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VIEW FROM THE 25th FLOOR

'Bowled Over' by the Metro Orange Line

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

In preparation for the Metro Orange Line opening later this month, I've had several opportunities to ride end-to-end on the alignment.

I couldn't help being impressed by the quality of everything I saw – from the shiny new Metro Liners, to the paved road that gives a smooth, comfortable ride. The attractive landscaping, the bike and pedestrian paths and sound walls bowled me over. We have, indeed, created a vast green belt across the Valley.

For their hard work in constructing this newest addition to Metro's transit toolbox, we owe great thanks to Construction Chief Rick Thorpe, to Project Manager Roger Dames and his team, and to the contractor, Shimmick/Obayashi. They've managed to deliver an outstanding project, despite such setbacks as an unprecedented rainy season, the discovery of contaminated earth and a lawsuit that delayed construction for 23 days.

Now, an enthusiastic group of West Valley Division 8 operators has begun pre-revenue service between Warner Center and North Hollywood. Their maintenance colleagues have worked hard to prepare the Metro Liners for transporting thousands of passengers in daily service.

I want to express appreciation to San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt and his sector team; Division 15 Transportation Manager Gary Spivack and Maintenance Manager John Roberts, who were deeply involved in preparatory work; Division 8 Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds and Maintenance Manager Pat Orr, and all the members of the teams at both divisions. Well done!

I believe the Metro Orange Line is the perfect solution for the transportation challenge we face in the Valley. In fact, cities across the country are beginning to see bus rapid transit projects like ours as practical alternatives when the volume of ridership may not justify light rail. I expect even more interest from transit agencies around the world following opening day, Oct. 29.

On the threshold of Orange Line operation, it's also remarkable that we have two other significant projects in the works.

I toured the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension construction site, recently, and was struck by the immense size of the project and the machinery that soon will be installed to excavate the 1.7-mile tunnel in East LA. When opened in 2009, this railway will be great benefit to an underserved transit corridor.

And I was pleased to see that the construction team had worked for almost 450 days – more than a half-million manhours – with no lost-time injuries.

We're also making progress on the Exposition Line with the release, last week, of the environmental documents. Next steps are public hearings in November and approval in December by our Board, before design of the project moves into high gear.

We have exciting days ahead of us the remainder of this year. And more exciting times yet to come.

October 18, 2005

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