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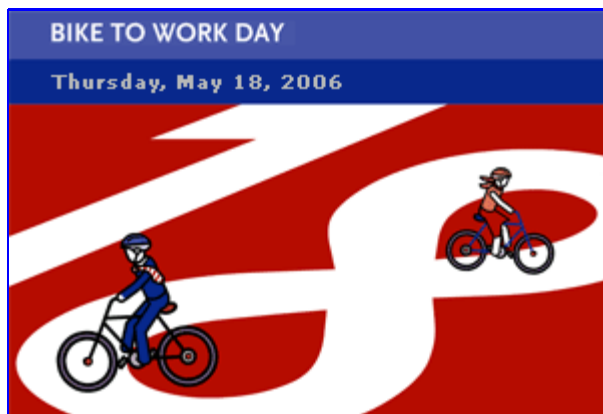
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Metro Promoting Bike to Work Day with Prize Drawings

By JOSÉ UBALDO

(May 2, 2006) Metro is promoting the 12th annual Bike To Work Day on Thursday, May 18, by offering several commuter bikes and bike accessories as prizes to those who register in advance online at [Metro.net/biketowork](#) and pledge to bike to work, school or other destinations on that day.

Metro employees and their families are eligible to participate in the prize drawings if they pledge to use their bicycles for commuting on May 18.

On Bike to Work Day, Metro will offer free rides to bicyclists on its buses and trains. Also participating are LADOT, Beach Cities Transit, Commerce Municipal Bus Lines, Commuter Express, Gardena Municipal Bus Lines, Montebello Bus Lines and Norwalk Transit.

Metro will co-host bike pit stops with local organizations and is inviting bicyclists to stop by for refreshments and free giveaways from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Bike pit locations

The bike pit stops will be located in Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys, Santa Clarita, Santa Monica and the South Bay area. For exact locations go to [Metro.net](#).

Metro is promoting the event with the California Bicycle Coalition, Caltrans, Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC), the City of Los Angeles Department of Transportation, Bikestation Long Beach, REI, 7-Eleven, Ocean Potion Suncare, Costco, Clif Bar, Answer Products, the Aerospace Corporation, City of Los Angeles, Delta Air Lines, Foothill Transit, Ketchum-Downtown YMCA, Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), City of Santa Clarita and Newhall Bicycle Company.

Metro is also supporting a series of events such as the third annual interfaith Blessing of the Bicycles at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles and the El Segundo/Westchester Bike To Work Employer

- Register online at [metro.net](#). Click on image for details and download cool new screensaver by Metro Webmaster Joe Simpson.

Challenge on Tuesday, May 16, as well as the Los Angeles River Ride, on Sunday, May 21, sponsored by the LACBC.

Details of these and other bicycling events are accessible on Metro.net.

Metro has spent more than \$10 million funding such projects as the Long Beach Bikestation, bike lockers and racks at Metro Rail and Metrolink stations and other public facilities to encourage commuters to bike to work, and also for education of children on safe riding habits and other bike expenditures.

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Metro Responds to "Day Without Immigrants" March

Photos by Gayle Anderson
May 1, 2006

Scroll through thumbnail images below and click to view slide show. Images are from the morning march that gathered at Los Angeles City Hall. Guy with the mini-dv camcorder (third from last image) is CNN Anchor Anderson Cooper making the rounds in downtown Los Angeles as part of his national coverage of the event.

Demonstrators en route to the rallies on Wilshire Boulevard crowded onto Metro Blue Line trains beginning before 10 a.m., Monday morning, headed for the 7th and Metro station. Service Development Manager Bruce Shelburne estimated the three-car trains were transporting some 8,400 northbound passengers per hour.

At the 7th and Metro station, the demonstrators boarded westbound trains to reach the rally sites on Wilshire. Shelburne estimates the Metro Red Line were transporting more than 20,000 passengers per hour, at peak. About half that number rode the trains eastbound after the demonstrations.

By 10 p.m., Monday, Metro Rail service had returned to normal and was operating routinely Tuesday morning.

"There were no problems whatsoever with the crowds," said Shelburne. "Our primary concern in events like this is safety and I think we did a good job. The Sheriff's deputies did an outstanding job helping us out. The agency showed its mettle out there yesterday."

After the demonstration ended at Wilshire and La Brea, Metro provided 32 extra buses to carry the crowds back eastbound.

To get the 32 buses, Bus Operations Center issued a general call for all buses that were going out of service. The extra service was in effect between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. and moved an estimated 6,000 passengers, said Tom Jasmin, director of Operations Control.

By 9:30 p.m., Jasmin said, regular Metro Bus service had been restored on Wilshire. -- from Bill Heard







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Arthur Winston's great niece Yvette Chappell-Ingram accepts the APTA honor on behalf of her late uncle. Shown with her, from left are APTA Vice Chairman Fred Gilliam, South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and Winston great granddaughter Brandii Wright. Photo by Steve Mulally



APTA Honors Arthur Winston with Lifetime Achievement Award

(May 3, 2006) The American Public Transportation Association honored the career of the late Arthur Winston, May 2, with its Lifetime Achievement Award.

South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey and two Winston family members – great granddaughter Brandii Wright and great niece Yvette Chappell-Ingram – accepted the award on his behalf.

APTA's annual Bus Conference was held at the Marriott Hotel in Anaheim.


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Mark Your Calendars for 2006 Metro Bus Rodeo > The 2006 Metro Bus Rodeo, hosted by the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector, will be held on Saturday, Sept. 23, at Santa Anita. Preliminary qualifying events are scheduled Sept. 13 – 16. The next APTA International Bus Rodeo will be held in Nashville in early 2007.

Metro Bus Rodeo Team Placed 6th, Overall, at APTA Finals



Metro's Bus Rodeo team, from left are coach Steve Mulally; Arthur Winston Division 5 mechanics Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde; Division 1 Operator Sam Morales; and coach Frank Cecere.

(May 3, 2006) Metro's Bus Rodeo team placed sixth, overall, at the 2006 APTA International Bus Rodeo held April 30 during the organization's annual Bus Conference in Anaheim.

Taking first place was AC Transit of Oakland. Delaware Transit Services of Wilmington, Del., placed second and Oahu Transit Services of Honolulu took third.

San Mateo County Transit District placed fourth and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) was fifth.

In the maintenance event, Arthur Winston Division 5 mechanics Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde scored 1,075 points to secure seventh place among the 40 competing transit agency maintenance teams.

The State of Florida's LYNX team placed first with 1,225 points; Orange County Transportation Authority of Anaheim was second with 1,147.5 points; and Coast Mountain Bus Company of Vancouver, B.C. scored 1,125 points for third place.

Taking fourth, fifth and sixth place, respectively, were Sacramento Regional Transit District, San Mateo County Transit District and AC Transit of Oakland.

In the competition for operators of 40-foot buses, Division 1 Operator Sam Morales scored 567 points to place 14th among 63 competitors.

The top operator, scoring 610 points, was Matt Chomjak of Snohomish County Community Transit of Everett, Wash. Second place, with 609 points, was Rendol Whidden of Broward County Transit of Pompano Beach, Fla. Jesse De La Cruz of AC Transit placed third with 606 points.

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Grocery Shoppers Soon Will 'Check Out' Metro Rail Safety Ads

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 3, 2006) Starting May 29, 11 area Albertsons supermarkets will feature Metro Rail safety advertising on televisions at their checkout stands. The ads are meant to increase rail safety awareness.

The 15-second ads were the brainchild of Barbara Burns, assistant Community Relations manager, who thought up the idea while standing in line at a grocery store that featured in-store advertising on TVs at the checkout.

"Because they're only 15-second spots, they happen really fast and people won't turn away or get bored," Burns said. "We have six different spots so they'll rotate and you won't be seeing the same one over and over."

Extracted from the award-winning, live-action film on rail safety produced by Metro and now licensed to other transit agencies, the short ads will run 10 times an hour, all day, from the end of May through December.

'20 spots per hour'

"In July and September, when kids are going to school or getting out of school, they'll be running 20 spots per hour," said Burns, who hopes the impact will be greatest among children and young people.

The Albertsons stores that are running the advertisements are all within a two-mile radius of either the Metro Blue, Gold or Green Lines, or of the Exposition Line or the Eastside Extension, ensuring that the viewers who frequent the store and also live around light rail tracks and trains will be getting the full impact of the safety messages.

"The estimates are that just under 4 million people should see the videos during the ad period," Burns said.

And at just under \$30,000 for the entire deal, Burns said the price tag for the whole project is a steal compared to comparable advertising among more traditional lines.

"It's tremendously cheaper than the advertising in either print, or television or radio," she said. "And you have a captive audience – people standing in line at the checkout stands."

Rail safety ads will be seen at Albertsons in Long Beach, Highland Park, Baldwin Hills, Montebello, Paramount, Norwalk, South Gate, Alhambra, Hawthorne and Los Angeles.

The short videos feature scenes of children playing, people driving and city shots, all near light rail tracks. The music and sound effects add to the image and printed messages on the screen, indicating that

safety comes first around railroad tracks and trains.

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Photos by Rich Morallo

Operator Kevin Henderson greets a visitor to the Metro booth at Worldfest, the San Gabriel Valley's Earth Day festival.



Metro Volunteers Were Out in Force to Promote Transit

- Agency ambassadors met the public at various weekend events

By RICH MORALLO

(May 4, 2006) A little nervous and excited, East Valley Division 15 Bus Operator Kevin Henderson arrived early on a recent Saturday at Woodley Park in Encino. He was there to staff a Metro information table during Worldfest, the San Gabriel Valley's Earth Day festivities.

"This is my first community event," said Henderson, one of the Division Ambassador Committee (DAC) members who are assigned to bus divisions and promote Metro to the public during weekends.

As Henderson unloaded boxes of Metro promotional materials, Benny Lorenzo, an accountant with Metro Volunteers, was already handing out transit pamphlets 40 miles away at Pasadena City College.



Miko Lorenzo, wife of Accountant Benny Lorenzo, helped staff the Metro booth at Pasadena City College.

Metro Volunteers, typically Gateway Headquarters staff members, also promote agency transit services in Los Angeles neighborhoods.

"I woke up today even earlier than I do for work," laughed Lorenzo, who with his wife Miko, talked about the agency to dozens of Hispanic high school students attending a career expo hosted by Adelante Mujer Latina and Women at Work.

Enhancing the image

On that Saturday, Henderson, Lorenzo and other DAC and Metro Volunteers members helped enhance the image of the agency at eight community functions in Los Angeles County.

"This past weekend was the first time in a long while that we had so many agency ambassadors out in force in the public, " said Community Relations intern Kathy Lo, who coordinates the activities of the Metro Volunteers.

"All DAC members who were contacted agreed to help," said Tanya Hardson, an Arthur Winston Division 5 operator, who managed their scheduling.

Also in Pasadena at an information table, Community Relations Manager Helen Ortiz received many compliments about the Metro Gold Line during Earth Day festivities at Memorial Park. "These events are important to the agency as we show that face-to-face contact with the community is a core value."

Braving a chilly wind blowing through Ted Watkins Park in Watts, Transportation Operations Supervisor Marie Miller, from Division 5, waited at her information station for the participants of the Gift For



Assistant Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown gives a young visitor some Metro promotional items at the Wellness, Literacy and Job Fair in South Los Angeles. Below, two young visitors enjoyed their foldup Metro buses given them by TOS Marie Miller at the Gift for Life Cancer Walk-a-Thon in Watts.



With brooms in hand, a score of youngsters at the Ross Snyder Recreation Center set out to make their surroundings more pleasant during the Clean Community Campaign in the Westside/Central Service Sector.

Life Cancer Walk-a-Thon to arrive.

Talking up Metro

"I'm here to talk up Metro but also for my 17-year old niece who has leukemia," said Miller.

In the South Bay, Transportation Planning Manager Scott Greene set up an information table at the Healthy Start Walker and 5K Run near Westchester High School.

"I also demonstrated how easy it is to mount a bicycle on Metro buses with a mobile bike rack put together by the Regional Rebuild Center," Greene said.

Meanwhile Assistant Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown from Carson Division 18 passed out employment information at the Wellness, Literacy and Job Fair in South Los Angeles. Operator Alice Brass, also from Division 18, supported the Clean Community Campaign at the Ross Snyder Recreation Center in the Westside/Central Service Sector.

Brass' son, Ryan, a high school sophomore, assisted his mother in passing out Metro bags to earn community service credit hours.

Reinforcing Metro Volunteers

Security Assistants with the Transit Services Bureau reinforced the Metro Volunteers and DAC members who staffed an agency booth during the two-day Whole Children Whole Planet Expo held in the Los Angeles Convention Center.

"We are a useful source of quality information, since we know how the transit system works," said Security Assistant Hector Corrales.

Other staff members who volunteered that weekend were:

- Worldfest – Anthony Lawson, Brian Graber, Laurel Kopanski, Rene Cerna, Connie Cashaw.
- Pasadena Earth Day – Jill Smith, Juan Augspurger and Carl Torres.
- Whole Planet, Whole Children – Sherie Ayers, Barbara Trigg, Jean Dykes, Michelle Smith, Oscar Vasquez, Jessica Masarroti, Mary Jimenez, Edith Agee, Bill Moore, Tanya Hardson, Letty Licon, Ramon Zendejas and Christopher Santos.
- Women at Work – Linda Tam.



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Articulated Buses Now Running on Wilshire's Metro Rapid Line 720

- 78 'artics' to help relieve standing loads in one of LA County's busiest transit corridors

By DAVE SOTERO

(May 4, 2006) Placing high-capacity buses where they're needed most, Metro is now phasing in 60-foot articulated buses on Metro Rapid Line 720, the agency's first and most successful rapid bus line operating on heavily congested Wilshire Boulevard.

By the end of July, all buses running on Line 720 will be articulated. During peak morning and afternoon periods, a total of 78 "artics" will operate on the line.

Metro also plans to operate all Line 720 buses the entire length of the bus route by the end of June. Some buses are now scheduled to stop in Westwood and in downtown Los Angeles. This change will ensure that all riders will be able to get to their destinations no matter what bus they take.

"Metro's introduction of articulated buses on Metro Rapid Line 720 will provide immediate relief to the more than 40,000 riders who commute daily along this heavily congested urban corridor," said CEO Roger Snoble. "These higher capacity buses will help alleviate standing the loads we typically see on this line, a service improvement that our customers will surely appreciate."

With room for 57 seated passengers, the buses will provide 43 percent more seating capacity than Metro's standard 40-passenger, 40-foot buses.

Metro has placed articulated buses on several of its bus services, including the Metro Orange Line, Metro Rapid Line 757 on Western and Metro Rapid Line 754 on Vermont.

Metro Rapid Line 720 provides access to the communities of Commerce, downtown and midtown Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, Westwood and Santa Monica.

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Employees Showcase Their Creations at Metro Craft Fair



Photos by Bill Heard

Rose Ann Sanchez shows her handmade jewelry selection to Dee Nunez. The crafts and artworks offered for sale during the Employee Craft Fair included flower arrangements, clothing articles, decorated "treasure" boxes, candles, soaps and gift baskets.



Phillip Gonzales looks over the greeting cards handcrafted by Mercedes Meneses during Thursday's Employee Craft Fair. Twenty craft booths were set up around the third floor mezzanine at the

Gateway Building.

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Metro Gold Line Operator Mary Barrios holds the distinction of being the first female operator to win the Metro Rail Rodeo with her victory in 1998. Photo by Raymond Mandujano

Oops! First Female Operator Won Metro Rail Rodeo in 1998, Not 2006

- Operators Mary Barrios and Robert Rodriguez represented Metro at APTA finals in San Diego in 1998
- Operator Vicky Maes-Melendez now joins the female winners' circle

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 5, 2006) When Operator Vicky Maes-Melendez won the 2006 Metro Rail Rodeo, April 22, she became only the second woman to win the annual event, a distinction first earned by Operator Mary Barrios in 1998.

MyMetro.net mistakenly reported, last week, that Maes-Melendez was the first female Rail Rodeo winner.

Barrios' 1998 teammate was Operator Robert Rodriguez, who placed third in the local contest this year and who, along with Operator Tu Phan, won the 2002 APTA International Rail Rodeo.

So, Rodriguez was eager to set the record straight in an e-mail to the editor. "In 1998, Mary Barrios, a part-time operator from the Blue Line, won first place that year."

Metro's first Rail Rodeo was held in 1995, and Barrios competed that year and in 1996 and '97 before winning in 1998.

Represented Metro at APTA finals

Along with her teammate Rodriguez, she represented Metro at the APTA International finals in San Diego. The team placed seventh among 16 competitor teams.

Barrios, 48, joined Metro as a bus operator in May 1984 and drove buses for almost 11 years out of divisions 7, 3, 18 and 5 before beginning training as a Metro Rail operator.

She was designated a rail operator in February 1995, and started as a part-timer on the Metro Green Line. Barrios later moved to the Metro Gold Line and was one of the operators who helped start service on that line.

A single mother, she lives in Los Angeles with her son Nicholas, 20. She also has two grown daughters, Natalie, 28; and Nicole, 21.

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Metro, Union Negotiators Optimistic About Bargaining Talks

- 'Candid discussions' with 'mutual respect' mark the talks
- Goal is to make June 30 contract agreement deadline

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 5, 2006) Metro and the agency's three major labor unions are optimistic about the progress of bargaining talks, thus far, as they work toward meeting a June 30 contract agreement deadline.

"We're communicating and there are tough issues," says Deputy CEO John Catoe, who heads negotiations with the UTU and ATU. "There are things the unions want for their members and things we in management want changed. We get into very candid discussions...at times they are very warm."

But, Catoe says the ground rules for bargaining talks call for mutual respect among the parties. The goal is to negotiate agreements union leaders and their members will regard as fair, that address their interests and will gain their support.

"We want an agreement that will allow us to recruit and retain professional employees and that will ensure the economic sustainability of the organization," says Catoe. "It should be an agreement that will be the starting point for improving the relationship between management and union leaders."

Neil Silver, president of ATU Local 1277, agrees that negotiators are dealing with some knotty problems during their talks.

'Finding common ground'

But, "we can sit down and discuss our positions," he says. "We're finding common ground and, that said, I respect the people across the table and the process."

In a recent letter to UTU members, General Chairman James A. Williams and the union negotiating team wrote, "We already have had several across-the-table negotiating sessions and the atmosphere has been very favorable."

The letter noted that the union had not yet received specific proposals from Metro and, therefore, could not provide a side-by-side comparison with union bargaining goals. "(B)ut be assured this committee will do everything in our power to assure that when we do bring you a proposed settlement, it will protect you and your family for the duration of the contract."

Brenda Diederichs, Metro's Labor Relations chief, is leading the agency's negotiations with the TCU. Although neither side has offered contract proposals, the parties have identified 10 common interests

and already have tackled two of the “meatier” issues.

“Everybody’s there with the notion of solving problems and doing what’s best for Metro and the employees,” says Diederichs. “It’s very much a joint effort by the TCU and Metro.”

Olivia Nelson, division chair of TCU Local 1315, is pleased with progress made so far in negotiations. She notes that common interests have been grouped together for discussion at the bargaining table.

“Unless we run into a roadblock – and I don’t think we will – we should be able to make the (June 30) deadline,” she says.

Joint training sessions

Once contract agreements have been reached, Catoe says management and union negotiators will conduct joint training sessions.

The purpose is to ensure that both sides have the same understanding of contract provisions and how they apply to management and labor.

“Both parties will be in the room so that everyone gets the same interpretation,” says Catoe. “There will be no misunderstandings because members of both negotiating teams will be there.”

After the contracts are in place, Catoe says service sector general managers will meet regularly with local UTU and ATU officials to resolve issues that may crop up. A major goal: reduce the number of union grievances and arbitrations.

“We communicated to them that we’re interested in the welfare of our employees,” Catoe says. “The unions are interested in the welfare of their members, so we started off with a common interest. That’s how the process has been moving.”


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Commuters Searching for Alternatives as Gas Prices Soar

- Monthly pass sales up as carpool interest grows and companies join pass programs

(May 5, 2006) Sales of Metro monthly passes are increasing; more Angelenos are looking to form carpools; and a growing number of companies in LA County are joining Metro's Transit Access Pass programs to help their employees beat the high cost of gasoline.

With gas prices now exceeding \$3 per gallon, commuting options such as public transit and ridesharing are receiving renewed interest as cost-effective alternatives to single-passenger driving. During March, for example, Metro boardings were up 3.7 million over a year ago.

From March to March, monthly pass sales rose 5.4 percent in both units and revenue (up \$120,000), while sales of K-12 student passes were up 52 percent in units and revenue (up \$300,000).

Year to year sales of monthly EZ Passes jumped 31 percent (up \$300,000), while sales of EZ zone stamps climbed 72 percent in units and 89 percent in revenues.

Total pass sales revenue, including EZ Passes, rose 10.1 percent over the previous year. All told, Metro sold about 22,000 more monthly passes in March 2006 than in March 2005.

Looking for carpool partners

Meanwhile, visits to the Ride Matching page on Metro's CommuteSmart.info increased by 57 percent as 3,194 more people accessed the Web site in April than had visited it in March. Overall the number of registered commuters actively looking for carpool partners grew to 104,488 across the five-county area.

To date, more than 20 Los Angeles-area businesses, large and small, have joined Metro's various pass programs.

The Business Transit Access Pass (B-TAP) program is for businesses; the I-TAP program is available to large institutions such as colleges and trade schools; while the A-TAP program is an annual pass that businesses provide to those employees who currently ride Metro to work.

Among organizations that have joined the pass programs are the Omni Los Angeles Hotel with 220 full-time employees, Hercules Customer Furniture of LA, the Grafton on Sunset luxury hotel of West Hollywood with 35 employees, and CALIF, an independent living center in LA.

Chad Tompson, controller of the Grafton on Sunset, said 80 percent of the hotel's workforce use transit passes for travel on Metro buses and

the Metro Red Line. "We want to make sure everyone can get to work."

"With rising gas prices, this seemed like the responsible thing to do," said Bob Graney, Omni general manager. "And we're already seeing the benefits. Our associates are rested, more relaxed and ready to start the workday."

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Ops Staff 'Pulled Together' for May 1 Marches, Catoe Says

- **Editor's Note:** This is the text of a memo Deputy CEO John Catoe sent, May 8, to all members of the Metro Operations staff.

To All Operations Staff:

Thanks to all your hard work and support during last Monday's "A Day Without Immigrants," Metro Operations successfully maintained service levels and continued our mission of providing excellent transportation service to our customers.



Photo: Gayle Anderson

Rail TOS Thurmon Green works the 7th & Metro Center platform of the Metro Red Line during morning arrival of people attending "A Day without Immigrants" rally.

It was not an easy task, but you all pulled together to make it happen. Our bus operators on lines serving downtown Los Angeles and the Wilshire area had to contend with service interruptions and detours due to the march, and operators on most bus and rail routes had to deal with extra crowds.

Metro Blue Line operators transported about 8,400 demonstrators per hour and Red Line operators more than 20,000 passengers per hour (at

peak) to rally sites on Wilshire Boulevard. Then, when it was all over, we carried everyone back home. This meant adding 32 extra buses in addition to our regular service.

One of our main concerns during these types of events is safety. Due to the good planning of our management team, the hard work of our frontline employees, and the support of our Sheriff's deputies, there were no problems that day.

I truly appreciate the dedication and professionalism you bring to your jobs, that day and every day. -- Deputy CEO John Catoe

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The Apprentice(s)

- Visiting Metro kids are on the job for 'Bring Your Daughters & Sons to Work Day'
- [More>](#) *Survivor Island* at San Gabriel Valley Division and *on the scene* at Arthur Winston Division



Kids on tour from Arthur Winston Division are put to work in the Design Studio creating an ad campaign for Metro. Here they pose for photo which later appears on billboard, above.



Design Studio director Michael Lejeune starts the team on the



creative end of the ad campaign project.



In the print shop, Printing Services Supervisor Robert Hartert explains the magic that transforms a digital file into a billboard.



At BOC, students observe Larissa Labon at the CCTV console of the Metro Orange Line.



Printing Services Supervisor Thomas Rodriguez leads a group from South Bay Division 18 in a copy center project. Below, the Carson kids accomplish the desired results.



Photos by Sarah Winfrey

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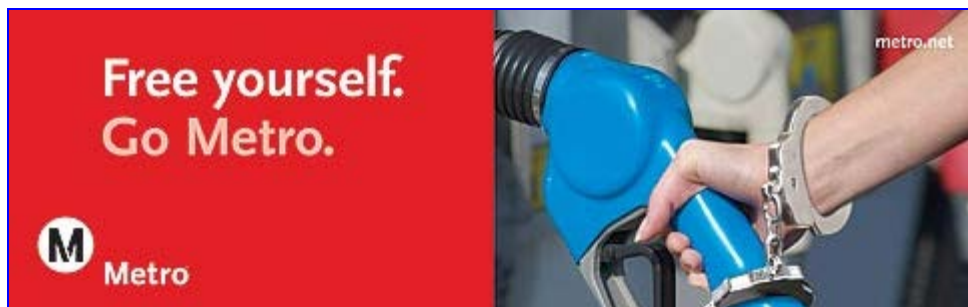
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Click on image to download a "Free Yourself" screen saver.



'Free Yourself' From High Gasoline Costs, Metro Ads Urge

- Ads set for billboards, bus shelters, bus cards, newspapers

By DAVE SOTERO

(May 9, 2006) Metro has launched a new ad campaign that urges drivers to free themselves from record-high gasoline prices.

The ads depict a motorist handcuffed to a gas pump and read: "Free yourself. Go Metro." The ads will appear on billboards and bus shelters and also will be placed on the sides of buses and in newspapers throughout LA County.

"The message is simple," says Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "It's high time that all Angelenos take a serious look at how much money they are spending at the pump. If you're burdened by having to pay spiraling prices for fuel, ease the burden by choosing public transit."

The cost for a single gallon of gasoline now exceeds that of a \$3 Metro Day Pass. The American Automobile Association reports the cost of regular unleaded gasoline in the Los Angeles-Long Beach area has risen from \$2.58 to \$3.36 per gallon in the last year alone.

The cost of filling a sport-utility vehicle a single time is now the same or more than the cost of a \$52 Metro pass that's good for an entire month. Yearly commuting costs on the Metro System are just \$624.

The "Free Yourself" ad campaign complements Metro's ongoing marketing efforts to lure solo drivers from their cars.

The public has responded by using Metro Bus and Rail services in growing numbers. First quarter 2006 ridership gains are up from previous year levels by 11 percent for Metro Rail and 7 percent for Metro Bus.

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Survivor Island:

San Gabriel Valley Division kids prepare for major challenge.

Below, watch out David Blaine!! Move your mouse over image to see the bus rise.



On the job at Arthur Winston Division

Arthur Winston Division Operator Vickie



Dean and daughter.

TOS Regina Bird joins sister and fellow TOS Rachel Bird on board the Metro Red Line.



Regina Bird and daughter.





Class Pictures: Above, at Arthur Winston Division, at left, meeting Metro Transit Security Canine Deputy Napoleon at Metro Headquarters, and, below, getting up close and personal with the Fire Department.



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Snoble Proposes \$3.031 Billion Balanced Budget for FY 2007

- Covering \$112 million deficit will nearly exhaust agency reserves
- Budget includes 2 percent wage increase, but no fare hike

(May 9, 2006) CEO Roger Snoble is proposing a \$3.031 billion Metro budget for FY 2007, beginning July 1, that will be balanced by nearly exhausting the agency's reserves to cover a \$112 million budget deficit.

The spending plan is only \$176 million or 6 percent more than the FY 2006 budget, but drawing down the reserves will leave only an estimated \$66 million balance by the end of FY 2007.

Metro will have to defer such capital projects as the relocation of South Park, bus engine replacements, additional radios for contract buses, a new color printing press and some rail facilities projects. On the positive side, the budget includes a proposed 2 percent wage increase.

This year's budget increase is largely due to the scheduling of more bus and rail service to meet Consent Decree requirements and a \$14 million increase in fuel costs, among other expenses.

Metro's cost per bus revenue service hour will rise by \$5.32 from \$109.66 per hour in FY 2006 to \$114.98 in FY 2007. On the other hand, rail cost per revenue vehicle service hour is expected to drop by \$11.43 from \$363.31 in FY 2006 to \$351.88 in FY 2007.

No fare hike proposed

Despite increased costs, however, no fare hikes are being proposed as a means of balancing the budget.

"We're mortgaging our future," Snoble observed. "On the one hand we need to give the public more rideshare options, especially, in the wake of record gas prices, and we are."

"But we recover only 25 percent of our operating costs from fares and the rest is subsidized by taxpayers. That can't be sustained," Snoble said, noting that such major transit properties as New York City and Washington, D.C. recover over half of their operating costs from the farebox.

During a briefing for local media on Monday, Deputy CEO John Catoe said 1.6 million revenue service hours were added in the past five years to meet Consent Decree orders. "That's over \$100 million a year."

The Consent Decree is due to expire Oct. 29 and District Court Judge Terry Hatter has declined to appoint another special master to succeed

Donald Bliss, who resigned in February.

Metro will hold a public hearing on the draft budget at 2:30 p.m., Wednesday, May 17, in the Board room. The Board will consider adopting the budget at its Thursday, May 25, meeting.

Reined in Workers' Comp

Snoble noted that Metro has eliminated 545 full-time positions since FY 2004. The agency also reined in Workers' Compensation costs by reducing employee injuries and lost work days, which cut the number of claims from 3,264 in FY 2000 to 1,255 in FY 2006.

In FY 2007, Metro will cut expenditures for such administrative expenses as office supplies, travel and training and professional services by 11 percent.

At the same time, Metro needs to recruit more than 200 bus operators now and, as Catoe noted Monday, will need approximately 300 by the end of June due to plans to expand service hours.

Pointing out that the region is virtually at full employment, he said, "The reality is, we're going to have to do a very aggressive outreach program" to recruit more operators.

Beyond further belt tightening on overhead, Metro will lobby for more state and federal funds and seek more riders to boost revenue.

More bus service planned

The draft FY 2007 budget calls for spending \$1.338 billion or 44.2 percent of the total budget on bus operating and capital for Metro and the county's municipal bus operators.

Metro will increase bus service by 96,000 operating hours next year for a total of 7.8 million Metro Bus and Metro Orange Line revenue service hours.

The agency will receive and put into service 94 high-capacity articulated buses on Wilshire/Whittier's Metro Rapid Line 720 and on Metro Rapid Line 761 on Van Nuys Boulevard and on other busy bus lines.

Seven new Metro Rapid Lines will debut on Long Beach Boulevard and Pacific Avenue, Reseda Boulevard, San Fernando Road and Lankershim Boulevard, Santa Monica Boulevard, Central Avenue between downtown Los Angeles and the Metro Blue and Green Lines, Pico Boulevard (operated by Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus), and on Atlantic and Fair Oaks boulevards.

This will bring the Metro Rapid total to 22 lines, with six more scheduled for operation in FY 08.

To bolster security, Metro will install security cameras at Metro bus divisions and at Gateway Center.

Metro Rail to expand

The draft spending plan earmarks \$720 million, or 23.8 percent, for countywide rail, including Metro Rail operating and capital costs and \$57 million for Metrolink.

With Metro Rail ridership up more than 10 percent in the past year, in FY 2007 Metro will increase rail service by 36,000 hours and receive and deploy 19 new light rail cars.

New highway projects planned

The budget proposes \$590 million, or 19.5 percent, for highway and other regional transportation programs such as construction of freeway carpool lanes, freeway sound walls, street widening, better traffic signal coordination, grade separations at railroad crossings, bikeways, ride-sharing incentives and shuttles.

The budget also includes funding for the Metro Freeway Service Patrol to help stranded motorists.

Some of the major highway projects that will be under construction in FY 2007 include the Interstate 405 northbound carpool lane from Ventura Boulevard to Burbank Boulevard, Interstate 5 carpool lane from Route 118 to 170 and from Route 170 to 134, carpool lanes on Route 14, Interstate 5, Interstate 405 and Route 60.

Debt service dips slightly

Metro's debt service for the next fiscal year will be \$306 million – 10.1 percent of the budget. It's down \$4 million from this year's debt service on bonds issued for various transportation projects.

Rounding out the FY 2007 draft Metro budget are expenditures for other governmental programs such as transportation planning, legal and other expenses. These total \$76 million or 2.5 percent of the budget.



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Honor Roll: Celebrating Metro’s 2006 Graduates

- Download and print your [2006 Honor Roll Form](#) here. (PDF)

(May 10, 2006) May and June are the “cap and gown” months for many families – a time to honor our high school, vocational school and college graduates.

Once again this year, the names of graduates will be listed in a special “Metro Honor Roll,” a compilation of those who earned their diplomas, certificates or degrees in 2006.

If you or someone in your immediate family graduated last winter or will graduate this semester, *myMetro.net* wants to know. Last year more than 200 graduates were listed on the Honor Roll.

The names of Metro employees and the children and spouses of employees are eligible to be included in “Metro Honor Roll.” Due to a lack of space, the names of employees’ grandchildren can no longer be included.

Posted on web site June 22

The “Metro Honor Roll” will be posted, June 22, on the myMetro.net web site and will be distributed as a special employee publication the following week.

To be included, employees must fill out and submit a Metro Honor Roll form no later than June 15. Forms should be returned to Bill Heard at mail stop 99-19-8 or faxed to (213) 922-2704.

Forms are being delivered to all work locations. They also are available in a .pdf file on the Intranet, in the MTA Research Center library, in the Metro Store and in the Metro Café lobby.

Metro Honor Roll forms also are available by mail or FAX by contacting Communications Manager Bill Heard at 922-7479.


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Exposition Construction Authority Board Approves Budget

(May 10, 2006) The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority Board approved the proposed \$118 million FY 2007 budget at its May meeting. The budget includes design-build contractor expenditures, Metro and Exposition Authority costs, utility relocation, real estate and right-of-way costs, professional services, third-party review and a \$2 million project contingency fund.

The Expo Board also approved three direct-hire staff positions for FY 2007 and the Metro Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU addresses Metro's ability to review any significant changes to the design or construction of the project, develop an agreement for use of all real property, right-of-way and other assets and describes funding sources and the financial relationship with Metro.

The Expo Board also adopted the Financial Institutions Resolution, which empowered designated officers to sign checks and perform banking services.

The next scheduled meeting is set for 2:30 p.m., Thursday, June 1.

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APTA Peer Review of Metro Transit Security Program

(May 10, 2006) At Metro's request, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) will conduct a "Peer Review" of the Metro Transit Security Program from May 15 through May 19.

The central purpose of the peer review is to assist the agency in defining an efficient and effective model for transit security that meets the objective of the Board's adopted security policy.

The peer review panel will consist of transit industry professionals who will examine each of the five organizational designs developed by the Metro staff for consideration as security program alternatives. The panel will discuss how each alternative might be expected to perform against stated objectives and industry best practices.

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Metro Ridership Gains in 2006

(May 10, 2006) In a recent interview with the Chicago Tribune, Metro reported that ridership in the first quarter of calendar 2006 increased 11.4 percent on Metro Rail and 7 percent on Metro Bus compared with first quarter of calendar 2005.

The higher ridership is a strong indication that more Los Angeles commuters were seeking relief from soaring gasoline prices, which, at \$3.25+ per gallon, now surpass the cost of the \$3 Metro Day Pass.

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Arthur Winston Honored on All Metro Vehicles

(May 10, 2006) Interior bus and rail cards are being installed on all Metro buses and rail cars. The cards are a celebration of the legacy of Author Winston.

Similar to the Rosa Parks car cards, these cards will commemorate Metro's "Employee of the Century" with his photograph and quote: "I guess if you take things day by day, you live long enough. And if you live long enough, you see things you never thought you'd see."

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Looking Back in Metro History

In May 1895, the Los Angeles and Pasadena Railway Company began operation of the area's first interurban line. The line linked Los Angeles to Pasadena 10 miles to the Northeast. Pasadena's population tripled in the decade following the opening of the line.

In May 1939, Union Station opened to passenger service. After a construction period of six years and an expenditure of \$11 million, the last great train station built in the U.S. attracted more than a half-million visitors to its three-day grand opening celebration. After a long period of declining passenger train travel, Union Station now stands revived, and serves as Southern California's largest transportation hub.

In May 1924, Pacific Electric held a groundbreaking ceremony at First Street and Glendale Boulevard for Los Angeles' first subway, a mile-long tunnel from Glendale and Beverly boulevards to 4th and Hill streets.

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Employees Can Save \$30 on Tickets to ‘Stomp’ Performances

- Show Metro ID badge for discounts on seven performances at the Pantages

By KIM UPTON

(May 10, 2006) Metro employees can get \$30 off selected performances of the international percussion sensation “Stomp”, now playing at the Pantages Theater in Hollywood.

Performers in the show combine music, movement and everyday objects to create a rhythmic experience for the audience. The \$30 discount is valid for the following performances:

- Wednesday, May 10, at 8 p.m.;
- Thursday, May 11, at 8 p.m.;
- Sunday, May 14, at 6:30 p.m.;
- Tuesday, May 16, at 8 p.m.;
- Wednesday, May 17, at 8 p.m.;
- Thursday, May 18, at 8 p.m. and
- Sunday, May 21, at 6:30 p.m.

Metro employees should show a Metro ID badge or valid Metro pass or Metro Rail ticket when purchasing tickets at the Pantages Theatre box office, 6233 Hollywood Blvd.

Employees should use the promotional code “NOISE” when buying tickets on the Web through Ticketmaster or by calling 213-365-3500 or 714-740-7878.

For further information on “Stomp,” go to [www.broadwayla.org](#) from your home computer.


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Board OKs Proposed Development, Hybrid Cars, CCTV and Rebuild of Eastside School

(May 11, 2006) A proposed development in Boyle Heights, the purchase of hybrid sedans and closed-circuit TV systems, and an agreement to build an East LA high school were among the items approved by the Board at its May 3 meeting.

Item 7, Boyle Heights Development. The development in Boyle Heights will consist of 90 to 100 for-rent housing units located above 40,000 to 50,000 square feet of ground floor retail or entertainment space, a public plaza area, and parking spaces.

The Board approved a motion giving the CEO authority to enter into a Joint Development Agreement with the developer, Cesar Chavez and Soto, LLC.

The proposed development site, located in a two-block section of Cesar Chavez Avenue between Soto and Fickett streets, currently is being used for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension construction office.

The proposed development will be located about two blocks north of the Metro Gold Line station at 1st and Soto.

Item 22, Hybrid Sedans. The Board authorized the purchase of 40 hybrid sedans on the open market. Earlier bids received were rejected when it was found that the cars could be purchased at a lower price on the open market.

The motion authorizes the CEO to award a fixed-price contract to firms offering the best combination of price and delivery schedule. The total cost of the 40-vehicle purchase must not exceed \$1.08 million.

Item 33, Closed-Circuit TV. The Board approved a motion to provide closed-circuit TV systems for additional security at divisions 2, 3, 8, 10, 18 and at the Regional Rebuild Center.

The CCTV systems will be added to an existing \$297,785 security contract that would be increased by a not-to-exceed amount of \$390,000 to a new total of \$687,785.

Item 43, Rebuild LAUSD School. The Board approved a motion to provide funding to rebuild LAUSD's Ramona Opportunity High School in East Los Angeles. The school property is adjacent to the Indiana Street site of a Metro Gold Line station planned for the Eastside Extension.

The Board's action provides \$20 million Metro originally committed to the school project. LAUSD will contribute \$4 million to the project. Metro also will provide 20 percent (not to exceed \$1 million) to match LAUSD's Joint Use Funds. Any costs above \$25 million will be shared equally between Metro and LAUSD. Metro's costs will be capped at \$26

million.

CEO Roger Snoble also was authorized to seek additional federal, state or local funds that the rebuilding project might be eligible for to help offset Metro’s cost commitment.

The motion included a number of contingencies, including reaching a property exchange agreement within 60 days; rebuilding the school according to an earlier approved plan; and issuing a Notice to Proceed within four months after Metro has cleared the site for construction.

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Metro, UTU Agree on Plan to Ease Bus Operator Workload, Keep Buses on the Road

- Part-time operators permitted to work additional hours
- Temporary agreement begins May 14, ends June 24

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 11, 2006) With Metro experiencing a chronic shortage of bus operators that has kept some full-time drivers on the road seven days a week, the United Transportation Union has agreed to a plan that will help temporarily ease the workload.

A Letter of Agreement, signed Tuesday by Metro's chief negotiator and the UTU, allows part-time operators to voluntarily work the same hours as full-time operators on assignments they are qualified to fill.

Under the union's contract, part-timers normally may not work a full eight-hour shift on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

The temporary agreement will give part-time operators overtime after eight hours on those days or when they exceed 40 hours in any workweek, Sunday through Saturday.

The agreement takes effect on May 14 and will continue through June 24, when the next "shakeup" of bus routes and operator assignments takes place. It does not affect "BDOF" operators who are at the first level of employment as Metro bus operators.

'An undue burden'

A May 10 bulletin to UTU members signed by General Chairman James A. Williams and the five local chairmen, said the shortage of bus operators has "placed an undue burden on these full-time members and also has become a matter of concern and morale, not to mention safety."

"(T)his is a temporary agreement to assist the MTA in putting out the service needed by the transit-dependent public," the bulletin said.

"I'd like to thank James Williams and his committee for listening to us, being responsive and helping us provide uninterrupted service to our customers," said Deputy CEO John Catoe. "The agreement will provide some relief to those operators who are working seven days a week and it allows us to cover assignments we might have missed because of a shortage of operators."

Of the total 4,328 bus operators employed by Metro, 3,570 are fulltime operators and 758 are part-time. According to Catoe, Metro has immediate openings for 260 bus operators and will have 300 openings by the end of June.

Metro is constantly recruiting operators, but is finding that the Los Angeles area’s labor shortage and its own high standards for bus operators are keeping the agency from filling its operator ranks.

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APTA President William Millar, third from left, toured the Metro Orange Line with Metro Construction Chief Rick Thorpe, Project Manager Roger Dames and CEO Roger Snoble.



Photos by Bill Heard

APTA President is Impressed with Metro Orange Line, Metro Rapid

(May 12, 2006) William Millar, president of the American Public Transportation Association, believes more Bus Rapid Transit systems like the Metro Orange Line and Metro Rapid will be built in other cities around the nation.

Millar toured the Metro Orange Line, May 4, at the invitation of CEO Roger Snoble. Accompanying them were Metro Construction Chief Rick Thorpe and Roger Dames, Orange Line construction project manager.

"I'm very impressed with what I see," said Millar. "The quality of design of the system, its simplicity, the beauty of the stations and the ease of fare collection – it looks like a very fine operation to me."

Millar said Bus Rapid Transit programs like the Metro Orange Line and the Metro Rapid lines are having an impact on mass transit.

"People like the speed, they like the



APTA's William Millar, far right, commented on the "quality of design" and the "beauty of the stations" during a stop at the Orange Line's Van Nuys station.

convenience and, in city after city as they improve the bus service, they see more people using it," he said. "Obviously, people value this service."

Construction Project Manager Roger Dames, third from left, points out the sound walls and landscaping along the Metro Orange Line to APTA's William Millar. With them are CEO Roger Snoble and Construction Chief Rick Thorpe.



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Photos by Sarah Winfrey



West Valley Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds, center, and visiting East Valley Division 15 Transportation Manager Gary Spivack, second from right, rear, join with transportation trophy winners on site.

Div. 8 Transportation, Div. 5 Maintenance are 'Outstanding' for March

BY SARAH WINFREY

(May 12, 2006) West Valley Division 8 received the "How You Doin'?" Award for Outstanding Transportation Division for March 2006.

Arthur Winston Division 5 won the "How You Doin'?" award for Outstanding Maintenance Division for March 2006.

Division 8 also placed first in the contest for Outstanding Transportation Division during the months of May, August and September of 2003. The division had previously won the "How You Doin'?" Outstanding Division for FY 2004.

"I'm very proud of their hard work," Division 8 Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds says. "We've had a very busy year because of the Orange Line."

"This award is well deserved," says Victor Baffoni, Chairman of UTU Local 1608.

Division 8 hosts
Cinco de Mayo
celebration



Division 8 employees celebrated their win at a Cinco de Mayo party that included a Mariachi band. Employees also enjoyed the food their Metro co-workers had prepared for the party.

“This event is an example of how we are family here,” Reynolds says.

Division 5 also took home the maintenance award in September 2005 and won second place awards for the months of December 2005, January and February 2006.



Cinco de Mayo celebration includes live performances of Mariachi band.



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Orange Line Bike Path Relay to Kick Off Bike Commute Week

(May 12, 2006) Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and LA City Councilmember Wendy Greuel will join more than 100 students, seniors, costumed characters and others, Monday, for a two-mile relay ride along the Metro Orange Line bike path

Metro employees are welcome to join the relay ride, which will begin and end at the Winnetka station park & ride lot. The event, which will start at 10 a.m., is the kickoff for Bike Commute Week, one of the major features of Bike to Work Week, May 15-19, in California.

The American Heart Association, American Diabetes Association, Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition, and Safe Moves, sponsor of safety bike programs for children, also will participate along with the Los Angeles Department of Transportation.

The Orange Line bike path is part of 1,252 miles of bike paths, on-street lanes and designated bike routes in Los Angeles County that are detailed in a new Metro Bike Map that will be distributed at the event.

On Thursday, May 18, Metro will offer free rides to bicyclists on Metro buses and trains, as will LADOT Commuter Express, Beach Cities Transit, Commerce, Gardena, Montebello and Norwalk bus lines.

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With kids from Griffin Avenue Elementary School assembled in front of a Metro Rapid articulated bus, Mechanic Jose Garcia gives a safety briefing.



Photos by Rich Morallo

DAC Members Satisfy Elementary Pupils' Curiosity about Metro

- Career information and transit safety are the topics

By RICH MORALLO

(May 12, 2006) "How much do bus operators make?" "Do you like driving a bus?" "How does the farebox work?"

The questions were endless for Division Ambassador Committee (DAC) member Diana Martinez as she spoke to children in three classes during a recent Career Day at Western Avenue Elementary.

"It's important for Metro to communicate career information to the students who one day will start to consider future job options," said Martinez, a bus operator from Arthur Winston Division 5. "At the same time they can pass on to their families what they learned about transit safety."

Transportation Operations Supervisor June Singleton-Reece, who accompanied Martinez, described for the students how she drove a bus for 11 years before becoming a supervisor.

"Besides careers, we also promote safety and I warned the students to never run after the bus," she



Division 18 Operator Theresa Bender responds to questions from the pupils at McKinley Avenue Elementary School. Division 5 TOS June Singleton-Reece, right, gave a bus and rail safety presentation to the pupils at Western Avenue Elementary School.

said.

Career Day presentation

While Singleton-Reece and Martinez were talking to the Western Avenue students, five miles away fellow DAC member Theresa Bender attended McKinley Avenue Elementary School's Career Day.

"I told the students I decided to become a bus operator when I was in school 16 years ago," said Bender, a Carson Division 18 operator. Bender explained to 50 third-graders that the Metro job is not always easy but she has fun and enjoys what she does.

Bender smiled at some of the feedback from the children. "One of the students told me that he wanted to be a bus driver, a police officer and a baseball player."

Meanwhile, Mechanic Jose Garcia talked to Griffin Avenue Elementary students in East Los Angeles about his work at the repair and refurbish shop in the Regional Rebuild Center.

"Be careful near buses and trains, and step back from the curb when waiting for the bus," Garcia told the youngsters.



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CEO Roger Snoble, center, and other Metro officials met Tuesday morning with the APTA peer review panel. From left are Greg Hull of APTA, Richard N. Winston of Chicago Transit, Matthew Tucker of Santa Clara Valley Transportation, Metro Rail Chief Gerald Francis, Deputy Chief Jeri Lee of WMATA, Metro Transit Operations EO Carolyn Flowers, Willie McCuller of St. Louis Metro and Scott Schroeder of BART.



Photo by Bill Heard

APTA Panel Convenes to Review Metro's Security Program

(May 16, 2006) Six members of a peer review panel formed by the American Public Transportation Association at the request of Metro met Tuesday morning with CEO Roger Snoble to kick off a three-day study of the agency's security program.

The panel will take a look at how security is provided throughout the Metro system by the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau and Metro Security, as well as assessing costs and other elements of the program.

"We want a fresh, comprehensive, knowledgeable look at all aspects of our security detail to help us strengthen it and make it more cost-effective," Snoble told the group.

The CEO was complimentary of the security currently being provided by the Transit Services Bureau and Metro Security. "People generally view our system as being safe, but when you look at the cost, it's extremely high."

Panel leader Greg Hull, APTA's director of operations, safety and security programs, said the group will "support you in what you're trying to achieve, and that is to find the best direction in providing security to your riding public and to your employees."

The peer review panel will deliver a preliminary report, Friday, during a meeting with Snoble.

In addition to Hull, members of the peer review panel are Richard N. Winston, executive vice president, Chicago Transit Authority; Scott L. Schroeder, controller-treasurer, San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District; Matthew Tucker, chief operating officer, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority; Willie McCuller, director of security and fare enforcement, St. Louis Metro; and Metro Transit Police Deputy Chief Jeri Lee of Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

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Yaroslavsky, Greuel Launch Bike to Work Week on Metro Orange Line Bikeway

Photos by Gary Leonard



World's Tiniest Bicycle: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky examines the world's smallest rideable bicycle during the Bike to Work Week kickoff event. Looking on, at left, is LADOT General Manager Gloria Jeff, along with Superman, Elvis and a group of bicyclists who joined in the celebration.



Supervisor Yaroslavsky leads the way with Los Angeles City Councilmember Wendy Greuel and other cyclists close behind to kick off Bike to Work Week during a ride, Monday morning, on the Metro Orange Line bike path. To promote bicycling as a viable alternative for commuters, Metro will offer free rides to bicyclists on its buses and trains on Bike Commute Day, Thursday, May 18.


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May Committee Meetings

- Wednesday, May 17
 - Planning and Programming, 1 p.m.
 - Public Hearing, FY 2007 Proposed Budget, 2:30 p.m.
 - Finance and Budget, 2:30 p.m.
- Thursday, May 18
 - Executive Management and Audit, 9 a.m. **Cancelled**
 - Construction, 10:30 a.m. **Cancelled**
 - Operations, 12 Noon

Metro, SCRRA Budgets, New Bus Division Proposal on Committee Agendas for May

- [Item 6, SCRRA FY 2007 Budget](#)
- [Item 10, Metro FY 2007 Budget](#)
- [Item 23 Grade Crossing Improvements](#)
- [Item 26, Division 20 Railcar Wash](#)
- [Item 27, New Bus Division](#)
- [Item 30, Division 5, 10, 18 Improvements](#)

(May 16, 2006) Consideration of FY 2007 budgets for Metro and the SCRRA, along with a proposal for a new bus operating division and Metro Blue Line grade crossing improvements are among items on Board committee agendas in May.

Item 6, SCRRA Budget. The Planning and Programming Committee will consider a motion to approve a \$47.7 million contribution of Proposition C 10 percent sales tax funds to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) for the Metrolink FY 2006-07 preliminary budget.

The sum includes approximately \$32.9 million for operations, \$14 million for rehabilitation and renovation, and \$781,000 for capital projects. Capital projects include approximately \$458,000 for a train storage facility at Keller Street near Union Station, and a new platform at Union Station; also included is \$323,000 for a settlement with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad.

The Metrolink budget anticipates a 7.7 percent increase in ridership. A 5.5 percent fare increase is planned for July 1, 2006 to help offset rising operations costs, especially for diesel fuel.

Item 10, Metro 2007 Budget. The Finance and Budget Committee will consider a motion to adopt Metro's \$3,031 billion FY 2007 annual

budget. The proposed budget would authorize 8,980 full-time equivalent positions – an increase of 62 FTEs over the FY 2006 budget.

The Enterprise Fund, which includes bus and rail operations, capital projects and debt service, is budgeted at \$2.047 billion. The Governmental Fund, which includes subsidies to others, is budgeted at \$960.6 million, while the Agency Fund – the Benefit Assessment District budget – is proposed at \$23 million.

The proposed budget includes a 2 percent wage increase, but defers a number of capital projects and will draw on the agency's reserves to cover a \$112 million deficit.

- [Click here for full budget story](#)

Item 23, Grade Crossing Improvements. The Operations Committee will consider a motion to add \$6.478 million to a multi-year project to upgrade deteriorated grade crossings on the Metro Blue Line with proven longer lasting low-maintenance, corrosion-inhibiting materials.

The first phase of the upgrade within the embedded track structures at grade crossings in the City of Long Beach is 90 percent complete. The second phase will upgrade the ballasted portions of track at 25 grade crossing locations. Materials for the upgrade are currently under procurement contract. The cost of the project, which would continue through FY 2011, is estimated at \$10.6 million.

Item 26, Division 20 Railcar Wash. The Operations Committee will consider a motion to allocate \$15.4 million for construction of a new enclosed railcar wash facility and the expansion of the servicing platform at Metro Red Line Division 20. The current railcar wash facility and servicing platform were not designed to handle longer trains or the current volume of daily railcar washes required to keep the fleet at an acceptable level of cleanliness, according to a staff report.

Enclosed in an all-weather structure to help reduce noise output when equipment is in operation, the proposed railcar wash facility would be capable of handling the present volume of railcars required for revenue service.

The elevated servicing platform would be expanded from its current capability of two railcars (1-married pair) to handle 12 railcars (6-married pairs). The platform would also be illuminated by overhead lighting to improve employee efficiency and reduce potential injuries. Preliminary engineering began in FY 2006 and the project would extend through FY 2009.

Item 27, New Bus Division. With its current operating divisions rapidly running out of space to park and maintain a growing bus fleet, Metro is proposing to build a new "Union Division" bus operations facility at Terminal 31, located across the intersection from the Gateway Building and adjacent to the Regional Rebuild Center.

The facility, built on roughly six acres, would house and operate a mixed fleet of some 200 CNG buses, including 60-foot articulated coaches. It would be an LEED-certified facility with three levels of bus and car parking, along with administrative and maintenance buildings. The cost of construction, which could begin in January 2008, is

estimated at \$90 million, plus an estimated \$5 million if a cash counting facility is included.

The Operations Committee will consider a motion to increase the current life-of-project budget from \$1 million to \$4.946 million to cover administration, environmental studies, project design and engineering, preparation of contract documents and specifications, and minor construction costs required prior to major construction of the facility.

Item 30, Divisions 5, 10, 18 Improvements. Metro is proposing to make important improvements that will modernize and expand the maintenance and transportation capabilities of Arthur Winston Division 5, Gateway Division 10 and South Bay Division 18. The Operations Committee will consider a motion to establish a budget of \$18.3 million for the project.

The work at the three divisions includes replacement of outdated bus washing equipment and addition of second washers, installation of bus exhaust systems, more storage space, new bus hoists, upgrades to bus service pits, installation of catwalks and overhead cranes for CNG tank maintenance, retrofitting painting equipment, renovation of operator break areas as well as maintenance and transportation administration spaces, improved shop and yard lighting and yard security.

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Communications intern Reina Slutske masters the two-wheeler at the Long Beach Convention Center.



How Reina Found Her Courage, Learned to Ride a Bike and Got Kissed

- A *Bike to Work Week* story of one young woman's quest for acceptance and mobility

By REINA V. SLUTSKE

(May 16, 2006) In the late 1800s, bicycles were revolutionary. They created independence, especially for women, and offered an option other than the horse and buggy to get where you needed to go.

Fast forward to a time when our bikes collect dust in favor of our cars and \$3 per gallon gasoline. As Los Angeles County's Bike to Work Week approached, I confided in my co-interns and boss, Bill Heard, that I didn't know how to ride a bike, and neither did my boyfriend, Ari Kutner.

Bill promptly gave me an assignment: learn to ride a bicycle and write a story about it for Bike to Work Week.

I was in a state of shock. Me on a bike? My stomach tied itself into a knot. The last time I was on a bike was when I was seven years old, growing up in San Jose. I tried to ride one and fell on my neighbor's lawn. After that day, I swore I would never ride again.

But early Sunday morning, sure enough, Ari and I took the Metro Blue Line down to the Transit Mall in Long Beach. We proceeded to Bikestation Long Beach, a non-profit organization that promotes bike commuting, including Bike to Work Week. Although it is used mainly for bike parking, it also has other services, which include renting bikes for day use.



Unsure of what's to come, Employee Communications Intern Reina Slutske summons her courage before mounting her rented bike.

Instructions in French?

We rented two bikes, identical green with fat tires. The attendant explained the bike's seven speeds, the brakes, seat adjustments, and how "forgiving" the bikes were. He might as well have spoken in French, because most of what he was saying didn't make any sense to me, the inexperienced bike rider.

We took our bikes out to the front of the Long Beach Convention Center, which has a wide path perfect for learning to ride. Within ten minutes of getting his footing, Ari was off and racing, happy as could be. He would ride around, and come back with a huge grin on his face.

As for me... well, every time I tried to get both feet on the pedals, I would completely recoil, or not even reach them. I was so terrified that I was making sure to keep one foot on the ground at all times.

Being the supportive boyfriend that he is, Ari stood by me and tried to coach me. But my body did not want the ground beneath me to leave abruptly.

I remembered rolling around the neighborhood on my scooter and watching other kids speed past me on their bikes. I thought of my sister biking off to the market to run errands, leaving me behind.

A godforsaken bicycle



Trying desperately to master her uncooperative

And now here I was in the present, where my head ached from the glare and my butt hurt from sitting wrong on this godforsaken bicycle.

bike, Reina is unwilling to take her feet off the ground.

I pouted and felt like crying. How could I learn now to ride a bike? I was too afraid—afraid of falling, afraid of failing, afraid of being left behind. I just wanted to give in.

"You're psyching yourself out," Ari said. "You're almost there. I know you can do it. You can't be afraid. You have to be persistent."

I decided to sit as Ari pedaled off for a little bit. I thought of many things, and then, for some odd reason, my mind went to my grandmother. She had died a little over a week earlier. If there was one thing to be said for her, she was a fighter. Quitting just wasn't in my blood.

I got up on the bike, and adjusted the pedals. I pushed a little forward, and let my other foot finally leave the ground and find its way onto the pedal. It was about faith, mainly faith in myself.



Success! Reina pedals happily alongside the Long Beach Convention Center.

Wind in her hair

Three seconds on the bike turned to four, and four turned to ten. Little by little, I kept moving, as if someone was walking alongside me, pushing me forward. I felt the wind through my hair and across my skin as I pedaled, watching Ari in front of me, and calling out to him, "Wait!"

He turned around and smiled as I caught up, starting to whiz by on the bicycle. When I stopped, he laughed and kissed me, with a great big smile on his face; proud that I didn't give up, no matter how much I wanted to.

As we raced up and down the convention center path, with the ocean in the distance setting a perfect scene, I was amazed with myself. Even though I couldn't steer and kept somehow driving myself into walls and planters, the fact that I was even riding was a miracle. Sitting at lunch that day, I never felt happier and more alive.

I live too far away to be able to commute by bike for Bike to Work Week, no matter how much I want to. Aside from its amazing health benefits, for both our bodies and the environment, the fact is that the world passes by us way too fast in our cars.

We're so focused on getting where we need to go without killing anyone that we forget how beautiful Southern California really is and forget to enjoy it. There is something peaceful and wonderful about a bike.

Meanwhile, boyfriend Ari Kutner stands proudly next to his bike.



When I got on the Metro to return home from Long Beach that night, I took notice of the numerous bikes that were around me, and felt incredibly proud. Persistence, after all, was what it was all about. And I couldn't wait for my next bike ride with Ari.

Editor's Note: Reina Slutske is a Communications Department intern who reports for myMetro.net. She graduated with a degree in journalism from Cal State University Fullerton.



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Ara Najarian Succeeds Frank Roberts on Metro's Board

- Glendale councilman to represent North County, SFV sector



Metro Director
Ara Najarian

May 17, 2006) Glendale City Councilman Ara Najarian will be sworn in, May 25, as the newest member of Metro's 13-member Board of Directors. He succeeds former Board Chairman Frank Roberts, who is retiring.

Like Roberts, former mayor of Lancaster, Najarian will represent the North County and San Fernando Valley Sector, which includes the cities of Burbank, Glendale, Lancaster and Palmdale.

Najarian was elected to the Glendale City Council in April, 2005. Prior to that, he was an elected member of the Glendale Community College Board of Trustees.

He served seven years on the Glendale Transportation and Parking Commission, two of those years as chairman. He is currently vice chairman of the Glendale Redevelopment Agency and past chairman of the Glendale Housing Authority.

Najarian has been an attorney in private practice for 20 years. He attended Occidental College, where he received a BA in economics; he later earned a JD from the USC School of Law.



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Arthur Winston's Family Expresses Appreciation

(May 17, 2006) The family of Arthur Winston is extending appreciation to Metro for all the condolences sent by members of the staff over the past few weeks.

"On behalf of our family, please forward our thanks and gratitude to everyone at Metro who so kindly expressed their respect for Arthur and provided their support for the family with cards, flowers and messages. We are grateful for their warm wishes and gracious prayers," said Brandii Wright, Arthur's great granddaughter.

The following poem was written by South Bay Governance Council member Devon Deming. She wrote it after seeing a card commemorating Arthur Winston on the Metro Blue Line. Deming is the LAX Rideshare manager.

Angel

Dedicated to the memory of Arthur Winston



Arthur
Angel of this rough City
Dedicated to movement
And to life

Born in a nameless state
Raised on an electric street car
The future
Years before its time
And now the past

Never burdened by a day without work
Your soul celebrates
A lifetime of service to millions of travelers
Passing through

Your picture lightens
The weight of this train car
On a foggy May morning

Your spirit will
Move this City
For another hundred years

-- Devon Deming

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Rail Transit Operations Class of 2006 with certificates for completing training course that qualifies them as train operators and supervisors. Lead instructor Arnold Johnson, seated, foreground, delivered the eight-week course.



Training Course Readies Operators, Supervisors for Rail Transit Operations

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(May 18, 2006) Certificates in hand, they stood 15 strong in crisp blue Metro uniforms last Friday. The graduating class of Metro Rail train operators and supervisors do not take their responsibilities lightly. They are part of some 200 Rail Operators who pilot several tons of steel and technology through the countywide maze of tracks and tunnels to get Los Angelinos and others to where they need to go.



Lead Instructor Arnold Johnson, at left, and Rail General Manager Gerald Francis with graduates.

After completing a grueling eight-week intensive training course, the graduates joined with Deputy CEO John Catoe, Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, UTU General Chairman James Williams, UTU Vice-chairman Vic Baffone and Local 1565 Chairman Tim Delcambre and

Operations staff for a cake and certificate ceremony at Metro Headquarters May 12.

"The first 3 ½ weeks of training consisted of an overview of the rail system and concentrated instruction on rules and procedures," said Linda Leone, Rail Instruction Manager.

"The next three weeks were hands on, for the most part, learning yard operation, mainline operation, the vehicle, and line-specific procedures for the Blue Line."



Deputy CEO John Catoe congratulates Rail Transit Operator Ruth Villalpando.

This segment was followed by two more weeks of similar training specific to the Metro Green Line.

The hard part over, the graduates completed the last bit of paperwork and gathered for a celebration. "You make this system work," Catoe told the group of graduates.

One by one, each graduate was called to the front of the Windsor Room and walked an impressive line of congratulatory handshakes from Francis, Operations staff and UTU leadership.

"I know that I have a team, now, the best that there is, to do the best job possible," said Erick Diaz.

Diaz, who has recently returned from deployment in Iraq with the Army Reserves, praised the expert training he received in the class. "I know what it means to have to depend on teamwork."

Photos by Gayle Anderson



Training Instructors Arnold Johnson, center, and Gerald Harper, at left, led a group of instructors who focused on specific disciplines. Pictured, are, from left, Harper, Freddie Marlow, Johnson, Hector Gutierrez and Karl Williams.

The class of 2006 was directed by lead Training Instructors Arnold Johnson and Gerald Harper. The training yielded 10 new operators: Sebastain Casteneda, Ruth Villalpando, Elaine Woodard, Floyd Gross, Erick Diaz, Alma Reyes, Michael K. Brown, David Earley, Surinder Gill, and Willie Reyes.

The roster also included four newly assigned to the rank of Rail Transit Operations Supervisor (RTOS): David Aguirre, Matthew Antaya, Mario Cancio and Jose L. Gonzalez.



Class of 2006 with UTU leadership, from left, Vice-chairman Victor Baffone, Local 1565 Chairman Tim Delcambre and UTU General Chairman James Williams.

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Aerial view of the solar panel installation at East Valley Division 15. East Valley Division 15 and West Valley Division 8 in the San Fernando Valley are the sites of the largest solar power installation of any transportation agency in the United States and the 20th largest green energy-producing installation ever built in the United States.



Metro to Mark First Anniversary of Solar Panel Installation

- Project at divisions 8 and 15 are transit industry's largest

By DAVE SOTERO

(May 19, 2006) Metro will mark the one-year anniversary, May 26, of the installation of the transit industry's biggest solar power project – nearly 1,700 panels placed atop four buildings at East Valley Division 15 and West Valley Division 8.



The panels provide 15-20 percent of the two divisions' total energy needs by generating an estimated 700,000 kilowatt-hours per year.

The panels provide 15-20 percent of the two divisions' total energy needs by generating an estimated 700,000 kilowatt-hours per year. Together, they have saved the agency approximately \$150,000 in electricity costs.

The Solar Panel project demonstrates Metro's commitment to "green power" and demonstrates how a major agency can take advantage of state incentive programs to implement renewable energy solutions in Los Angeles County.

The event is scheduled from 10 am to 11 am at Division 15 in Sun Valley.

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Metro to Offer 'Transit English' Classes to Help Fill Operator Ranks

- Safe operation, effective communication are program goals
- Metro to partner with LA Community Colleges

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 19, 2006) Facing an immediate need to fill almost 300 bus operator positions, Metro plans to reach out for candidates who might qualify for the jobs through participation in a new "transit English" program.

The language course, developed through a partnership between Metro and the Los Angeles Community College district, would concentrate on teaching likely job candidates enough English to successfully complete bus operator training, to safely operate a bus in LA's challenging environment, and to communicate effectively with dispatchers, supervisors, law enforcement officers and customers.

"We believe there are a lot of people out there who just need a little help with the language, but could be great bus operators," says Don Ott, executive officer of Administration. Ott, who is spearheading the program for Metro, hopes to see transit English classes by January 2007 or earlier.

Andrea Burnside, the Operations Administration managing director, first met with community college representatives about the program in 2005, says safety is a top concern.

Safety a top concern

"It would be a requirement that anyone who comes into the program through a transit English class can understand safety issues and communicate effectively enough to be a safe operator," she says.

Metro's transit English program would be part of a larger initiative by the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department, the state Employment Development Department and the LA Community College District to train people as longshore and warehouse workers and in safety and security, freight movement and logistics.

The group already has received \$25,000 in seed money to write a curriculum, recruit businesses that need workers, and write a grants package for federal funding. The grant application is due June 30.

Lenny Ciufo, director of job training at LA Valley College, says the English proficiency of Metro job candidates would be assessed to determine how much transit vocabulary training each would need. Depending on proficiency level, classes could range from 40 hours to 75 hours or more.

Job prospects, prescreened by Metro for employment eligibility, would be referred to the transit English program. They could be hired by the agency for operator training once they had successfully completed the language classes.

The federal grant would cover the cost of the classes which also might include study skills, time management, note- and test-taking and critical thinking. The classes would be taught either at a local community college or at other convenient locations, Ciufo says.

"We hope this will offer people in our community career opportunities at Metro," says Ott.

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Photo by Bill Heard



Obesity Now at Alarming Rates in LA County, Health Experts Say

<Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky called for planners to include options for healthy lifestyles during a health conference at Metro Headquarters.

- Conference at Metro Headquarters seeks ways to improve health

(May 23, 2006) County health officials, medical professionals, transportation planners and public officials attended a conference at Metro Headquarters, Tuesday, to discuss an alarming rise in obesity in LA County and ways to provide an environment that would encourage improved health.

Earlier this year, the County Health Department released a study that showed the rate of adult obesity rising, with one in five adults in LA County now obese. The average adult gained six pounds between 1997 and 2005, collectively making the county 44 million pounds heavier, the study said.

The conference, titled "Built Environment and Transportation: Impacts on Public Health," featured such speakers as Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and CEO Roger Snoble, along with discussion panel members who included Metro Chief Planning Officer Carol Inge.

In an eight-year period ending in 2005, the prevalence of adult obesity in the county increased from 14 percent to 21 percent. By 2010, the study said, the rate is expected to reach 25 percent.

Noting that communities can play an important role in improving their residents' health, County Health Officer Jonathan Fielding said, "Communities that foster walkable neighborhoods, access to healthy foods, parks and green space, and encourage physical activity . . . have the potential to greatly impact the rising trend of obesity, as well as diabetes and other chronic diseases."

Conference sessions covered such topics as health issues, protecting the public from air pollution, smart community growth, healthy

lifestyles, and planning communities that include options for healthy, active living.

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Retiree Mary Mendoza Died Following Brief Illness

(May 23, 2006) Funeral services are scheduled, Saturday, for retired Service Attendant Mary S. Mendoza who died May 20 following a brief illness. She was the wife of Steve Mendoza, a field equipment technician at the Regional Rebuild Center.

Visitation hours are from noon until -2 p.m., Saturday, May 27, at the Ingold Funeral Chapel, 8277 Juniper Ave., Fontana, followed by a funeral service at 2 p.m. For information and directions, call 909-822-8083.

Mary Mendoza, 53, joined Metro on May 21, 1984, and worked as a service attendant at divisions 18, 5 and 10. The Long Beach native retired in December 2004 with 20 years' service.

A resident of Fontana, she is survived by her husband, Steve; sons Dave and Mark; five grandchildren; two brothers and two sisters.



Mary Mendoza

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Metro Choir Director Renee Willis and choir members are honored at the Los Angeles County Board of supervisors meeting today. "We appreciate the fact that you have this spirit and commitment to your community and bring joy to all of us," said County Supervisor Yvonne Burke. Photo by Bill Heard



LA County Board of Supervisors Pays Tribute to Metro Choir

- "Community service and commitment to make a 'joyful noise'"

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 23, 2006) The LA County Board of Supervisors paid tribute, Tuesday, to the Metro Choir for its "outstanding community service and commitment to make a 'joyful noise' within the community and workplace...to increase morale, harmony and productivity."

The Choir, led by Renee Willis, raised its voices to sing the National Anthem at the outset of the Board of Supervisor's meeting. Afterward, Supervisor Yvonne Burke presented certificates of commendation to each choir member.

Photo by Bill Heard



The Choir, led by Renee Willis, raised its voices to sing the National Anthem at the outset of the Board of Supervisor's meeting.

"We appreciate the fact that you have this spirit and commitment to your community and bring joy to all of us," said Burke.

"The (members of the choir) are just a small sampling of the employees of Metro," Willis said in thanking the Board. "We provide the best transportation service in LA County."

'A great honor'

Singing for the Board of Supervisors "was wonderful and a great honor," said Choir member DonCosta Seawell. "It was a privilege."

Willis said the Choir spent a month during their lunch periods practicing for Tuesday's event and for their appearance, last week, to sing the National Anthem before an LA Avengers game at Staples Center.

Photo by Reina Slutske



Singing the National Anthem in opening ceremonies of the LA Avenger game at the Staples Center, Metro Choir goes prime time at "Metro Night."

"The choir is fantastic," she said. "We care about one another and we care about doing a good job while we're at work."

Singing in the Choir, she said, "helps us get through our day in a positive manner and to be kind and compassionate to our fellow employees and want to make the workplace a better place to be."



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Funeral Services Scheduled for Division 10 Operator Brian Walker



Brian Walker

(May 25, 2006) Funeral services are scheduled, Saturday, May 27, for Gateway Division 10 Operator Brian Walker, who died in an auto accident May 19.

Visitation hours are from 5:30 to 6:30p.m., Friday, May 26, at Spaulding Mortuary, 3045 La Brea, Los Angeles. For information and

directions, call 323-934-1181.

Services will be held at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, May 27, at the Church of Christian Fellowship, 2085 S. Hobart in Los Angeles.

Walker, 49, a full-time bus operator since March 21, 1999, was a resident of Los Angeles. He is survived by his wife, Jera, a brother, a sister and nieces. -- *from Karl Downs*

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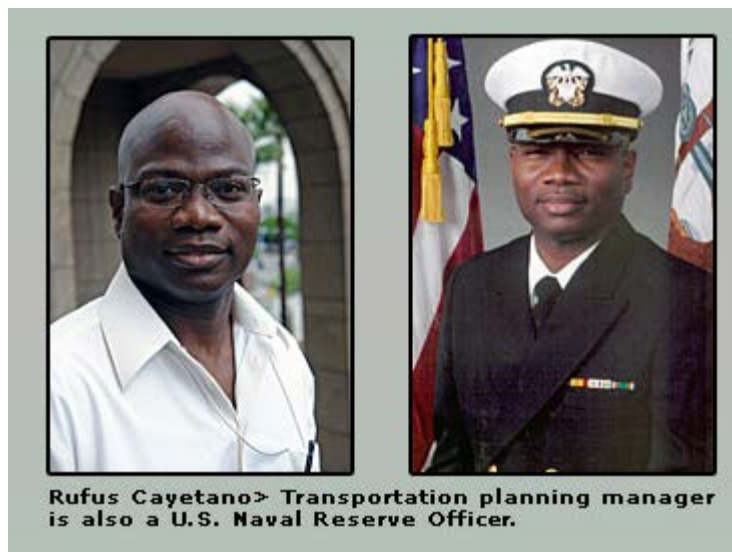
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Photo by Bill Heard



Metro's Rufus Cayetano's Life Has Come 'Up Through the Ranks'

- Native of Belize is now a U.S. Naval Reserve officer

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 25, 2006) Rufus Cayetano has experienced a lot of change and personal growth in his lifetime, starting from a childhood in the Central American nation of Belize to his recent selection as a lieutenant commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve.

Cayetano, 41, now a transportation planning manager in Metro's Local Programming Department, had earned an associate's degree and was working as an English language and geography instructor at a college in Belize when he decided to follow his parents to California.

Not long after arriving in the United States at the age of 22, he enlisted in the Navy and served seven years as an air traffic controller, rising to second class petty officer.

During that time, Cayetano served aboard aircraft carriers with the naval amphibious forces in the Western Pacific and Persian Gulf, participating in both Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1991.

Service in the Navy helped Cayetano become a naturalized citizen and also made him eligible for G.I. Bill college funding. He received an undergraduate degree in aviation management from Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 1995 and, two years later, a masters in public administration from Cal State Long Beach.

Naval Reserve ensign

With those degrees in hand, he was commissioned a Naval Reserve

ensign in mid-1998. After an additional 18 months of correspondence course study and classroom work during three annual training periods, he was designated a Supply Corps officer.

"If it wasn't for the G.I. Bill, I wouldn't be where I am today," he says. "The G.I. Bill allowed me to go to school and get my education."

Cayetano first came to Metro in 1996 as an intern in Operations Planning and then in Capital Planning. After graduate school, he worked for a short time for the San Bernardino County Association of Governments before returning to Metro in 1999.

At Metro, Cayetano is involved in planning programs concerning the region's municipal operators. He also drills on weekends as an administrative contracting officer with Naval Supply Support Battalion 1's Contingency Contracting Command in San Diego.

Cayetano and his wife, Jean, live in Los Angeles with their three daughters, Nelinie, 12; Cherise, 7; and Jeanine, 4.


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CEO UpDate

An Opportunity We Can't Afford to Miss!

Kudos for the Metro Rail team, Bus Operations Control and the Metro Choir

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

Gasoline prices are sky-high and the government says motorists may have to endure increased fuel costs for years to come. That's a very gloomy forecast for drivers, but those clouds have a silver lining for us: We have a wonderful opportunity to attract new riders to the Metro System.

Thanks to three-dollar-a-gallon gas and to our own aggressive advertising and marketing, we've seen more and more people trying transit – and carpooling and vanpooling and even bicycling – as a way to cut their commuting costs. For the first four months of the year, Metro Bus ridership was up 7.6 percent and Metro Rail ridership was up even more at 13.7 percent over last year.

But, when people decide to give up their cars and ride Metro, we have to be prepared to give them quality service. They won't accept anything less. Luckily, we're positioned very well just now to offer potential riders good service. We have capacity on the system and we've been working hard for the past four years to make sure that we can provide safe, convenient, reliable transportation.

Even so, we have to prove ourselves to every new customer who steps aboard a bus or train. Many of them haven't used transit in years – if ever. It can be scary for a new rider who isn't familiar with our bus routes, may not know how to pay the fare, where to sit or how to signal for a stop.

But, if the bus or train is in good mechanical order, comfortable, clean, on time and safe – and if the reception by the operator is friendly, courteous and helpful – we have a real good chance of getting that new customer back again. And maybe he or she will bring a co-worker.

Kudos for our Metro Rail team

I want to commend our Metro Rail team for their quick recovery, Tuesday morning, from a double whammy that disrupted service on both the Blue Line and Green Line. The Bus Control Center and divisions 1, 2, 3, 9, 18 and 5 also deserve great credit for promptly responding with bus bridges to transport our customers who otherwise would have been stranded.

The trouble began just before 5 a.m. with an explosion in an electrical vault that shut down Blue Line service between the Pacific Coast Highway and Willow stations. Then at about 6 a.m., a vehicle flew off a highway overpass on the I-105 in Downey, fell onto the Green Line right-of-way and came to rest upside down near the Lakewood station. The driver was transported and no Metro employees or passengers were injured.

Despite the complicated nature of these incidents, the Wayside team was able to restore service on the Green Line by 8 a.m. and got the trains running again on the Blue Line by 9 a.m. A remarkable performance by everyone involved!

Applause for the Metro Choir

Let's hear it for the Metro Choir! The 34-member choral group, skillfully directed by Renee Willis, has earned the admiration of the LA County Board of Supervisors. The Choir sang the National Anthem during the Supervisors' meeting, May 23, and then received certificates of commendation for their "outstanding community service and commitment to make a 'joyful noise'" from Supervisor Yvonne Burke.

It was an eventful month for Choir members. Earlier in May, they sang the National Anthem before an appreciative crowd at an LA Avengers game. Surely it was their inspiration that helped the Avengers beat the Las Vegas Gladiators, 44 to 27.

May 25, 2006

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