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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.

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