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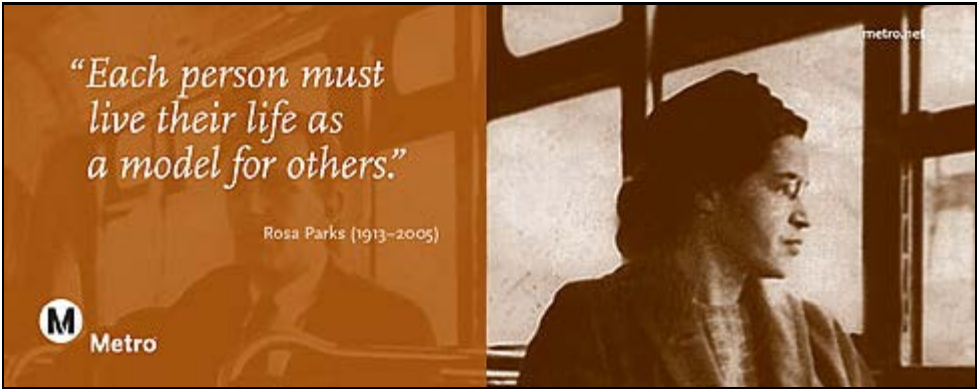
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Civil Rights 'Icon' Rosa Parks Honored at Unveiling of Commemorative Posters



CEO Roger Snoble presided over the unveiling, Thursday, of the new Rosa Parks commemorative posters. The bus cards, which will be featured in every coach in Metro's fleet, were designed by Creative Director Michael Lejeune. Snoble said the cards were meant to commemorate Parks' courage and an "immense amount of change because of one person on a bus."



City Councilman Bernard Parks called Rosa Parks a "symbol to many as the starting of the civil rights movement." He said she was a truly humble person and that "she did a great

thing not just for blacks, but for society in general, to understand that you could not relegate anyone to the back of the bus."



South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and Metro's most senior employee Arthur Winston speak at the unveiling today. "Rosa Parks has opened up many opportunities for all females and others, as well," Coffey said. "Without that, I don't think many of us would've had the opportunity to move forward, to prove that we are very successful business leaders." Winston—who started at Metro more than 20 years before Parks' historic act in 1955—was grateful to participate in the 50th anniversary celebration.



CEO Roger Snoble, Arthur Winston, General Manager Dana Coffey and Board members Bonnie Lowenthal and Bernard Parks gather around the new bus card honoring Rosa Parks. Lowenthal said, "I know Rosa Parks is a model for civil rights...but, through her courageous example, she also furthered the cause of women's rights in America."



Arthur Winston and South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey view the bus card commemorating Rosa Parks. CalTrans Division 7 Director Doug Failing said, "There's always the opportunity for bad things to happen. And it will be ordinary people (like Parks) rising up with good instincts, good intentions, making good decisions that will create the extraordinary events that we need to remember in this country."

-- From Jimmy Stroup

Photos by Luis Inzunza


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Special Master Approves Metro's New Service Plan; Compliments Agency

- Notes Metro's 'new dimension of bus service'
- Read> [Metro Statement on the Special Master's Ruling](#)

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 1, 2005) The special master for the federal Consent Decree released a decision, Nov. 30, approving Metro's New Service Plan and complimenting the agency for adding "a new dimension of bus service to Los Angeles County" with implementation of the Metro Rapid program.

The program began in 1999 with Metro Rapid lines on Wilshire and Ventura boulevards. By June 2008, it will have grown to provide service on 29 lines – many with articulated buses.

Special Master Donald Bliss's order is intended to ensure that Metro Rapid service remains "consistent with passenger demand and economic feasibility...." No more than one-third of local service can be converted for expansion of Metro Rapid service.

"Since the inception of the Consent Decree, the MTA has made the improvement of bus service a high priority," Bliss wrote. "The progress has been substantial."

He said Metro's "multifaceted and diverse bus system...has become a model nationwide." And he noted that bus operations funding had grown from \$719 million (25 percent of the budget), when the Consent Decree was signed October 29, 1996, to \$1.195 billion (40 percent of the budget) in 2005.

'Best in the nation'

Bliss quoted from a Metro document in which the agency "further commits that it 'will continue to build on the service improvements, fleet modernization, and operating efficiencies it has achieved under the Consent Decree even after it expires, thereby assuring transit-dependent riders that its bus operations will remain among the best in the nation.'"

The special master set a number of conditions Metro must continue to meet to ensure that its New Service Plan is in full compliance with the Consent Decree when the 10-year agreement expires next year.

These include establishing and maintaining high standards of service quality, following certain guidelines on peak period and off-peak bus headways and meeting weekday Metro Rapid service hour criteria.

The order permits Metro to adjust service levels and realign service under certain conditions, sometimes in consultation with the Joint

Working Group, of which the Bus Riders Union is a member. Metro also has to submit quarterly reports on the implementation of its plans to the special master.

“With a New Service Policy in place, a fare policy that has met the Consent Decree requirements, and substantial resources committed to improving the quality of bus service (as measured by reductions in overcrowding),” Bliss wrote, “the MTA has taken action to address the three key components of the 1996 Consent Decree.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Metro issued this statement following the release of the special master’s Nov. 30 ruling on the New Service Implementation Plan.

Metro Statement on the Special Master’s Ruling

(Nov. 30, 2005) Today’s ruling by the Special Master regarding the Consent Decree and the approval of Metro’s New Service Implementation Plan validates Metro’s efforts over the past years and in future years aimed at improving Metro Bus service in LA County.

The Special Master’s ruling shows that Metro is in compliance with all 10 areas brought into question by the Bus Riders Union regarding Metro’s New Service Implementation Plan.

The ruling further recognizes Metro’s plan as one that complies with the Consent Decree and, along with a fare policy and resources committed to improving the quality of bus service, states that Metro has taken action to address the three key components of the 1996 Consent Decree.

Upon preliminary review, the order by the Special Master appears to be reasonable. Metro remains committed to providing the best service possible and will continue to look at ways to further improve public transportation for the region.

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LA's First Subway Opened on Dec. 1, 1925

On this day in 1925, Pacific Electric held a grand opening ceremony for Los Angeles' first subway, which reached from Beverly and Glendale boulevards to the Subway Terminal Building at 4th and Hill streets.

While the subway tunnel was in planning for 10 years and under construction for one year, Pacific Electric hoped to attract investment for future extensions.

Cultural and demographic changes led to the demise of the privately run rail system in Los Angeles. In 1955, the last train ran through the tunnel. The tunnel was then used for a number of years by the federal government for Civil Defense supply storage.

There was a proposal to reuse the tunnel as a downtown people-mover system linked to park and ride lots, but the tunnel was later rendered unusable for transit purposes when new high-rise building foundations severed it.

– Courtesy of Metro Research Center

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Gift-giving drive volunteer Veronica Hargrove signs up Communications Manager Bill Heard for a gift pledge.



Metro's Annual Gift-Giving Drive Gets Underway

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 2, 2005) This year will mark Metro's 10th annual Holiday Gift Giving Drive for the Fred Jordan Mission for Skid Row Kids and coordinators are making up lists and checking them twice as gifts and donations begin to pour into the collection center.

A group of volunteers from the Gateway Building and the divisions are busy collecting unwrapped gifts and toys for the Fred Jordan Mission in downtown Los Angeles and arranging for delivery.

Norfina Joves and Tashai Smith, from the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department, are coordinating the annual effort. They take over from former employee Bessie Rush-Johnson, who had been the Gift Giving Task Force coordinator since 1996.

"The gift giving drive is in transition right now, " said Smith, who is already planning to kick next year's drive into high gear by enlisting a round of volunteers for a gift giving task force.

This year, the gifts will be collected without the fanfare of previous years, when Santa and his helpers would load the gifts onto decorated buses in the Plaza, cheered on by employees and children from the Gateway Child Center. However, this will not damper spirit of giving for those in need, says Smith.

Gift tags are available during office hours from Norfina Joves on the 13th floor, cubicle 95.



Gift tag comes with instructions.

Smith reminds gift-givers to attach the gift tag to the unwrapped present. "If you haven't signed up for a gift tag, you can still bring a gift," she said.

The volunteers are seeking donations of new unwrapped gifts that can include an abundance of suitable items such as blankets, toy cars and dolls, games, pencils and paper, stuffed animals, footballs, soccer balls and basketballs, rain gear, back packs and even canned goods.

Monetary donations also are accepted, says Smith. Checks may be made out to "Fred Jordan Mission."

Gifts must be delivered by Friday, Dec. 9. Volunteers will point out the drop-off location on the 13th floor.

The gifts will be picked up by the Fred Jordan Mission on Monday, Dec. 12, and will be distributed at the mission's Skid Row Annual Christmas Celebration on Sunday, Dec. 18, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.


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President Signs Appropriations Bill with Funds for LA

(Dec. 2, 2005) President Bush signed H.R. 3058 into law, Thursday, a 2006 appropriations bill that provides more than \$850 million in formula and discretionary funds for transportation needs in Los Angeles County.

The bill contains an "earmark" of \$80 million in New Starts funds for the Eastside Light Rail Line construction project that is consistent with Metro's Full Funding Grant Agreement.

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Red Cross Blood Drive Scheduled Friday, Dec. 9, at Gateway

- Appointments still available noon to 3 p.m.

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 2, 2005) Metro—with help from the American Red Cross—will hold an all-day blood drive on Dec. 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Four Red Cross nurses will help Metro employees donate blood in the Union Station Room, 3rd floor.

"A lot of people want to come down and give," said Corporate Safety Systems Manager Eddy Boghossian, who helped organize the event.

Boghossian expects the turnout to be good. People who have been tattooed within the past 12 months and those who have low iron counts should check with the nurses about their eligibility to donate.

Appointments are necessary. Contact Becky Quinteros @ 213-922-6865 or quinterosb@metro.net.

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Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Board Meeting

Read> [Expo Line Board](#) to Consider Environmental Recommendation

(Dec. 2, 2005) The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Board voted in favor of an amended recommendation, Thursday, that the LACMTA Board approve the Locally Approved Alternative for the mid-city Westside Transit Corridor and the final environmental impact statement and report for the light rail project.

The Locally Approved Alternative includes a number of design options:

- An undercrossing between Jefferson Boulevard and Trousdale Parkway on the USC campus with an option for a future USC/Exposition Park Station near Kinsey Drive on the campus;
- La Brea aerial station and grade separation;
- La Cienega station 500-space parking facility on the southeast corner of Jefferson and La Cienega on the city-owned east central interceptor sewer construction staging site;
- Jefferson Boulevard northside widening at La Cienega Boulevard;
- Jefferson Boulevard grade separation near Ballona Creek; and
- Venice/Robertson at-grade interim station located east of National Boulevard within the Metro-owned Exposition Line right-of-way.

With the approved amendment, offered by Culver City Vice Mayor Gary Silbiger, the Expo Line Board’s recommendation will:

Exclude an at-grade station at Venice/Robertson and at-grade crossings of Washington/National Boulevards from further consideration,

Continue to consider the aerial station at Venice/Robertson and the grade separation of Washington/National Boulevards and expressly certify the final EIS/EIR to include this aerial station option and,

Require the agency to continue to work with Culver City staff towards implementing the aerial station when funding becomes available.

The Expo Line Board also approved the contract for procurement support services with TEC Management Consultants, Inc. and carried over revisions to the Administrative Code until next month to incorporate several additional changes to the code.

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Metro Transit Security Sgt. Ty Henderson, left, and Senior Security Officer Rodel Pareja apprehended an arson suspect.



Photo by Gayle Anderson

Security Officers Catch Red Line Arson Suspect

(Dec. 2, 2005) Metro Transit Security Sgt. Ty Henderson and Senior Security Officer Rodel Pareja are credited with apprehending a man suspected of trying to start a fire, Nov. 22, on a Metro Red Line train.

Henderson and Pareja caught the suspect on South Bonnie Brae Ave. near 7th Street after he exited an escape hatch onto the sidewalk.

The officers turned the suspect over to Sheriff's deputies, who arrested him for aggravated arson, tampering with the transit system and unlawfully causing a fire – all felony charges.

A commendation letter from the Sheriff's Department expresses appreciation to Henderson and Pareja "for their diligence and commitment to duty."

The case is being investigated by the Sheriff's Arson Explosives Detail, which will file the case with the County District Attorney's office.

Service was affected for about 20 minutes while law enforcement officers investigated the incident.

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Whirlwind Tour of Foreign Cities Reveals Public Transit Adaptability

- Metro's Carolyn Flowers visited four European and Asian cities



By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 2, 2005) It was a whirlwind journey that touched four countries on two continents in only 14 days, but when it was over, Metro's Carolyn Flowers had gained valuable information about financing and operating mass transit systems.

"It was like being on the 'Survivor' reality TV show," says Flowers, executive officer for Operations Administration, recalling the international mission that sent her and 11 other transit agency executives to Spain, Denmark, China and Japan, last month.

The Transportation Cooperative Research Program in cooperation with the Eno Foundation of Washington, D.C., sponsors the annual fact-finding missions to give U.S. transit managers an opportunity to meet foreign transportation officials and observe various aspects of their organizations and operations.

In 2004, Milo Victoria, deputy executive officer for Operations Maintenance, participated in a similar mission to South America, visiting Brazil, Chile and Ecuador.

Flowers, who is responsible for Metro's operations budget, manpower planning and scheduling, was chosen from among 65 candidates for the Oct. 21 through Nov. 4 study mission. Her traveling companions came from transit properties in such cities as Phoenix, Austin, Denver, Tulsa and Tampa.

First stop: Barcelona



At the Shanghai Urban Transport Bureau, Flowers and her group were given a presentation on the city's bus services.

Starting from Washington, the group first visited Barcelona, Spain, where they learned about a major project to use public/private financing to build and operate the city's transit lines.



Riding the new subway in Copenhagen, Denmark, Metro's Carolyn Flowers flashes a complimentary day pass.

In Copenhagen, Denmark, the group was told that authorities want to encourage a portion of the population to move out of the core city. They hope a new subway line, currently under construction, will foster residential and business development in the suburban areas.

The cost of the rail construction project will be offset through government land grants along the subway line. Similar

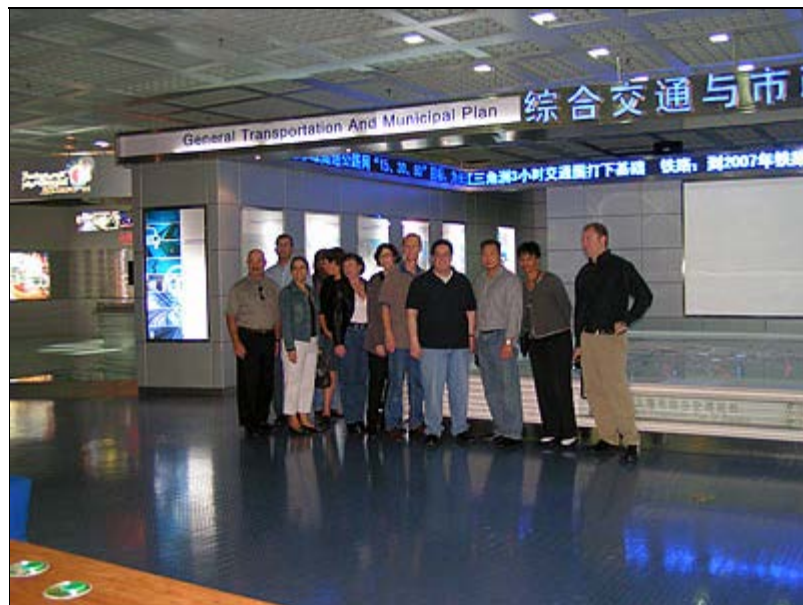
programs are being tried in Osaka and Shanghai.

"We were interested in how these cities are handling high-density and transit-oriented development," says Flowers. "Those are issues we're seeing here in LA."

Next, the group flew to Shanghai. With a population of 18.7 million, it is China's third largest metropolis and one that is experiencing rapid urban planning and explosive growth in preparation for the World Expo in 2010.

"The city has four subway lines now and, in the next four years, will build nine more subway lines," Flowers says, amazed. "They operate 18,000 buses a day and are 100 percent contracted out."

She also rode the maglev train, which reached a speed of more than 250 mph, from the airport to downtown Shanghai. The train is magnetically levitated, has no wheels and "is much smoother than a rail line. There's no sensation of acceleration."



Touring the Shanghai Museum of Urban Planning, the 12-member U.S. study group viewed a model of current and future subway alignments. Carolyn

Flowers is second from right.

Ridership slump in Osaka

In Osaka, a city some 285 miles southwest of Tokyo, the study group learned that the local transit agency has experienced a 20 percent decline in ridership over the past five years. A growing population of retirees and a desire for automobile ownership among young people is blamed for the slump in boardings.

Osaka’s transit agency recently began offering a smart card, similar to Metro’s TAP card, that can be used for transit fares, but also can be used as a discount card in purchasing merchandise at local businesses, Flowers says.

Looking back on her trip, Flowers was especially impressed with how flexible the four transit agencies have been in planning, funding, operating and managing the cost of their systems, as well as fostering transit-oriented development.

“We were treated as a quasi-governmental delegation in every country and given access to high-level officials,” she says. “It was a lifetime opportunity.”


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[Metro History Fact]



Transit officials with rendering of Division 8 at groundbreaking ceremony.

New Division 8 Opened in 1982

On Dec. 5, 1982, a new 17-acre Division 8 opened for service at 9201 Canoga Ave. in Chatsworth. A Mexican-themed grand opening celebration was held a couple of months later, and more than 1,000 attendees enjoyed mariachis, Mexican food and facilities tours.

West Valley bus operations were moved to the new facility from the former Division 8, a 5.5-acre site at 14557 Sherman Way in Van Nuys. The original Van Nuys Division, officially designated as Division 8 on Aug. 15, 1958, was a Pacific Electric Railway (1901-1953) property passed down through Metropolitan Coach Lines (1953-1958) and the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (1958-1964) to the Southern California Rapid Transit District (1964-1993).

Today the San Fernando Valley Service Sector's West Valley Division 8 has capacity for 249 buses, operates local lines, Rapid Bus line 750 and the Metro Orange Line.

– Courtesy of Metro Research Center



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Metro Employees and Guests Flock to Magic Mountain Event

(Dec. 6, 2005) It started with 300 tickets, then 500 tickets and before it was over, a total of 1,330 tickets had been sold for Metro's private party, Nov. 19, at Six Flags Magic Mountain.

The event was so popular, says Danielle Boutier, director of Communication Services, that the amusement park provided two additional groups of tickets to meet employee demand.

From the downtown headquarters to the farthest operating division, a "broad mix" of employees called in for the \$21 tickets. Turnout rivaled the Employee Day, last spring, at Universal City.

"It was really fun," says Government Relations Manager Michael Turner. He and his 12-year-old son, Davis, arrived about 7 p.m. and spent the evening riding the roller coasters.

"Because it was a private party, the lines weren't nearly as long and we could get off the roller coaster and get right back on," he says. They left at midnight, feeling a little unsteady.

Given the popularity of the private party, Magic Mountain already has scheduled next year's event for Saturday, Nov. 18, from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. Tickets for the 2006 event will go on sale in the Metro Store in late September or early October.

The tickets give Metro employees, family and friends free entry to all Magic Mountain rides and attractions, including the Goliath "hypercoaster" and the Viper roller coaster.



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New Rapid Bus Lines, Limited-Stop Service in Mid-December

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 6, 2005) Metro will implement in mid-December a new Express Bus Line between Long Beach and El Monte, a new Rapid Bus Line along Western Avenue and new limited-stop service on four bus lines.

Express Bus Line 577X will begin weekday operation on Monday, Dec. 19, with service between El Monte and Long Beach via the 605 Freeway.

There will only be four stops: at the El Monte Bus station, the Metro Green Line Norwalk station, at Cal State Long Beach and at the VA Medical Center in Long Beach.

Metro will begin service on the new 13-mile Rapid Bus Line Line 757 along Western Avenue from the Western/Hollywood Metro Red Line station to the Metro Green Line's Crenshaw station. The new line will operate seven days a week beginning Sunday, Dec. 18.

Metro also plans to implement new limited-stop, weekday bus service on four existing lines.

They are Line 330 (W. Pico Blvd./East 1st St./Floral Dr. Dozier/Rowan), Line 368 (W. Washington Blvd./Cesar Chavez Ave. and Cesar Chavez/Roman), Line 442 ((Hawthorne Station-LA/Union Station Express), and Line 444 (Rancho Palos Verdes/Torrance-LA/Union Station Express).

Additionally, the agency will begin operating Saturday service on Crenshaw Metro Rapid Line 710 and will deploy new 60-foot articulated buses on both Vermont Rapid Bus Line 754 and the newly implemented Western Rapid Bus Line 757.

Metro also will add additional service on eight bus lines in both the morning and afternoon peak periods to improve service on lines 62, 108, 266, 16-316, 445, 450X, 717 and 720.

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Citizens' Advisory Council Board Wowed by New AnsaldoBreda Rail Cars

- The 2550 rail car may go in service next spring
- Will be tested on Metro Gold, Blue and Green Lines

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 7, 2005) It was just a ride from Union Station to the maintenance yard and back, but it was long enough for members of the Citizens' Advisory Council to be greatly impressed with the new AnsaldoBreda 2550 light rail car.

"This thing's quiet," said Council Member Wally Shidler, a regular rider of the Metro Blue Line. "This is really quiet." The first of the new cars may be in service as early as next spring.

The Italian-made AnsaldoBreda car is the first of 50 Metro plans to add to its fleet over a three-year period. The cars cost \$2.72 million each.

Since receiving the first unit, Metro has been testing the car on a section of the Metro Gold Line near the 210 freeway.

"We've completed the bulk of the testing that we need to do on the Gold Line," said Dave Kubicek, deputy executive officer, Rail Operations Fleet Services. "Part of the commissioning process is that we're also going to run the car on the Green Line and the Blue Line."

No costly modifications

Testing on all three Metro light rail lines is required because, unlike previous models, the 2550 was designed to be used on any of the lines without costly modifications.

Photos: Jimmy Stroup



Members of the Citizens' Advisory Council file into the Italian-made AnsaldoBreda 2550. The 90-foot two-car light rail car is expected to finish testing soon and begin revenue runs as early as spring 2006.



Deputy Executive Officer of Railway Operations Fleet Service Dave Kubicek and Citizens' Advisory Board Council member Wally Shidler sit in two of the 76 seats on the new AnsaldoBreda 2550. With 50 of these purchased, the new light rail cars will be a

“After we work out the bugs, the car will be sent up to Pittsburg, Calif., to the AnsaldoBreda plant and adjusted to the specifications or whatever modifications have to be made,” said Duane Martin, Gold Line transportation manager.

common sight on the Gold Line and the Eastside Expansion.



The cockpit of the new AnsaldoBreda 2550 provides improved design meant to aid operator comfort and functionality.

After that, Martin said, the remaining trains yet to be built in Italy as part of the order will incorporate the changes.

Sleeker than the Siemens P-2000s that currently run on the Gold Line, the 2550s are bullet-like in design. Their shiny silver façade doesn't hurt that comparison, either.

Burnished silver

The metallic décor continues into the interior, where the railing and seat mounts are all the same burnished silver as the outside skin. Rugged black rubber flooring also complements the futuristic metallic theme.

Just when the interior seems to look more like an operating room than a train, the pattern of the seat material rules that out. With swirling bright reds, blues, greens, yellow, purples and oranges, it looks like it's having more fun than any seat ought to be allowed.

As more of the 2550s appear on the Gold Line, Kubicek said some of the P-2000s will move to the Green and Blue Lines to increase their fleet sizes.

With 40 due to run on the Gold Line and 10 more on the Eastside Expansion, the AnsaldoBreda 2550 is sure to become a common sight for East Los Angeles Metro rail riders.



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Division 18 Health Fair Will Look at the ‘Complete Person’

By REINA V. SLUTSKE

(Dec. 7, 2005) Fifteen vendors will participate, Thursday, in Carson Division 18’s Health Fair to promote treatment for “mind, body, and spirit.”

According to Division Transportation Manager Cindy Karpman, the program is held once a year to help employees who have health problems.

“A lot of the health issues arise from bus operators, like high blood pressure, tension, headaches,” said Karpman. “If they can get information at the division, it can help a lot.”

Featured at the Health Fair will be a special Women of Color Breast Cancer Awareness workshop, coordinated by Assistant Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown, who is involved with the organization.

Women of color are at especially high risk for breast cancer, according to Y’von Davis-Carter, who helped organize the Health Fair. The workshop will help women learn to do self-examinations to look for cancerous lumps.

Among other vendors, Long Beach Medical Clinic will be performing tests, including blood pressure and fat analyzing. Martino Massage, which specializes in lower back and neck pain, will be giving mini-massages. The Employee Assistance Program will provide mental health information, and a financial consultant will also be available.

According to Davis-Carter, the whole individual is what counts. “We’re looking at the complete person, because it all goes together.”



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Memorial Service Set for Gold Line Operator Michael Ehrich

(Dec. 7, 2005) Michael Ehrich, 58, a Metro Gold Line operator since start-up in 2003, died suddenly at his Pasadena home on Monday, Dec. 5.



Michael Ehrich

A visitation is scheduled from 5 to 8 p.m., Friday, Dec. 9, at the Douglas and Zook Mortuary, 600 East Foothill Blvd., Monrovia. Phone 626-358-3244.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 10, also at Douglas and Zook Mortuary.

"Mike's zest for life and fun was unparalleled," said Transportation Manager Duane Martin. "He had a great wit, and always kept everyone entertained.

His team spirit for the Gold line was his passion. His willingness to help and go the extra mile made him one of the best. He will be greatly missed."

A Metro veteran with 19 years' service, Ehrich joined the SCRTD in September 1986. He was a native of Duluth, Minn.

Ehrich is survived by his wife and fellow Gold line Operator Pam Parker-Ehrich, who joined the agency in July 1987 and has 18 years' service. Survivors also include their three daughters Michelle, Jeanette and Angela; son Tyler and two grandchildren.

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Passengers exit Metro Liner at North Hollywood Station.



Photo by Gary Leonard

Orange Line Boardings Far Exceed Metro's Expectations

- 'Versatile line' drawing 16,360 boardings each weekday

(Dec. 7, 2005) With a full month of data now available, estimated weekday boardings on the Metro Orange Line for November stand at 16,360 – three times what the agency expected.

Saturday boardings on the 14-mile, cross-Valley line are estimated at 11,220, almost 69 percent of the daily total. Sunday boardings were recorded at 8,126, almost half the daily total.

The most popular stations: North Hollywood, Van Nuys, Reseda, Warner Center and Balboa.

"This is a unique line and more versatile than we had thought," says San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt. "We thought it would be primarily a commuter line, but it seems it's more of a service interconnection line, although the commuter population is growing."

While earlier boarding estimates of 10,000 to 11,000 daily boardings were based on ticket sales, November estimates are based on schedule checker observations and some automated passenger counter numbers.

66 percent at Noho

Just over 66 percent of westbound daily boardings occurred at the North Hollywood station, with the majority apparently coming as transfers from the Metro Red Line.

The second most popular station for westbound boardings was Van Nuys, with 8.6 percent, while the Laurel Canyon station pulled 6.7 percent of boardings.

Statistics showed that 20 percent of westbound riders got off the buses at the Van Nuys station, 12.3 percent at the Reseda station and 18.7 percent at Warner Center.

On the eastbound run, the Van Nuys station has an estimated 22 percent of the boardings, ahead of Warner Center with 16.7 percent and the Reseda station with 12.9 percent.

Most of the eastbound riders – an estimated 67.3 percent – disembarked at the North Hollywood station, but 9.1 percent left the buses at the Van Nuys station and 5.2 percent at the Valley College station.

“We’ve watched the heavy loads every day and the figures for November are consistent with what we’ve seen,” says Hunt. “I’m very pleased, but not surprised.”

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Metro Safety Compliance Officer Ralph Sbragia provided tunnel safety training for three battalions of firefighters.



Photo by Bill Heard

Local Firefighters Receive Tunnel Safety Training from Metro

BY JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 9, 2005) Three battalions of local firefighters received emergency response tunnel safety training from Metro, this week, in preparation for the tunneling on the Eastside Extension.

Ralph G. Sbragia, Metro safety compliance officer, delivered the two-hour training sessions that taught city and county firefighters about the special dangers involved with rescue situations in tunnels.

Sbragia briefed the firefighters on topics like airborne gas hazards, and electrical, lighting and communications systems that will be present in the tunneling operation. Metro is offering 12 training sessions to ensure that fire stations remain adequately staffed to respond to emergencies.

"This was an introduction to the California [and federal] Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations," Sbragia said. "By law, the firefighters have to receive a basic level of instruction before they enter the tunnel."

Mandated training

As many as 50 construction workers—who also receive state and federally mandated safety training from their primary employer—can be in each tunnel at any given time.

With that many people at risk if an incident occurs, Sbragia said firefighters need to be familiar with what they might encounter in a rescue attempt before entering the tunnel.

"All of the fire stations that might be called upon to respond in the tunnel if an accident should occur during the Eastside Extension [construction] received training," he said.

Tunnel safety training will resume in the Gateway Building Board room Dec. 20 through Dec. 22 so firefighters who remained in service during the first round can receive the training.

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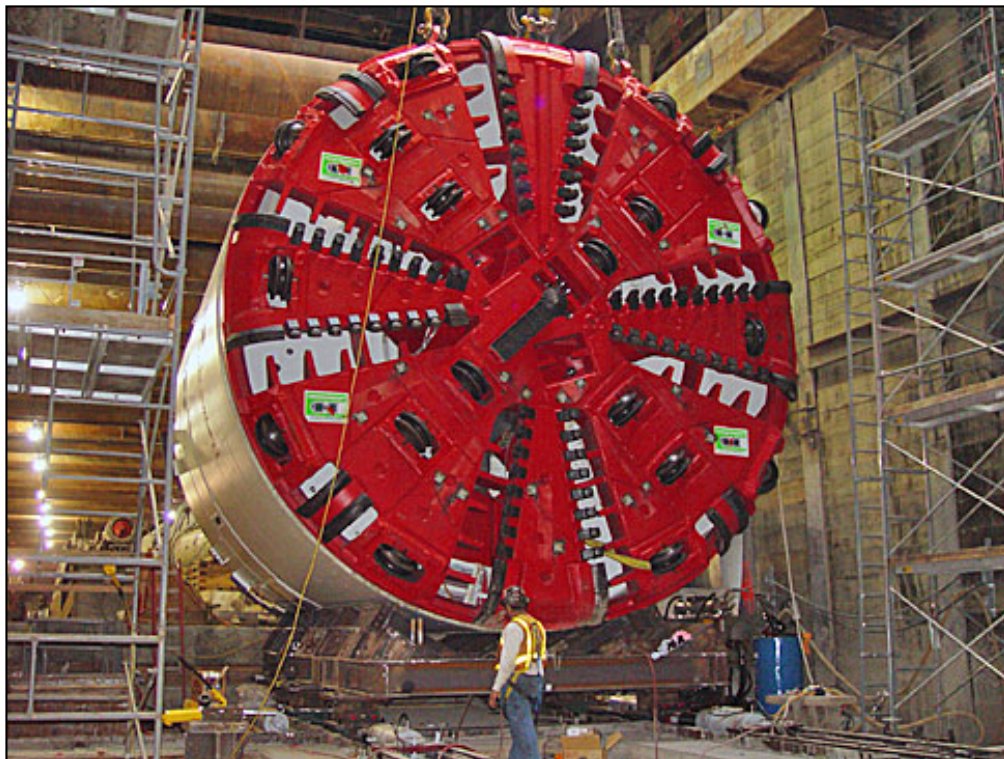
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A construction crew works at the cutting head of an earth pressure balance machine, dubbed Susie, in preparation for the start of tunneling.



Photos by Luis Inzunza

Crews Assembling Eastside Extension Tunneling Machines

(Dec. 9, 2005) Construction crews are assembling the two earth pressure balance machines that soon will begin drilling twin, 1.8-mile tunnels for the Metro Gold Line's Eastside Extension.

Manufactured in Germany, the machines are designed to maintain pressure against the tunnel face as they move forward. Material dug away from the face is moved back through the machines and deposited into small rail cars for transport back to the tunnel opening.

Work has been in progress on the six-mile, \$898.8 million Eastside Extension since groundbreaking in July 2004. The project is being built by Eastside LRT Construction, a joint venture of the Washington Group International, Shimmick International and Obayashi

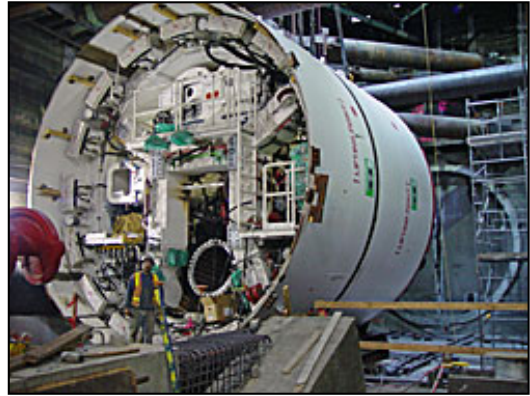


The earth pressure balance machine has cutting edges that grind into the face of the tunnel as the machine inches forward.

Corp. It is scheduled for completion in late 2009.



The twin machines are still under construction in this photo. Small rail cars will carry the discharged earth, or muck, away from the rear end of the machines, shown here.



This section will be joined to others to make up the complete earth pressure balance machine.

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Express Line 577X Will Connect El Monte and Long Beach

- New bus line starts service with free rides, Dec. 19-20
- Line 577X joins 450X as Metro’s second express service

By DAVE SOTERO

(Dec. 9, 2005) Metro will launch a brand new express bus line, Dec. 19, that will speed commuters between El Monte and Norwalk in about 30 minutes and between Norwalk and Long Beach in 20 minutes, cutting riders’ commute times nearly in half.

The new line will be introduced during a grand opening ceremony at 10 a.m., Friday, Dec. 16, at the VA Medical Center in Long Beach. Rides on the new Metro Express Line 577X will be free to the public Dec. 19 and 20.

The 577X buses will use HOV lanes on the 605 Freeway for most of the 28-mile route and the new line will make only four local stops.

“This is a corridor we’ve never had service on before, so we’re blazing a new trail here for our transit patrons,” said Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford.

Second express line

Express Line 577X is the second service in the Metro Express bus program. It joins Express Line 450X, which debuted in June 2005 to provide service between the Artesia Transit Center to downtown LA along Harbor Freeway HOV lanes.

Southbound service will begin at the El Monte Transit Center, which has connections with 27 other bus lines, then travel directly to the Norwalk Metro Green Line station in about 30 minutes.

It will then continue on to Long Beach, stopping only at the VA Medical Center and the Cal State Long Beach campus 20 minutes later.

End-to-end, Metro Express Line 577X will take about 50 minutes, a distance that could take a solo driver up to an hour and a half to complete during morning and afternoon rush hours.

Buses will depart weekdays every 20 minutes during the peak periods of 5:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. and every 30 minutes during the off-peak times of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. After 8 p.m., buses will run every 60 minutes until 11 p.m.

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Lankershim Train Depot awaits Restoration behind Artful Banners



Before and after: Run your mouse over image to see the construction site behind the special vinyl banners.

(Dec. 9, 2005) Although Metro is restoring the historic Union Pacific depot on Lankershim Boulevard in North Hollywood, it presented an unsightly appearance to passengers using the nearby Metro Red and Orange Line stations.

Now, colorful vinyl banners depicting street maps, historic photographs and text have improved the customer environment at the depot.

The banners, which cover more than 5,500 square feet, are a joint project of the Metro Art Department and the Design Studio. Library Services Administrator Matt Barrett assisted historic images.

Photo by Deniz Durmus



Commuters have commented favorable on the newly installed banners that shield the train depot construction site. Photos and text describe the origin

of the local street names, including Victory Boulevard, which was named in 1924 to honor the San Fernando Valley's WWI veterans.

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Special Master: 'Conditional Approval' for Metro's Transit Service Policy

- Latest Consent Decree ruling includes service changes on 13 bus lines

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 13, 2005) The special master overseeing the federal Consent Decree gave conditional approval, Dec. 9, to Metro's revised Transit Service Policy and to service changes implemented on 13 bus lines between June 2003 and June 2005.

The ruling by Special Master Donald Bliss followed on the heels of an order, issued Nov. 30, that approved the agency's New Service Plan.

In that order, Bliss said "the MTA has taken action to address the three key components of the 1996 Consent Decree." The components are the New Service Policy, an approved fare policy and "substantial resources committed to improving the quality of bus service...."

In the Dec. 9 ruling, the special master ordered Metro to make a number of technical amendments to the Transit Service Policy.

Clarifies responsibility

The amendments would clarify the responsibility of sector Governance Councils regarding passenger safety and would include several ways to analyze the impacts on the transit dependent when service changes are made in the future.

Although the special master's order gave conditional approval to changes on the 13 bus lines, Metro was directed to reinstate by June 2006 bus service that was lost when two of the lines – 720 and 209 – were modified in June 2003.

Metro also must develop a mitigation plan to address security concerns raised by cancellation of Line 107, which had served the Metro Blue Line Slauson station.

In addition, the agency was directed to develop a plan to improve service on Shuttle 611, serving the communities of Maywood, Bell, Cudahy, South Gate, Walnut Park and Huntington Park.

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Developer to Build 22-Story Complex at Wilshire/Western Station

CEO Roger Snoble and Bruce Rothman of KOAR Institutional Advisors sign lease documents for a 2.63-acre parcel at the Wilshire/Western Metro Rail station. Wilshire Entertainment Center will develop a residential and retail complex on the site.



Groundbreaking is expected in early 2006 on this 200-unit condominium high-rise at the Wilshire/Western station. The development also will house 49,500 square feet of retail and restaurant space, along with a 700-space parking structure.

- Completion of \$150 million development in spring 2008

(Dec. 13, 2005) With a flurry of pens, Monday, Metro entered into an agreement that will bring a 22-story condominium and retail complex to Wilshire/Western, the latest of a growing number of developments being built or proposed along the Metro Rail system.

CEO Roger Snoble signed the agreement with Bruce Rothman of KOAR Institutional Advisors on behalf of developer Wilshire Entertainment Center.

The agreement is a 50-year lease, with a 25-year option, of 2.63 acres at the Wilshire/Western station. The lease is valued at \$365,500 a year.

Groundbreaking for the \$150 million development is slated for early 2006, with completion expected in the spring of 2008.

The new complex will share the intersection with the Wiltern Theater, the Pierce National Life building and The Mercury, a former oil company office building now being converted to condominiums.

200 condo units

Development plans for the Wilshire/Western property call for almost 200 two- and three-bedroom condo units on 16 floors. The complex is to include 49,500 square feet of retail space on two levels, a 700-space parking garage and a 12-space bus layover facility.

Two of the residential floors will be penthouse-style units of 2,000 and 3,000 square feet, according to Rothman. The retail space will include both national-brand stores and neighborhood businesses.

The bus layover facility will be relocated from its current position just off Western Avenue to a parcel between Sixth and Oxford.

Other joint developments along the Metro Red Line include the Hollywood and Highland entertainment center, an apartment complex at Hollywood/Western, a development at Hollywood and Vine, apartments and a school at Wilshire/Vermont and a proposed development at the MacArthur Park station.

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Volunteers with bounty of Metro's 10th Annual Gift Giving Drive

Volunteers Deliver more than 1,000 Gifts for Skid Row Kids

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 14, 2005) It wasn't Santa's sleigh that landed on the P2 loading dock at Metro Headquarters Monday morning. Instead, it was a delivery truck from the Fred Jordan Mission, here to collect far more than a sleighful of toys from Metro's 10th annual Gift Giving Drive.

Arrayed in ribbons and protective plastic bags, the festive gifts were put there not by elves, but by volunteers who collected more than 1,000 gifts donated by Metro employees in the short span of two weeks.

Tom Jordan, son of the mission's founder, Fred Jordan, and executive vice president of the organization, couldn't have been more delighted by the heartfelt presentation of the dozen or so Metro 'elves' who delivered the presents from the distribution center on the 13th floor.

"The partnership with Metro has made thousands of children happy for the holidays," said Jordan. "This is the 10th year of Metro's gift drive and that makes it very special."



Mission executive Tom Jordan: "Metro has made thousands of children happy for the holidays."

Shaking hands and sharing hugs with volunteers, Jordan said the mission expects 10,000 to 12,000 children to attend the annual holiday

party on Sunday. Several of the Metro volunteers plan to attend and help distribute the gifts.

Gifts included an abundance of suitable items such as blankets, toy cars and dolls, games, pencils and paper, stuffed animals, footballs, soccer balls and basketballs, rain gear, back packs, canned goods and monetary donations.

The annual Gift Giving Drive was coordinated by Tashai Smith and Norfina Joves, both from the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department. Volunteers who accomplished the many tasks involved include: *

Diane Dominguez *
Barbara McDowell *
Darlene Blake * Connie Rodriguez * Ralph Rodriguez * Raquel Pena *
Margaret Merhoff *
Jacqueline Davidson *
Deborah Bishop * Jeanne Kinsel * Lucille Coleman * Philip Waldman * Tony Martin * Violeta Aguilos * Amy Binh Ly * Linda Perryman * Veronica Hargrove *
Sangeeta Patel * Marie Tervalon * Fe Alcid-Little * Michael Quick * Dolly Turner * Larry Kelsey * Diane Young. *



Tom Jordan thanks coordinators Norfina Joves, at left of Mr. Jordan, and Tashai Smith, right, as volunteer 'elves' load bags of gifts onto delivery truck.

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Volunteers stuff 100 bags with holiday gifts for homebound seniors served by the St. Vincent meals on Wheels program.



Metro Staff Stuffs 100 Gift Bags of Holiday Cheer for Homebound Seniors

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 14, 2005) A number of Metro staff were sequestered in the Union Station Conference Room on Monday, busily stuffing 100 gift bags for seniors and homebound people served by the St. Vincent "Meals on Wheels" program.

"The holiday season is the loneliest time of the year for the city's poorest seniors, many of whom are homebound without the means or capability to get around," says Tess Fitzpatrick, an administrative analyst in ITS.

Fitzpatrick knows first-hand the joys a hot meal and warm greetings can bring to the forgotten elders. She's a volunteer runner for the St. Vincent "Meals on Wheels" program.

She and other Metro volunteers have been collecting useful



items for the goodie bags that will be delivered to seniors along with their holiday meal on Christmas Day.

Volunteers Fe Alcid-Little and Tess Fitzpatrick have a lot in common. They're sisters and both are runners for the St. Vincent Meals on Wheels program.

"We've put together 100 gift bags for the seniors and homebound. The items were donated in blocks of 100 from groups of Metro employees who pooled their resources to provide 100 toothbrushes, 100 angel ornaments, 100 little soaps, 100 combs and several other useful items," she said.

Ultimately, Meals on Wheels will deliver 2,500 bags this season, 100 of which will come from Metro employees.



Assembly line of volunteers stuff 100 holiday gift bags during their collective lunch hour.
Foreground: Lynn Ong, ITS

Volunteers will deliver the gift bags to Sister Alice Marie Quinn at the St. Vincent's Senior Citizen Nutrition Center on Dec. 19, where they will be treated to lunch and a tour of the famous kitchen, which has been staffed on many occasions by such celebrated chefs as Wolfgang Puck.

St. Vincent Meals on Wheels is privately funded, serving an average of 2,500 meals a day, including some 1,500 meals delivered directly to each home.

Metro volunteers include * Edina Pagadora * Nancy Untalan * Lou Pecho * Juliet Glindro * Cory Uy * Carmelita Malonzo * Melissa Olivo * Marta Mack * Barbara Burns * Helen Ortiz * Denise Charles * Nela De Castro * Barbara Olson-Bonk * Mary Nugent * Jessica Gil * Jeannette Bell * Carol Holben * Yvette Nixon * Richard Christie * Liz Campos * Tess Fitzpatrick * Lynn Ong * Joe Giba * Ralph Carapia * Debbie Bishop * Renita Anderson * Frank Shapiro * Nadine Beffa * Michael Eshete * Anne Adelman * Fred Polscheit * Jacquenette Terry * Alicia Walker * Helen Cosner * Fe Alcid-Little * Tess Banaag * Tommye Williams * Susan Cariasa. *



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'Tis the Season



Metro Choir Begins Annual Caroling Tour



Metro Choir Director Renee Willis strikes up the band of Christmas carolers as they launch the annual caroling tour of Metro Headquarters. The Metro Choir performs every day - from December 12 through December 23 - in the Plaza lobby and on scheduled floors of the Gateway Building - from noon to 12:30 p.m.

Metro Choir Roster - 2005: * Juanita Wright * Renita Anderson * Robin Blair * Avis Brame * Cynthia Chin-Pak * Patricia Clark * Tahir Davis * Pamela Fairbanks * Frank Foster (Guitar) * Edith Goff-Youngblood * Keith Hanson * Collins Kalu * Jeanne Kinsel * Wanda Knight * Leticia Lawenko * George Parks * Gerald Price * Joel McIntyre * Doncosta Seawell * Dana Williams * Thomas Traylor * Frank Salem * Lucille Coleman * Jesus Bautista * Renee Willis, Choir Director * Tirrell Dillard, Guest Musician *

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Editor's Note: Metro volunteers provide safety, anti-vandalism and public transit ridership messages at community events. Volunteers come from all divisions and departments and will typically participate at public events on their personal time. Volunteers also may be asked to speak at school career days, help in neighborhood cleanup drives, and walk or ride in parades. Metro employees interested in volunteer opportunities, can get more information at the Metro Volunteers table outside the cafeteria from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Monday, Dec. 19. For more information, call Rich Morallo at 922-2338.

Metro Volunteers Like Face-to-Face Interaction with the Public

- These employees spend personal time in volunteer work



Customer Service Officer Alan Gee talks with customers at the Compton Pride Day event.



Stenographer Ida Brown talks about bus safety with a youngster at the Action/Brotherhood Crusade Back to School Fair.

By RICH MORALLO

(Dec. 15, 2005) On weekends, Alan Gee typically runs around town taking care of errands. Dixie Dorsett studies for her graduate degree, and Michael Walton stays close to home checking e-mails from friends and relatives.

But Gee, Dorsett and Walton, along with Ida Brown and other staff members, periodically spend part of their weekends as volunteers helping out at Metro community outreach events throughout Los Angeles.

At the recent Compton Pride Day, Gee spent a couple of hours standing behind a Metro information table and answering questions from local residents.

"I volunteered to help out that Saturday because I wanted to meet our customers face-to-face and interact with the community," said Gee, a Customer Service officer.

Administrative Analyst Dorsett found herself at the USC Exposition Park on another weekend at the Mothers in Action/Brotherhood Crusade Back to School Fair.



Administrative Analyst Dixie Dorsett, in white blouse, helps a customer during the Action/Brotherhood Crusade Back to School Fair.

Wanted 'to get involved'

"I volunteer to get involved in the community, meet other agency staff members from other departments and most importantly, to mentor youth volunteers," said Dorsett, who had brought along some high school students to help at the Metro booth.



Transportation Operations Supervisor participated in the Parole Outpatient Clinic.

Walton worked with other Metro volunteers at the annual King Drew Jazz and Health Festival where hundreds of families passed by the booth.

"This festival is a golden opportunity to meet interesting people, obtain information about health, and listen to some good music," said Walton, a transportation operations supervisor.

Volunteer assignments include speaking engagements such as the one Walton accepted when he spoke about the benefits of using public transportation at the Parole Outpatient Clinic in downtown Los Angeles.

Throughout the year, many Metro staff members give up personal time on the weekends to go into their communities and help promote the agency. They do it for different reasons – to talk about transit and safety, promote ridership, meet the public and practice communications skills.

Whatever the motivation, perhaps Ida Brown, a stenographer at Arthur Winston Divison 5 explained it best. "I can't remember the actual reason, but I felt good after I did it."

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Tunnel boring machine is about to be lowered at Mariachi Plaza Station construction site.



Photos by Juan Ocampo

Eastside Extension: Tunnel Boring Machine Lowered into Position

- 'Vicki' and 'Lola' will excavate twin 1.7-mile tunnels beginning in January

(Dec. 15, 2005) Thursday marked a major milestone for the Metro Gold line Eastside Extension as Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Supervisor Gloria Molina, other elected officials and community leaders witnessed the second of two massive tunnel boring machines being lowered into position in the Mariachi Plaza station box at First and Boyle Streets.



With the tunnel boring machine in the background, CEO Roger Snoble and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa note milestone in construction of Eastside light rail.

Next month the machines, nicknamed Lola and Vicki, will begin boring twin 1.7 mile tunnels at an average depth of 50 to 60 feet between Mariachi Plaza and First and Lorena in Boyle Heights where narrow surface streets cannot accommodate light rail trains.

Fully assembled underground, each tunnel boring machine – built in Germany at a cost of \$10 million each – will weigh more than 2 million pounds and stretch 344 feet. They will carve 21-foot diameter tunnels and install pre-cast concrete tunnel liners.

"The City of Los Angeles, especially the Eastside, is moving forward now as we enter this critical tunneling phase," said Villaraigosa.



Officials assemble for photo at the site where tunnel machines will begin boring twin 1.7 mile tunnels.

"It's a milestone that was achieved thanks to a united community, united local leaders and a united Congressional delegation," noted Molina. "It won't be long before we can all see the light at the end of the tunnel and that will be a welcome sight, indeed."

\$500 million in federal funds

"The federal government has committed nearly \$500 million for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension that will provide a critically needed safe, affordable and efficient mode of transportation to the residents of East Los Angeles," said Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (Calif. - 34) who represents Boyle Heights.

"For the families of the East Los Angeles community whose transportation needs have been ignored for far too long, this is truly a day to celebrate," she said. "Next stop: East LA."

Vicki and Lola are closed-faced earth pressure balance machines (EPB), rather than open face machines such as those used in building the Metro Red Line. The EPB machines have been widely used in Europe including during construction of the English Channel tunnel.

The machines are better capable of handling the excavation by providing increased ground support during tunneling to reduce the risk of excessive ground settlement.

The amount of earth excavated from the two tunnels by Vicki and Lola could cover an entire football field from sideline to sideline and end-zone to end-zone 15 stories high.


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Panel of Experts Issues Final Report on Wilshire Tunneling

- Says tunneling and operation of subway past Wilshire/Western can be done safely
- Mayor Villaraigosa says Board will ask for lifting of federal tunneling ban on Wilshire

(Dec. 15, 2005) The panel of experts examining the safety of tunneling along the Wilshire Corridor has submitted its final report, concluding that it is possible to both safely tunnel and safely operate a subway beyond Wilshire/Western.

The American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Peer Review panel unanimously agreed that the work could be done safely "by following proper procedures and using appropriate technologies...."

In announcing the review panel's report at Thursday's Board meeting, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa said, "The Board will be asking Congressman Waxman to now remove the federal prohibition on a subway. Clearly, without federal assistance, a subway would not be possible and, yes, we have to balance the need for a subway down Wilshire Boulevard with the fact that we have to maintain our bus system."

"My hope is that it's going to begin a conversation within the city and in this region about what we're prepared to do to support public transit," he added, "and not just the building of new rail lines and busways, but also improving our bus system and, very importantly, providing the operational dollars...."

Panel's recommendations

The tunnel panel's recommendations for future tunneling on Wilshire include the use a "slurry shield tunneling machine" that minimizes gas leakage and workers' contact with excavated soil.

It also recommended tunnel liners to prevent gas leakage, locating stations to minimize exposure to tar sands and high gas concentrations, marking the location of abandoned oil wells and sticking to "proven technologies."

The tunnel panel agreed that the decision not to extend the subway tunnel in 1985 "was prudent, given the circumstances and extent of information and technology available at that time."

But, the experts said, "Much has changed since then to significantly improve tunneling and operation safety." The report cited instances in which the City of Los Angeles has excavated two large sewer tunnels using construction techniques similar to those it recommended for the Wilshire Corridor.

The report said the construction industry has benefited by "creating a safety culture and by striving toward zero accident incidents." It also

noted that Metro's workplace safety record "has improved over time" and that the agency "has been applying Dupont Safety Program practices."

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Board Paves Way for 2006 Start of Construction on Expo Line

- Certifies environmental impact documents

By RICK JAGER

(Dec. 16, 2005) The Board voted, Thursday, to certify the Exposition Line's environmental impact documents, a significant step that paves the way for the start of construction in 2006.

"Today's approval by the Board signals the start of a much-needed transportation project that will serve thousands of Westside residents," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

In certifying the Mid-City/Exposition Corridor Final Environmental Impact Statement/Report (FEIS/FEIR), the Board also adopted a modified Locally Preferred Alternative with a rail route from 7th and Metro, via a connection along Flower Street in downtown LA, to Venice/Robertson in Culver City.

The modified plan incorporates these design options:

- An undercrossing between Jefferson Boulevard and Trousdale Parkway on the USC campus;
- La Brea aerial station and grade separation;
- La Cienega station 500-space parking facility on the southeast corner of Jefferson and La Cienega on the city-owned east central interceptor sewer construction staging site;
- Jefferson Boulevard northside widening at La Cienega Boulevard;
- Jefferson Boulevard grade separation near Ballona Creek; and
- Venice/Robertson at-grade interim station located east of National Boulevard within the Metro-owned Exposition Line right-of-way.



A display about the Exposition Line construction project was mounted in the Metro Headquarters lobby during Thursday's Board meeting. Senior Quality Engineer Jim Stubblefield pauses to read about the proposed USC/Exposition Park station.

- Thursday's Board action also included environment clearance for three construction design options should additional funding become available:
- USC/Exposition Park optional at-grade station near Kinsey Drive on the USC campus;
- USC/Exposition Park extended undercrossing option (precludes optional at-grade station near Kinsey Drive); and a Venice/Robertson aerial station.

The Board also eliminated from further consideration a Venice/Robertson at-grade station (at-grade rail crossings of Washington and National Boulevards).

Built with local funding

The Exposition Light Rail Transit Project will be built with local funding instead of federal New Starts funding, thereby keeping the project on an accelerated schedule for a June 2010 completion. Cost of the project is \$640 million.

The Exposition Line will be approximately 9 miles in length and will share common track and two station (7th St./Metro Center and Pico/Chick Hearn) with the Metro Blue Line as it leaves downtown Los Angeles. Just south of downtown, the line will proceed west on the Metro-owned right-of-way on Exposition Boulevard.

Approximately eight new stations will be constructed between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City. A future second phase would extend the Exposition line to the City of Santa Monica.

The next step for the project is the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) by the Federal Transit Administration. FTA environmental clearance is needed before the Exposition Construction Authority can award a contract for design and construction.



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Division 1 Employees Raise \$300 for Diabetes in '5K Jingle Walk'



(Dec. 16, 2005) Twelve members of Central City Division 1 participated, Dec. 1, in the American Diabetes Association's "5K Jingle Walk" through downtown Los Angeles. The team was made up of both maintenance and transportation staff. The employees raised \$300 for the foundation, which supports research, programs, information and advocacy for more than 18.2 million Americans affected with diabetes – including 1 million in LA County.



The Division 1 team gets ready before the diabetes walk by performing warm-up exercises. The walk started from California Plaza Court at Grand Avenue and continued past historic downtown LA landmarks, with rest stops on the way for refreshments.



Metro Bus Operator Marlene Widell, left, and Transportation Operations Supervisor Cindy Oviatt share a laugh after they finish the 5K Jingle Walk through downtown LA. -- from *Reina Slutske*

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Metro Sheriff's Deputies Bring Christmas Joy to East LA Family

BY JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 16, 2005)

Christmas came a week early to Hugo Roldan and his two daughters, Idalia and Rebecca, when Sheriff's deputies from the Transit Services Bureau's El Monte Special Problems Unit delivered all sorts of goodies to help them celebrate the season right.

Deputies Leo Castro and Tom Rodriguez met Roldan while he was waiting for a bus late one night in early November. The deputies were patrolling the area around the Eastside Extension as part of a security push.

Wondering why he was out so late—and carrying so many groceries—

Castro and Rodriguez discovered that Roldan worked all day selling peanuts and seeds to support his young girls and only had the late night to shop for food after his girls had finished their schoolwork.

They also learned that Roldan and his daughters were living in a church basement because they were saving money to get an apartment of their own, and that Hugo had no real plans for Christmas because he couldn't afford it.

"They were the perfect family to receive this stuff," said Rodriguez. "They really needed it."

Photos: Jimmy Stroup



The Roldan family with San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig and Sheriff's Deputies Leo Castro and Tom Rodriguez are surrounded by presents. Rodriguez and Castro were responsible for coordinating the gift donation with other Sheriff's deputies and Wal-Mart in the City of Industry.

A sparkling Christmas tree and lots of presents earn big smiles for Sheriff's Deputies from Idalia, 9, in red, and Rebecca, 7.



Microwave, bikes and toys

The stuff he's talking about was a microwave, bikes and toys for the girls, electric blankets, some food and a Christmas tree with lights and ornaments. The gifts, donated in part by Wal-Mart in the City of Industry and in part by the deputies themselves, were also to celebrate the Roldan family's move into their new apartment.

"We went to Wal-Mart and asked if they'd be willing to donate anything and they really came through for us," Castro said. "They even offered Hugo a job."

Castro and Rodriguez not only organized the gift donation, but also coordinated with the owners of the apartment the Roldans are renting to make certain they could move in on time, that the appliances would be there, and that the carpet would get replaced.

In full force, a dozen deputies and sergeants greeted Roldan and his daughters early Friday morning. The officers came to wish them well and give them what they could to help their holiday season shine a little brighter.



Metro San Gabriel Valley GM Jack Gabig and Sheriff's deputies from the Transit Services Bureau's El Monte Special Problems Unit smile for the camera with the Roldan family. Roldan and his daughters had only moved into their new apartment Thursday evening.

‘Something that God brought’

“I’m at a loss for words,” Roldan said in Spanish. “I’m kind of embarrassed. This is wonderful—something that God brought our way that I’m very grateful for.”

Idalia, 9, and Rebecca, 7, were overjoyed to receive the gifts, too. Though it may be hard, Idalia said she plans to keep one of her presents unopened until June for her birthday.



Rebecca, 7, and Idalia Roldan, 9, in red, open up the unexpected gifts from the Transit Services Bureau's El Monte Special Problems Unit. The presents, which were delivered to them Friday morning, included matching bikes, roller skates and board games.

San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig was also present to wish the Roldans a happy holiday season from Metro.

“I think it’s a gift to us to be able to help them,” he said. “They’re giving more to us than we are to them.”

The celebrations were sweet and all too brief as the Roldan girls needed to get off to the last day of school before their winter break—a break that the deputies hope can now be a little happier in small ways.



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In 2006, Metro's weekly passes will include an employee's photo and slogan. Monthly and semi-monthly passes will feature Metro technology and innovation.



Employee Photos, Slogans Will Highlight 2006 Weekly Passes

- Technology, innovation featured on monthly, semi-monthly passes

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 16, 2005) The smiling faces of 52 bus and rail operations employees will be featured throughout 2006 on Metro's weekly transit passes beginning Jan. 1.

First up – Ramona Escareno, a CCTV observer at the Rail Operations Center. She'll be followed by Wilber Vanderploeg, a Metro Red Line operator, Christopher Patrizio, a machinist at the Regional Rebuild Center, and 49 others week after week.

Along with the photos, each weekly pass will have the employee's title and a slogan – for security reasons, names are not included.

For Escareno, the slogan is: "Leading the team." For Operator Vanderploeg, it's: "Friendly and knowledgeable." Mechanic Patrizio's pass bears the slogan, "Fabricating parts for Metro vehicles."

"It's good for our customers to see the employees – whether it's a bus or train operator, a mechanic or a facilities maintenance employee – who provide their service day-to-day," says Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis.

Thus far, only the photos and slogans for the first 31 employees have been scheduled for printing on the weekly passes. The list of others who will be featured hasn't yet been finalized.

Technology and innovation

Metro's monthly and semi-monthly passes for 2006 will feature themes emphasizing the agency's technology and innovation.

The January monthly pass, for example, includes a photo of solar panels and notes that Metro has the, "Largest transit system solar panel system." The February pass pictures a ticket vending machine with a video panel.

The semi-monthly pass for Jan. 16 – 31 includes a photo of a tunnel boring machine of the type that will be used on the Eastside Extension. The March 16 – 31 pass pictures a Metro bus surveillance camera.

Metro's Design Studio designed the monthly, semi-monthly and weekly passes for 2006; photography is by the department's interns.

Here's a list of 28 other employees whose faces and slogans will be featured, in order of appearance, on weekly passes for the first half of 2006:

- Daniel Quigg, project engineer, "Buying the nation's most advanced buses."
- Chris Young, mechanic "A", "Making buses brand new, inside and out."
- Jeff Barton, welder, "Making tools for buses, engines and more."
- Mike Lozano, production planner, "Making sure the work gets done."
- Oswaldo Gonzalez, painter "A", "Applying reflective decals to make buses shine."
- Jo Ann Derbigny, train operator, "Dedication, passion and commitment, every day."
- Pam Parker Ehrich, train operator, "Always willing to help and lead the team."
- Lorenzo Rivera, train operator, "Known for great work ethics and performance."
- Hector Lopez, painter "A", "Making LA brighter, one bus at a time."
- Resendo Reyes, train operator and U.S. Marine, "Now serving our country overseas."
- Melvin Henderson, train operator, "Customer service is a part of every day."
- Connie Diaz, mechanic "A", "Rebuilding bus parts to keep you moving."
- Mike Barnes, train operator, "Active participant in the Local Safety Committee."
- Rogelio Chacon, train operator, "Customer service is always his priority."
- Julio Flores, bus operator, "Enjoying his job since 1989."
- Laura Lakis, bus operator, "14 years behind the wheel."
- James Ray, mechanic "A", "21 years servicing Metro vehicles."
- Lorena Serrano, bus operator, "Enjoying 14 years of public service."
- Robert Morvedt, bus operator, "Retired after a lifetime of service."
- Jesus Rivera, mechanic "A", "Working hard at Metro for 13 years."

- John Hill, mechanic "A", "Keeping LA moving for 23 years."
- Debbie Jimenez, bus operator, "Retired after 23 years of service."
- Javier Castro, mechanic "A" leader, "Keeping Metro buses safe for 26 years."
- Mary Ann Garcia, bus operator, "15 years of dedication."
- Richard Lopez, acting transportation operations supervisor, "Raised \$62,000 for Hurricane Katrina victims."
- Michael Mitchell, mopper waxer, "27 years behind the scenes."
- Pedro Lara, bus operator and mentor, "Trains new Metro Bus operators with a smile."
- George Sandoval, bus operator, "18 years of service and dedication."

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CEO Roger Snoble, joined by Metro Choir members and Tournament of Roses Queen and Court, notes Metro Gold Line is transit of choice for Pasadena festivities. Photo by Dave Sotero.



Rose Queen and Court Urge Public to 'Go Metro' for New Year's Festivities

- Use of Metro Rail more important this year, with events spread over several days
- Free rides on Metro buses, trains on Christmas and New Year's

By DAVE SOTERO

(Dec. 20, 2005) The Tournament of Roses Queen and Court joined Metro officials in Pasadena, today, to urge the public to "Go Metro" to attend 2006 New Year's and Tournament of Roses festivities.

Metro will provide free rides on all Metro buses and trains starting at 9 p.m., Christmas Eve through midnight on Christmas Day. The agency also will provide free rides beginning at 9 p.m., New Year's Eve through midnight on New Year's Day.

Unlike most years, the 117th Rose Parade will take place the day after New Year's on Monday, Jan. 2. Metro will operate the Metro Gold Line and Red Line all night, Sunday, to enable parade goers to get an early place along the parade route.

This year the 92nd Rose Bowl Game, hosting the BCS National Championship between the USC Trojans and the University of Texas Longhorns, is scheduled for a 5 p.m. kick-off on Wednesday, Jan. 4.

"The various Tournament of Roses festivities attract more than one million people," said Tournament of Roses President Libby Evans Wright. "We encourage everyone to make their travel as simple as possible by taking advantage of the convenient Metro service."

"Now in its third year of parade service, the Metro Gold Line has, itself, become a valuable part of the Tournament of Roses tradition, carrying tens of thousands of revelers to these world-class events every year," said CEO Roger Snoble. "All of us at Metro will do everything we can to provide the best transit service to the public so all may enjoy these marquee events."

Parking available

Parking will be available at several Metro Gold Line Stations, including Sierra Madre Villa (950 free and reserve spaces), Del Mar (600 paid spaces), Fillmore (131 free and reserve spaces), Heritage Square/Arroyo (145 free spaces), Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park (91 free spaces) and Union Station (2,000+ paid spaces).

The public may view post-parade floats at Victory Park, corner of Washington and Sierra Madre Boulevards in Pasadena on Jan. 2 and 3. Revelers can take the Metro Gold Line to Sierra Madre Villa Station in East Pasadena, where they can board shuttle buses from the Bus Plaza on the first level, which will take them directly to Victory Park.

Shuttles will depart from Sierra Madre Villa from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. January 2 and from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Jan. 3. Regular fares will apply.

Food aficionados may also ride the Metro Gold Line to participate in the Pasadena Food Bowl on Colorado Boulevard in Old Pasadena on Jan. 3 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Admission is free and will include music, entertainment and arts festival.


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2005's Events Ended an 'OK' Year; CEO Says 2006 Will Be 'a Great Year'

- Orange Line, Eastside and Expo Line among outstanding 2005 accomplishments

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 20, 2005) Although he cited a number of outstanding Metro accomplishments during the latter part of 2005, CEO Roger Snoble gave the year only an "OK" rating at Monday morning's staff meeting. But 2006, he predicted, will be "a great year," even though it will present some big challenges for the agency.

On the plus side of 2005, Snoble placed increases in ridership, new Metro Rapid and Express bus service, the opening of the Metro Orange Line in October, progress on construction of the Eastside Extension and Board approval of the Exposition Line environmental report.

He also noted that a panel of experts agreed that extending the subway along Wilshire Boulevard would be feasible and safe – a fact that encouraged Congressman Henry Waxman, last Friday, to introduce legislation to drop a federal ban on tunneling on the Westside.

On the negative side, Snoble mentioned the budget deficit his staff has wrestled with all year. A huge budget shortfall – amounting to between \$125 million and \$150 million – looms in the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

"For the last four years, we've overcome some substantial deficits, but none that big," he said. "It will take concentrated Board of Directors and staff work to reduce the structural deficit, but if it can be resolved, we have a really bright future."

'Resist reductions in force'

Asked in the Q & A session about the possibility of non-contract layoffs in 2006, Snoble said, "We're going to try to resist any additional reductions in force."

Adding that current staff levels are lower than he would like, he said, "We'll take a pretty hard stand in this budget year that we can't solve the structural deficit on the backs of our non-contract employees."

Deputy CEO John Catoe noted that labor contracts with Metro's largest unions – the UTU, ATU and TCU – expire June 30. He hopes to have agreements with all three in place by July 1, 2006.

Catoe plans to change the format of labor negotiations, this year, from one in which the parties stake out hard and fast positions to "interest-based" bargaining in which the agency and its unions have such

common goals as a stable work force and reasonable pay and benefits.

"We want contracts that are beneficial to our employees," Catoe said, "so that the union can say this is a good contract and Metro can meet our economic needs...."

Snoble noted with relief that the 10-year federal Consent Decree ends Oct. 29, 2006 – "314 more days to go!" – and said Judge Donald Bliss has indicated he won't continue as special master.

'Riders deserve the best'

Nevertheless, Snoble said that when the consent decree ends, "We'll continue to work as hard as we can to provide quality service to our customers...our riders deserve the best service they possibly can get and we need to be mindful of serving them."

Catoe reported on the status of Metro Connections, an agency initiative aimed at making regional bus service more effective and efficient by working closely with the municipal transit agencies to avoid duplicating routes and service.

Metro Connections envisions a network of strategically located transit centers linked by major routes served by Metro buses. Municipal buses and shuttles would serve many of the smaller lines radiating out from the transit centers.

A master plan of routes is to be completed by May 2006, with the first phase of implementation scheduled in December 2006 and full implementation continuing into 2009.

Catoe pointed out that the 450X express line on the Harbor Transitway and the 577X that began service, Monday, between El Monte and Long Beach, are elements of Metro Connections.

"It's underway," said Catoe. "It's going to be an improvement in our system. A lot of excitement and energy are being put into it."

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Gifts to Employees Have Declined, but Some Vendors Don't Get the Hint

Metro's ethics rules strictly limit what employees can accept

(Dec. 20, 2005) For the past two years, a certain contractor has sent Metro Procurement Chief Lonnie Mitchell a small Christmas gift.

Both times, Mitchell turned the item over to the Ethics Office and wrote the contractor a "polite letter" reminding him of Metro's gifts policy. He's hoping the contractor will get the idea that gifts are unwelcome before the next holiday season rolls around.

Despite Mitchell's experience, the size and number of holiday gifts that vendors and contractors give Metro employees has diminished considerably in the past few year, says Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman. She attributes that to an increased awareness of the agency's ethical standards.

Under Metro's Code of Conduct, gifts to employees by an individual or company doing business with the agency are limited to \$10 in a month and up to \$50 in a calendar year.

A 'zero' gifts policy

Some departments, like Mitchell's Procurement Department, have set a "zero" gifts policy, given the sensitive nature of their work and their frequent contact with vendors and contractors.

Gorman encourages any employee who receives a gift from an outside company to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest by turning it over to the Ethics Office.

The employee will receive a receipt for the gift, which will be



Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman and Procurement Chief Lonnie Mitchell display some of the holiday gifts received by Metro employees this year. All will be donated to charities.

donated to one of a number of charities listed by the agency.

The charities, which usually auction the gifts to raise money, provide receipts to the Ethics office, which keeps records of all such transactions. The employee will be notified which charity received the gift.

“It’s very easy to want to be a nice person and not to see any harm in a gift and just accept it,” says Mitchell, but in the long run, “It’s easier to say thanks, but no thanks.”


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CFO Richard Brumbaugh Announces Retirement from Metro



Richard Brumbaugh

(Dec. 21, 2005) Richard Brumbaugh, Metro's chief financial officer for the past seven years, has announced his retirement from the agency. He will assist in the transition to a new CFO, who has not yet been identified.

Brumbaugh, 59, initiated the development of the comprehensive "Safety's 1st" program, which has dramatically reduced employee lost-time accidents and has saved more than \$30 million annually in Worker's Compensation costs.

Instituted in October 2001, the agencywide program provides safety training for every employee – from top managers to frontline workers. It includes an incident reporting and followup system aimed at eliminating the source of accidents, close controls of Worker's Comp claims and appeals, and an aggressive case management process to hold costs in check.

Before the safety program began, Metro recorded about 3,000 employee injury claims each year – 20 lost-time injuries per 100 employees. In FY 2001, the agency lost some 108,000 days of work due to lost-time injuries, equivalent to the loss of 415 full-time employees.

'Major accomplishment'

"Dick Brumbaugh had the vision to bring to us a program that has created a new culture of safety at Metro," said CEO Roger Snoble. "Our employees now work safer thanks to Dick's foresight and the Safety's 1st program. It is one of his major accomplishments as our CFO."

Since joining Metro in December 1998, Brumbaugh has been responsible for the business support group, including finance, accounting, treasury, risk management, human resources, labor relations, procurement and information technology.

Other initiatives during Brumbaugh's Metro years include efforts to improve management performance through use of a "scorecard" of key performance indicators. He also instituted a series of management controls praised by independent accountants.

Looking back over his seven years at the agency, Brumbaugh gave credit to the employees in his department. "They are the most professional I've ever worked with, the most hardworking and conscientious."



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[Metro History Fact]



THEN - 1954 Rose Queen Barbara Schmidt learns what it's like to operate a bus.



NOW - 2006 Rose Queen Camille Clark observes train operation with Metro Gold Line Operator David Singer. Photo by Juan Ocampo.

Rose Queen First Promoted Transit in 1954

- Tradition continues with today's Metro.

(Dec. 21, 2005) Working with the Tournament of Roses to promote transit service is a tradition that dates back to 1954.

That year, predecessor company Metropolitan Coach Lines (1953-1958) first issued press releases and publicity photos featuring Rose Queen Barbara Schmidt.

The tradition has continued over the years with the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (1958-1964), the Southern California Rapid Transit District (1964-1993) and with today's Metro.

– Courtesy of Metro Research Center

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Bomb dog General Grant pokes his head out of his special compartment for a nuzzle with his handler, Senior Security Officer Henry Solis.



Photos by Harold Torres

It's A Dog's Life! Transporting Metro's K-9s in Safety and Comfort

- Non-Revenue mechanics designed, built special vehicle compartments

By HAROLD TORRES

(Dec. 21, 2005) The recent addition of two K-9 bomb dogs, Napoleon and General Grant, to the Metro Security force created a unique demand for special vehicles to transport the animals.

Napoleon, who is assigned to Security Officer Gustavo Lozano, and General Grant, who is assigned to Senior Security Officer Henry Solis, require vehicles that afford them a place to rest while they commute from their handlers' homes to their work assignments.

In transit, they require safety, protection, ventilation and comfort.





Two new Ford Crown Victoria sedans are outfitted with K-9 compartments.

Metro Security asked the Non-Revenue Department to outfit two new Ford Crown Victoria sedans to meet the call of duty for the hard-working dogs.

Mechanics Rand Hodges and Mark Garcia developed a creative plan for equipping the handler's vehicles, assembled the unit and installed custom wiring to convert the interior spaces to accommodate the dogs.

Provides utmost protection

Unique features include an interior space that is custom-made for K-9 habitat. The aluminum construction is designed to provide the utmost protection for the animals while allowing for maximum ventilation with its grille-work panels.

Flooring in the compartments is a special rubber mat that the dogs can comfortably lay down on and grip with their claws for stability.

There are no sharp edges on the interior surfaces and doorways that could cause injury. The entire construction is powder-coated white to keep the interior temperature down and to aid in identifying any injuries the dogs may have received.

The vehicles are equipped with two ventilation fans. One is an interior fan that circulates the cool air or heat from the front seats into the dog's area. The other is a special window fan that can be turned on with the window rolled down for maximum cross-ventilation.

A key feature is the "Hot-N-Pop" safety system. The handler can set the desired interior temperature he feels is safe for his dog. When the handler leaves the dog inside the vehicle, temperature



K-9 compartment view.



Cage is part of the door.

sensors continuously monitor the interior.

Beeper notifies the officer

If the preset maximum temperature is reached, the side windows automatically roll down and the door window fan starts working. If the temperature continues to escalate, a special beeper notifies the officer that the vehicle interior temperature has become critical.

In the event the officer can't make it to the vehicle before the dog would be affected by heat exhaustion, the door will automatically open and release the animal.

There also is an interior light and, most importantly, a sliding front panel that allows the dog to put his head forward so he can get that much-deserved reward for a job well done.

"It's really nice, makes it easy on the handler," says Solis, who noted that he previously used a makeshift arrangement with bungee cords for transporting his dog.

But, with the new, custom-made unit, he said, "So far, Grant's always smiling!"



Special window fan can be turned on with the window rolled down for maximum cross-ventilation.



K-9 compartment view



K-9 compartment view.



"Hot-N-Pop" safety system monitors the temperature when the dog is left inside the vehicle.

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Yvette Robles, left, and Olga Lopez of Metro's Community Relations team, shown here with an artist's rendering of the Pico/Aliso station, meet frequently with local residents and businesspeople on the Eastside.



Supporting the Community During the Eastside Construction Project

- Metro's Community Relations officers are on call for information and help 24/7

BY JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 22, 2005) With completion of the Metro Gold Line's Eastside Extension set for 2009, the communities affected by the construction have a long haul with Metro.

And it's for that reason exactly that Community Relations officers have worked so hard to keep the community involved in the project.

Assistant Community Relations Manager Yvette Robles and Community Relations Officer Olga Lopez hold weekly meetings with local residents and businesspeople.

They have office hours to solicit suggestions and complaints from those being affected by the work. They also walk the construction alignment daily and are on call 24/7.

In coordination with Planning, they provide updates at a monthly meeting with the Review Advisory Committee, which is made up of local community members, to try to keep the community near the Eastside Extension informed and as happy as possible during the lengthy construction period.

'Always available'

"We're always available to answer questions," Robles said. "Not only are we available, but we're also giving information before we start any

major activity and mitigating the impacts of construction as best we can.”

Small projects—keeping the ground wet to combat dust, ensuring trucks leave as little debris as possible as they travel, signs that say businesses are still open during construction and continually cleaning the streets around sites—keep Metro in good standing with locals.

Additionally, huge barriers enclosing construction sites to block the view and reduce the noise help keep the construction from intruding into community members’ lives.

No stranger to construction sites, Deputy Executive Officer of Project Management Eli Choueiry said that the Eastside Extension has been one of the easiest in terms of community involvement that he’s experienced.

“Yvette and Olga do a great job of keeping the community informed,” he said. “You keep the community informed and you’re halfway home. Yvette and Olga have dedicated themselves to building strong relationships in the community, which has been very important for the project.”


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CEO UpDate

2005: It Was a Year of Beginnings

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

2005. It was an exciting year. A year we can build on. A year of beginnings.

Metro Rail got a tremendous boost this year. Bus Operations scored big with the opening of the Metro Orange Line. Even our fortunes under the federal Consent Decree took a favorable turn.

The airborne delivery in June of our first 2550 AnsaldoBreda rail car signaled the beginning of a new era in rail service. Two 2550s are now being tested on the Metro Gold Line tracks and two others are in functional testing at the plant in Italy. These cars are the future of our light rail lines.

Board approval, earlier this month, of the Exposition Line's environmental report was a significant step toward the start of that rail project. And, with assembly of the boring machines almost complete, tunneling will begin soon on the Eastside Extension.

Harbinger of progress

Another harbinger of progress occurred when a panel of experts studying the feasibility of tunneling in West LA released an encouraging report. Shortly afterward, Congressman Henry Waxman filed legislation to end the prohibition against tunneling in that area.

Although Metro has no funding for another subway project just now, growing local support for a subway extension raises hopes for such a project in the foreseeable future.

The Metro Orange Line opened on a sunny October weekend and the public turned out in droves – 86,000 strong – to ride it. It was a spectacular beginning for a unique service and holds great promise for the future of bus rapid transit.

Unfortunately, some motorists are having difficulty adjusting to the Orange Line intersections – and too many accidents have resulted – but we're taking measures to mitigate that problem, including installation of new signage and photo-enforcement cameras.

Introduced new artics

We saw the first elements of our Metro Connections program with the introduction of the 450X Express on the Harbor Transitway and the 577X Express connecting El Monte and Long Beach. We also introduced our new articulated buses to city streets on Western and Vermont

avenues.

And finally, we're seeing the beginning of the end of the Consent Decree. Earlier this month, the special master approved our New Service Plan and wrote positively about the service improvements we've made.

The Consent Decree lapses next October, but we will continue to provide quality service to our customers with innovations in planning, scheduling and operations.

I want to close by thanking you for all you've done to make this a year of beginnings for Metro and for our customers. In 2006, let's continue to build on these foundations.

Happy Holidays to you and your family...and have a Happy New Year!

December 22, 2005

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Deputy Catches 2 Children Dropped from Burning Building

- Deputy Jeff Kim slightly injured, children and parents are OK

(Dec. 27, 2005) Two young children are alive today, thanks to the quick actions of two Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau deputies who responded to an apartment fire, early Tuesday, in Watts.

Deputies Jeff Kim and Annemarie Matusik, who are stationed at Metro's Rail Operations Center, were cruising Imperial Highway when they were flagged down at 2:50 a.m. by a passing trucker who saw flames coming from a building in the Imperial Court complex.

They rushed to the scene and found a second-floor apartment ablaze. Inside were a mother, father and two children – a nine-year-old boy and a year-old girl.

While Matusik used a fire extinguisher to keep the blaze at bay, Kim positioned himself to catch the kids. The mother first dropped her daughter into Kim's waiting arms. Then the father dropped their son.

The impact of the heavier child knocked Kim to the ground. He was transported to St. Francis Hospital where he was treated for a mouth injury and smoke inhalation and released.

Neither child was injured. The mother also jumped from the second floor window but, along with her husband, apparently wasn't injured.

"People already are calling to ask about making contributions to the family," said Lt. Jenny Bethune of the TSB South Bureau. She referred callers to the Watch Commander at 323-563-5000.

Firefighters are investigating the cause of the fire, according to Sheriff's Lt. Ed. Luevano, who also responded to the scene.

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From left, County Supervisor Don Knabe, Dr. Susan Angell, VA Long Beach associate director; Long Beach City Councilwoman Bonnie Lowenthal, Gateway Cities Governance Council Vice-chairman Wally Shidler, Metro Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford, and Metro San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig launch Metro's new express bus service, 577X.



Board Members Help Celebrate Line 577X Grand Opening

By DAVE HERSHENSON

(Dec. 27, 2005) Supervisor Don Knabe and Long Beach City Councilwoman Bonnie Lowenthal helped celebrate the opening of Metro's newest express service, Line 577X, at a ceremony, Dec. 16, at the Long Beach Veterans Administration Medical Center.

Line 577X began service, Dec. 19, transporting riders between four stops – the El Monte Transit Center, the Norwalk Metro Green Line Station, Cal State University Long Beach and the VA Medical Center.

Knabe said the new line will provide a quicker commute for many who now drive alone between the cities of Long Beach, Norwalk and El Monte because most of the 28-mile route is on the I-605 HOV lanes.

Lowenthal said that, in addition to giving current customers a faster and a more direct transit option, the 577X Line should also attract new discretionary riders as a low cost alternative to driving.

Knabe and Lowenthal were joined by Gateway Cities General Manager Alex Clifford, Gateway Cities Governance Council Vice Chairman Wally Shidler and Dr. Susan Angell, acting director of the Medical Center to highlight the new line's benefits.

Angell said she and the VA appreciated having a line that provides direct service to the VA Medical Center for employees of the facility and for the many veterans who depend on public transportation to take them to and from their medical appointments or to visit patients in the hospital.

“This is a corridor we’ve never had service on before,” said Clifford. “To be able to serve it with this new express service, and to provide direct connections to major transit hubs like the El Monte Transit Center, Norwalk Green Line Station, Cal State Long Beach and the Long Beach VA, makes it even better.”

Also attending the event were various Gateway Cities elected officials, city staff members, Council of Governments staff, Governance Council members, VA staff and others. San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig also participated.



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BOC Employees Open Hearts to 'Midnight Mission' Kids



Every year Bus Operations Control employees open their hearts to Skid Row's kids and contribute Christmas gifts to "The Midnight Mission." This year, the gifts – about 125 in all – filled the back of a pickup truck and were delivered to the mission, Dec. 21. The employees' gifts were received by mission president, Larry Adamson, center, who also led a tour of the facility. From left are employees Larry Haynes, Glendora Walker, Barbara Knight and David Seelig. (12/27/05)

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Employees Get a Glimpse of Metro Design Studio's Secrets

BY JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 28, 2005) Metro Design Studio recently treated some 40 employees from other transportation disciplines to a tour illustrating the ins and outs of creating the media pieces that define the agency's image.

Signs, maps, bus cards, calendars, ads – if it looks neat, is colorful and features the Metro "M," you can bet the Design Studio was responsible for drawing your eyes in that direction.

Most obvious to the regular Metro rider is the cornucopia of maps and signs that steer those needy for direction (or ripe for correction) onto the right path.

"Customer information and signage is a big, big, big project—and we've just started scratching the surface," said Lead Designer Neil Sadler.

Sadler said a major overhaul of the agency "look" is currently in the third year of a five-year plan. Where the agency's logo was once inconsistent in design and used willy-nilly, the Design Studio has made great strides to present Metro's image and logo uniformly.



Creative Director Michael Lejeune notes Metro campaigns are an important element of Metro's ability to effectively communicate with customers.

Replace older materials

By 2007, the Design Studio hopes to have replaced all the older material with current motifs and color schemes.

In addition to consistent design, Sadler said that a great deal of effort was made to rid Metro materials and signage of unnecessary words, replacing them with plain icons that meant the same thing.

Often, he said, people who dislike being told what to do with words will comply if the message comes by way of an inoffensive image.

"We're trying to send out a positive message all the time," he said. "And, for us as designers, there's a personality to it—there's a personality behind it."

One of the Design Studio's recent accomplishments was development of advertising and marketing materials for the opening of the Orange Line. The advertising campaign played heavily on the "Go Metro" theme, which has become the agency's slogan.

'A positive feeling'

"The marketing strategy [for the Orange Line] was to provide copy that would evoke a positive feeling, but also tell people exactly what it is," said Graphic Designer Sharleen Yoshimi.

That ad campaign especially featured photography, which some might be surprised to learn was mostly shot by the Design Studio's college interns Peter Watkinson and Suji Lee. Deniz Durmus was at one time an intern, too, but now actually contracts as a freelance photographer to the agency.

Where once the Design Studio relied on whatever photos they could get with whatever equipment they had, now freelance photographers and interns set up specific shots with a design in mind, said Senior Graphic Designer Elizabeth Bain.

"We feel like the photography really enhances our design," she said.

In an altogether different arena, the Design Studio is also responsible for the Metro.net website the agency uses as a means of imparting information to people over the Internet.

Webmaster Joe Simpson and Assistant Webmaster Kevin Woo maintain the site that features news about current Metro projects, as well as the "Trip Planner."

"By far, the Trip Planner is the most used thing on our website," Simpson said.



Assistant Webmaster Kevin Woo demonstrates an interactive information kiosk. Metro hopes the terminals will catch on with the public and will relieve some pressure from 1-800-COMMUTE by allowing customers to use the kiosk to get directions instead of calling for directions.

Interactive information kiosks

The webmasters are also contributing to a new touch-screen interactive information kiosk project that will give customers the ability to access information from Metro.net—including the Trip Planner and a real-time Southern California highway assessment.

"We're trying to install them in high-traffic areas and get a feel for how the public likes them," Woo said. "We're hoping this will catch on and be something that's beneficial."

The interactive kiosks will be placed in eight locations Metro-wide and should be installed by spring at the latest, said Jami Carrington, transportation planning manager, whose department is responsible for the kiosk program.

Creative Director Michael Lejeune is optimistic about the steps the Design Studio has made in the last few years – steps he said have led to tangible evidence of public impact. He cited a marked increase in name recognition, increased ridership, and a great improvement in the public's opinion of the agency.

"We're using design to change the perception of the agency," said Lejeune. "'Go Metro' is the lead image campaign, but all of our design acts together to enhance a customer's experience."

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Horace Mann Middle Schooler Zyda Culpepper-Baldwin with her safety poster, along with LA City Councilman Bernard Parks, school staff member Debra Gayle and Horace Mann student Rayvione Mouton.



Photos by Rich Morallo

Middle Schoolers Look Forward to Riding New Line 757

- 13-mile line connects Metro Red and Green Lines

By RICH MORALLO

(Dec. 28, 2005) Sixth grader Zyda Culpepper-Baldwin looked with expectation at the new red, 60-foot articulated bus parked along Western Avenue.

As people started arriving for the Metro Rapid Line 757 kickoff program, Dec. 16, Zyda whispered, "This is a cleaner, fresher bus and it has more space so people don't have to stand."

A student at Horace Mann Middle School, Zyda plans to use the new service along the Western Avenue corridor that already receives more than 38,000 daily boardings on the local Metro Bus system.

She and fellow student Rayvione Mouton gave a safety contact suggestion to start the bus debut program held at the southwest corner of Western and Slauson Avenues.

"I catch the Metro bus at Martin Luther King to travel south on Western," Rayvione said. "It's a 15-minute bus ride and Metro gets me to school on time."

As Zyda held up a poster showing students waiting for a bus at a street corner, Rayvione said, "Safety begins with you. Make good choices."



From left, Sheriff's Capt. Jacques La Berge, Horace Mann student Rayvione Mouton, LA City Councilman Bernard Parks, Horace Mann student Zyda Culpepper-Baldwin, LADOT's James Okazaki and South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey.

'Cut travel time'

"This new service will cut down on travel time," said LA City Councilman Bernard Parks, who spoke at the morning ceremony with South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and LADOT Assistant General Manager James Okazaki.

"With connections to other bus lines, local service and rail lines in the area, Metro Rapid ties into our enormous transit system," Parks said.

Coffey compared the transit rider volume along Western Avenue to the demand generated by a light rail line. "It is one of the densest corridors in Los Angeles County, and a perfect candidate for new Metro Rapid service."

She also described the 13-mile Line 757 route which will connect directly to the Metro Red Line at Hollywood and Western and travel south to connect with the Crenshaw Metro Green Line station.

The kickoff program speeches over, attendees, residents and media representatives walked toward the new high-capacity, high-tech bus for a ride.

"I'm driving," smiled Parks as he stepped into the bus.



Metro Bus rider Jose Melendez illustrates the route of Metro Rapid Line 757, linking the Metro Red and Green Lines.



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Metro to Operate Special Bus, Rail Service for New Year's

- Special Gold Line service for Jan. 2 Rose Parade

(Dec. 28,2005) Metro will help ring in a safe 2006 by providing special service for New Year's festivities.

Saturday, Dec. 31

Free rides on both Metro Bus and Rail starting at 9 p.m. New Year's Eve and continuing until midnight the following day – a total of 27 hours. All Metro Rail Lines will operate all night.

Sunday, Jan. 1

All-night service on only the Metro Red Line and Metro Gold Line for those attending the 117th Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena. Regular fares are in effect starting at midnight.

Monday, Jan. 2

Metro will operate a Sunday schedule on all Metro Bus and Rail lines with the exception of the Metro Gold Line. Metro Gold Line service will be more frequent, with additional trains added to accommodate Rose Parade attendees. Regular fares are in effect.

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Deputy Annmarie Matusik kept the flames at bay.



Deputy Jeff Kim caught the two children.

Fire Rescue Deputies to be Nominated for Lifesaving Award

- Deputies Kim and Matusik helped save two children from apartment fire

(Dec. 28, 2005) The Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau deputies who helped rescue two children from a burning building, early Tuesday, will be nominated for the department's prestigious Lifesaving Award.

Deputies Jeff Kim and Annmarie Matusik were alerted to a fire in the Imperial Gardens complex in Watts by a passing trucker. Matusik beat back flames with a fire extinguisher, allowing Kim to catch two children who could have been trapped in a second-floor apartment.

"The teamwork those two displayed in an impromptu situation where they didn't have time to coordinate efforts, and then to effect a rescue, is a testimony to their ability to think on the fly," said TSB commanding officer Cmdr. Dan Finkelstein, who will nominate Kim and Matusik for the Lifesaving Award.

It was a beeping smoke detector and her mother's screams that woke Wilshawnda Watkins, 17, just before 3 a.m., Tuesday. Smoke and fire were racing through the building. She grabbed her year-old daughter, Tyrea, and opened the window.

Watkins ran to the door of her room, but saw that the stairs were blocked by flames from the first floor. Just as she was closing the door, her 9-year-old brother, Jermaine, hobbled in, his ears and hands scorched by the fire.

Jermaine is still recovering from injuries suffered in an automobile wreck in November that left him with two broken legs and a broken arm. He only recently stopped using a wheelchair and leg braces.

Jumped from the window

While Deputy Matusik kept the fire under control below the apartment window, Watkins dropped baby Tyrea into Deputy Kim's arms. Then, urging Jermaine to join her, she jumped from the window.

Jermaine, however, waited a little longer, before finally being persuaded to jump. Kim caught him and the two rolled away from the flames.

The boy was hospitalized with burns on the backs of his ears and hands. Kim, 44, was treated for smoke inhalation and a badly bruised lip. Kim fractured two teeth during the rescue.

A native of Korea who always wanted to be a law enforcement officer, Kim graduated from the Sheriff's Academy in April 2002, trained at the Lennox station and was assigned to the TSB in March 2003.

Matusic graduated from the Academy in March 2000, completed patrol training at the San Dimas station and was assigned to the TSB in March, 2001.

"All of us are fortunate the deputies were on the scene," said Finkelstein. "I applaud the deputies' efforts. I'm glad they were there to help the family."