange Line track
the progress of the
construction of the transitway
in the San Fernando Valley.



8/17/2005>
Bikeway
approaching Valley
College Station.



8/17/2005>
Early morning
bike rider.



8/17/2005> Bikeway
north of Valley
College Station - POV
- Looking southeast.



8/17/2005> Nearly
completed Woodman
Station at the
Oxnard-Buffalo
intersection



8/17/2005>



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Director of Metro Commute Services David Sutton demonstrates how to save gas by vanpooling at media event held to promote Rideshare Week.



Photo by Casey Barnes/Van Pool Services, Inc.

Metro Moves into High Gear for Rideshare Week, Oct. 3-7

- Business participation in rideshare programs up 68%

By JOSÉ UBALDO

(Sept. 30, 2005) October 3 through 7 is Rideshare Week and Metro is challenging commuters and others to share a ride and save money on gas while easing traffic and air pollution.

Carpooling or taking public transit once a week, the agency says, will save the average commuter 125 gallons of gas a year.

Metro also is urging Southland commuters to participate in the radio campaign, "Pick a Day, Any Day", and join a carpool, or vanpool, take the bus or train, walk, ride a bicycle or telecommute.

"There has never been a better time than now to start sharing the ride," said David Sutton, Director of Metro Commute Services. "Let's share the ride and show the nation that Southern Californians are serious about helping out!"

Participation in Metro Rideshare programs grows every year. More than 1,000 worksites with 250 or more employees participate in Metro Commute Service programs, representing a 68 percent increase within the last three years.

Business participation

An additional 1,200 businesses with fewer than 250 employees also participate in these programs.

Metro's Rideshare programs are not limited to employers. On Oct. 6, Metro and UCLA will announce the debut of the UCLA Go! Metro Pass program for UCLA students and employees.

The new Go Metro Pass will give UCLA students the convenience of an unlimited Metro Bus and Metro Rail pass at significantly reduced fares. UCLA is subsidizing half off the cost of this program to make it affordable.

Metro School Pool is a service offering free, voluntary and confidential matching service to parents interested in organizing school carpools.

The program is open to students in all participating public and private elementary, middle and high schools in Los Angeles County. Parents share the task of driving students to and from school.


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Board Acts on Bus-Only Lane, Transit Security, Orange Line Graffiti

- [Item 8. Wilshire Boulevard Bus-Only Lane](#)
- [Item 14. Bus Digital Video Recorders](#)
- [Item 15. Metro Rail Surveillance Equipment](#)
- [Item 29. Metro Orange Line Graffiti](#)

(Sept. 30, 2005) The Board of Directors approved motions, during its September meeting, that will advance the bus priority lane project on Wilshire Boulevard and improve bus and rail security.

Earlier, the Operations Committee approved a plan to help fight graffiti on the Metro Orange Line.

Item 8, Wilshire Boulevard Bus-Only Lane. In March 2004, Metro and the City of Los Angeles opened a one-mile, bus-only demonstration lane on Wilshire Boulevard just west of the Veterans Administration Hospital. Studies showed the priority lane reduced bus running times and improved schedule reliability, and, in September 2004, the LA City Council made the lane permanent.

At its September meeting, the Board voted to direct the CEO to report back within 60 days with a formal scope of work that would include community outreach, street and road improvements and possible off-street parking, along with a formal project budget and implementation schedule for extending the priority lane into Beverly Hills, Santa Monica and West LA.

Metro also must complete a transit priority lane study, develop criteria for priority lanes and identify other possible priority lane corridors.

Item 14, Bus Digital Video Recorders. The Board approved a motion providing an additional \$1.15 million for installation of upgraded digital video recorders (DVR) on 397 Neoplan buses purchased in the late 1990s. Unlike the older DVR's, the new units can store and transmit "real-time" images to the ATMS central monitoring system.

Installation of the first 130 DVR units began, Aug. 11, on Neoplan buses at South Bay Division 18. With the new funding, Metro also can install new DVRs on 99 buses at North Los Angeles Division 3 and on 168 buses at Gateway Division 10.

Item 15, Metro Rail Surveillance Equipment. The Board approved a motion ratifying a \$2.1 million contract awarded in August to a Santa Ana company to provide pan-tilt-zoom cameras and a DVR system to improve Metro Rail security surveillance.

In addition, the amended motion grants the CEO temporary authority, through January 2006, to execute contract awards for those security enhancements presented to the Board in July and August.

Item 29, Metro Orange Line Graffiti. The sound walls and other areas of the Metro Orange Line have proved to be targets for graffiti vandals in the San Fernando Valley.

The Operations Committee approved a motion, Sept. 20, modifying the current contract of a North Hollywood maintenance service to include graffiti removal on the transitway for 52 months following the opening of revenue service.

The \$914,004 contract modification calls for up to three full-time graffiti removal technicians and service vehicles equipped with graffiti-removal equipment and supplies. The technicians would be deployed each weekday to inspect and clean Orange Line facilities.

“Removal of graffiti,” says the committee report, eases the “negative visual impact on transit system riders, adjacent property owners and the general public.”