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Ridership Surges in May as Gas Prices Remain High

- Orange Line patronage reaches 2020 ridership forecast

By MARC LITTMAN

(June 13, 2006) Metro ridership, particularly on the Metro Orange Line and Metro Rail, surged in May as gas prices remained stubbornly high.

Weekday ridership on the Metro Orange Line averaged 21,828 boardings, a milestone the Environmental Impact Report predicted wouldn't be reached until 2020.

Metro Rail ridership climbed 18 percent in May over last year, a gain of more than 1.1 million boardings. There were 7.7 million boardings in May 2006 compared to 6.6 million in May 2005.

Directly operated Metro Bus service, including the Metro Orange Line, carried 10 percent more riders – 34 million in May 2006 compared to 31 million in May 2005.

“With a \$3 Metro day pass costing less than a gallon of gas, it’s a powerful lure for commuters,” said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. “Combine that with new and better service, such as the Metro Orange Line, and commuters are finding they really can free themselves from high gas prices if they go Metro.”

To make the benefits – and savings – of public transportation tangible, Metro has undertaken a number of transit initiatives, including an ad campaign that depicts a motorist handcuffed to a gas pump with the text: “Free yourself. Go Metro.”

The ads appear on billboards and bus shelters, the sides of buses and in newspaper advertisements throughout Los Angeles County.