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Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens congratulates Operator Michael Prather after Prather's Safe Operator win for the month of November. He received a plaque and a permit to park onsite.



## New Division 1 Program Rewarding Safe Operators, Reducing Accidents

By REINA V. SLUTSKE

(Feb. 3, 2006) Since July 1, Central City Division 1 transportation managers have been promoting a program aimed at rewarding the division's safest operators while reducing accidents on targeted Metro bus lines.

Some lines, such as the 60, 18 and 745/45 lines, are targeted repeatedly, due to higher accident rates. Managers ride the lines along with instructors to observe the operators on the job. Each month, they pick the three safest operators on each line.

Each operator must exceed expectations, with no major write-ups or avoidable accidents within a 13-month period. Professional appearance and an overall good record are considered.

"There have been reductions in accidents this fiscal year and in Worker's Comp, which are key



Division 1 Transportation Manager Sonja Owens and Jeanne Henderson enjoy a moment after Henderson won Safe Operator of the month for November. Henderson drives the 720 Rapid bus line.

performance indicators,” said Sonja Owens, division transportation manager.

Between July and December, 2004, the rate of accidents per 100,000 miles averaged 4.47, while for the same period in 2005, the rate decreased to 3.48.

**November award**

The program also helped the division receive the “How You Doin’” award for November.

As a result of the program, operator morale has increased at Division 1, according to Assistant Transportation Manager Beth Kranda. “People are politicking to get the award. It comes with some prestige, and we’ve recognized that.”

The division has a mid-month ceremony, during which TVs are turned off, food is served, and awards – a plaque and a prime parking spot – are presented.

Owens hopes to expand the program to also focus on appearance and the best-dressed operators. Instead of a parking spot, the reward will be lunch with the manager.

“You’re supposed to be neat and clean out there,” she said. “If a driver is presentable, I’m going to feel better about the trip I take.”