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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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