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Photo by Mike Barnes



Terisa Price of Beach Cities Transit, a member of the South Bay Governance Council, and Metro Communications Chief Matt Raymond try out a solar-powered bus stop sign recently installed at the corner of Artesia and Kingsdale in Redondo Beach.

Metro to Test Effectiveness of Illuminated Bus Stop Signs

- Solar-powered signs also flash alerts to bus operators

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(June 2, 2006) When night falls, some bus stops in out-of-the-way areas of Los Angeles County are cast into darkness. So, Metro is testing a solar-powered bus stop sign that provides illumination and can alert approaching operators that patrons are waiting.

Metro Stops and Zones employees installed one "I-Stop Illuminated Transit Stop" in mid-May in Redondo Beach at the intersection of Artesia and Kingsdale near the South Bay Galleria. Another will be installed soon at a test site in Altadena.



A high-intensity LED light fixture mounted at the top of the 10-foot metal pole can illuminate a 6-foot diameter area

According to the manufacturer, Carmanah Technologies Corp. of Victoria, British Columbia, a high-intensity LED light fixture mounted at the top of the 10-foot metal pole can illuminate a 6-foot diameter area when a patron pushes one of three buttons on a waist-level panel.

A second button activates a bright, white flashing light at the top of the pole that can be seen for a mile by approaching buses. The third button illuminates bus information displayed in a box mounted on the pole.

According to Carmanah, the area lights provide extra security for transit patrons, while the flashing beacons help ensure that bus operators stop for waiting passengers. The solar-powered LED (light emitting diodes) lights are rated for 100,000 hours and need only two hours of sun exposure to provide light.

‘Looking for public input’

“We’ll be looking for public input during a six-month trial period and will be contacting other transit agencies that use Carmanah’s I-Stop about their experiences to determine how useful the illuminated bus stop signs are,” says Facilities Maintenance Manager Pete Serdienis.

“We want to know whether they will greatly reduce passenger passups at night and increase customer security and comfort levels,” he adds. “We will conduct a cost benefit analysis on their installation time, maintenance and vandalism before pursuing any large-scale purchases due to their relatively high unit cost.”

Serdienis says areas that would benefit the most from illuminated bus stops would be the less populated, rural areas of the county and dimly lit stops and along Metro’s overnight “owl service” bus lines.

Currently, more than 90 transit agencies in such cities as London, Toronto, Chicago, Atlanta, London and Long Beach, are using the I-Stop solar-powered equipment.



OCTA has installed some 700 illuminated bus stop signs

In Orange County, OCTA has installed some 700 illuminated bus stop signs and will eventually have 1,200 in operation.

“With the extra security lighting, the flashing beacon and the back-lit bus information, these new bus stop signs could prove to be a real benefit for our customers,” says Metro’s Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond.

“This is one of the many ways we’re looking to improve our transit system signage.”