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DWP Commissioner H. David Nahai, left, presents a check for \$357,000 from the DWP Solar Incentive Program to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, center, and Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky. The utility company rebates, which included \$1.46 million from the Southern California Gas Company incentive program, helped fund the installation of the solar generation facilities.



Photos by Juan Ocampo

## Solar Panels at Valley Bus Divisions Saved Metro \$185,000 Since May

- Panels supply up to 20 percent of bus divisions' energy needs

By DAVE SOTERO

(July 11, 2006) The huge solar panel project at Metro's San Fernando Valley bus divisions has so far saved the agency at least \$185,000 in electricity costs.

The Sun Valley and Chatsworth divisions were outfitted with a total of 1,648 solar panels last May. The panels produce a combined 425 kilowatts of clean, renewable AC power — enough electricity to provide up to 20 percent of each division's total energy requirements.

Occupying a total of 43,000 square feet of rooftop space at Division 15 and Division 8, the project is the largest solar



CEO Roger Snoble lists benefits of solar project at news conference.

power installation of its kind in the transit industry. The panels have enough generating capacity to power more than 100 homes a year for 25 years.

“It is no small feat for an agency the size of Metro to marshal the will and the resources to implement a renewable energy project of this magnitude,” said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, during a news event last Friday. “Far beyond being an environmentally responsible project, these solar panels just make good business sense and are now helping lower agency operating costs at a time when they are most needed.”

“With air quality concerns, rising fuel prices, tight operating costs and budget deficits, renewable energy solutions like solar power generation are becoming both an economic imperative and a responsible way of doing business,” said CEO Roger Snoble.



CEO Roger Snoble takes officials on rooftop tour of Division 15.

**Metro’s funding partners**

The panels, which cost \$3.3 million to install, were funded by \$1.48 million from Metro, \$1.46 million from Southern California Gas Co. and \$357,000 from the LA Department of Water and Power.

Metro will recoup its own \$1.48 million investment within seven to ten years through reduced electricity costs. The system is designed to last 25 to 30 years.

While other transit agencies have designed solar installations for purpose-built facilities, Metro

is the first to design a solar power generation project of this magnitude on existing rooftop space.

The emissions savings by avoiding fossil-fuel generation is equivalent to removing more than 500,000 pounds of carbon dioxide, 1,000 pounds of nitrogen oxide and 2,500 pounds of sulfur dioxide emissions per year. That is equivalent to taking 100 cars off the road.

Based on the success of this solar project, Metro may retrofit other transit properties with solar panels. Other possible applications could include solar panels on light-rail station platforms, where the photovoltaics could generate power for video surveillance cameras, intercoms and other station equipment.