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Metro Orange Line

COUNTDOWN

Canoga Park Station Countdown
Photos by Ned Racine
Circa: July 2006
Due to be completed by December, the Canoga Park park-and-ride station of the Metro Orange Line will include 611 parking spaces and will extend the popular transitway 0.3 miles to Canoga Avenue. These photos capture the raising and installation of the pillars that support the canopies for the Metro Orange Line Canoga station. The distinctive yellow light standards were raised July 31. --from Ned Racine



Canopies and crane.
July 2006



Three
machines
July 2006



Truck dumping water
pipe
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Southland Transit Agencies Offer 'Guaranteed Ride Home'

By RICK JAGER

(Aug. 11, 2006) A Southland partnership of county transportation agencies has unveiled its newest regional program to encourage commuters to share the ride to work.

It's called "Guaranteed Ride Home," and it's offered at no cost to participating employers and the commuters who work for them.

"This is a tremendous step forward in making ridesharing more appealing to Southland commuters," says Cosette Stark, Metro's Director of Research and Development.

The program is sponsored by Metro, the Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission, and the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG).

The Guaranteed Ride Home program addresses some of the most often-heard objections to ridesharing: "I'd rideshare, but what if my child gets sick? What if I have to work late? What if I have a personal emergency?"

Takes the worry out

The program takes the worry out of ridesharing by providing qualified employees a free rental car or taxi ride home if an emergency arises.

"Employers have a difficult job convincing their employees to share the ride to work. This program makes it a little easier," said Michelle Kirkhoff, SANBAG's director of Air Quality and Mobility Programs.

Companies located in the four-county area must meet eligibility requirements in order to participate in the program.

Once an employer is registered, employees who rideshare to work can receive up to four free emergency rental car or taxi rides home in a 12-month period.

And, if a company has its own guaranteed ride home program in place, the regional program can be used to augment it. Businesses of any size can enroll, and there is no cost to participate.





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Metro Steps Up Security; Training with Air Marshals Scheduled

(Aug. 11, 2006) Although there's no indication of a threat against Los Angeles-area surface transportation following arrests of alleged terrorists in London and Pakistan, the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau (TSB) has taken measures to tighten security on Metro Bus and Metro Rail lines.

Metro Police Chief Cmdr. Dan Finkelstein said Thursday that undercover officers, additional deputies and bomb-sniffing dogs have been deployed to patrol the Metro system.

Canine teams also have been stationed at the Metrolink station near the Bob Hope Airport in Burbank, he said.

Meanwhile, a security training exercise planned for next week in which TSB deputies and Federal Air Marshals would patrol the Metro Red Line is scheduled to continue subject to any change in world events, according to Sheriff's Lt. George Grein.

Exercise coordinators are waiting for federal officials to confirm that the marshals will be available to participate, given the heightened security measures taken since British police revealed the existence of a terrorist plot against U.S.-bound aircraft.





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Vandalism Suspect Arrested

(Aug. 11, 2006) Sheriff's Transit Service Bureau detectives and Chatsworth Special Problems Unit deputies arrested a juvenile, Wednesday, they say is responsible for more than \$50,000 in graffiti damage to Metro property.

The suspect was taken into custody during a search of his San Fernando Valley home. He allegedly vandalized Line 761 buses that operate out of East Valley Division 15, serving the Van Nuys area.

The juvenile, whose moniker is "Shok", was booked into Sylmar Juvenile Hall and will be charged with 31 counts of felony vandalism.



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Photos by Rich Morallo

X Games Attendees Kept Cool and Well-Informed at Metro Booth


By MARGARET MORALLO


(Aug. 11, 2006) While X Games 12 visitors walked around the fully decorated Carson Home Depot Center in the hot sun, they kept cool by passing by Metro's booth last weekend.

From Thursday to Sunday, Metro staff dedicated their time not only to helping people stay comfortable with Metro portable battery-run hand fans, but also to keeping them informed about bus and train safety.

"It is necessary to manage traffic and educate the public on the importance of being safety-conscious around tracks and trains," Senior Community Relations Officer Carlos Valdez explained.

A member of the Rail Safety Outreach group, Valdez and other staff members spent two days passing out safety literature to the X Games attendees.


Senior Community
Relations Officer
Carlos Valdez works
the X Games.


Bus Operator
Darlene Hayden, left,
and her daughter,
Ashley staffed the
Metro booth at the X


Games.



Metro Volunteers Jackie Martinez, Marco Pedemonte, Vicky Woods, Jessie Sanchez, Lourdes Pagan, Carl Johnson, Norman Ward, Charles Jackson, Darlene and Ashley Hayden, Oscar Lizaola, Ruben Madrid, Dwandollyn Jones, Rene Cerna and Ramon Gamez also committed their time to the event. Some showed their Metro pride, donning Metro shirts and hats.

Professional skateboarders practiced their flips in the air, bands performed live music to the audience, and kids tested their own biking techniques on a miniature dirt track. As the weekend continued, the number of people at the X Games grew.



 Division 18 Operator Charles Jackson gathers some Metro safety information for X Games attendees.

Since the X-Games were also located at Staples Center, Metro volunteers were eager to guide people to Metro buses and trains to travel between Los Angeles and the South Bay.

Speaking on behalf of the Rail Safety Outreach and Metro Volunteers, Valdez said, "It's always fun attending these events because we were able to provide a service to people."



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Metro Orange Line Weekend Ridership Set a Record in July

- Average weekday boardings also remain strong

By DAVE SOTERO

(Aug. 16, 2006) Weekend ridership on the Metro Orange Line reached a new record in July, with an average of 12,813 Saturday boardings and 10,428 Sunday boardings.

Since December 2005, Saturday ridership has risen from about 9,500 boardings, while Sunday boardings have climbed from about 7,300.

Overall, the Orange Line continues to experience strong ridership, with 20,760 average weekday boardings as of July 2006. The service set a ridership record in May 2006, when average weekday boardings reached 21,828.

Metro anticipates ridership will continue its strong pace in September with the return of students traveling to and from school.

"The strong weekday and weekend ridership on the Metro Orange Line demonstrates how strategically important this service is for all of our customers," said Richard Hunt, general manager of the San Fernando Valley Service Sector. "It doesn't just benefit workday commuters - it's also a great way to travel across the Valley on weekends for recreation, shopping and other personal trips."

In a Metro Orange Line survey conducted earlier this year, 31 percent of respondents indicated that they used the line to travel to destinations other than work, such as medical appointments, shopping and recreation.

The survey also found the Orange Line attracted a large percentage of new and discretionary riders. Thirty-two percent were either new riders or riders who had used Metro for less than a year, while about 37 percent said they had a car available for their trip.



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Orange-ticulated: Metro Local Line 233 in the San Fernando Valley is expected to be the first local service line to feature the poppy orange and silver articulated buses.



Photos by Bill Heard

Articulated Buses to be Assigned to Metro Local Lines

- Artics will wear the poppy orange color scheme

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 17, 2006) The first of 96 articulated buses painted in bright poppy orange and silver – and slated for Metro Local service – was displayed, Thursday, on Patsaouras Plaza.

Although much work still must be done to make bus stops ready to receive the 60-foot coaches, the new artics are expected to see their first use in local service on the 12-mile Van Nuys Boulevard Line 233 between Sherman Oaks and Lakeview Terrace.

The local service artics would join the articulated coaches already in use on Van Nuys Metro Rapid Line 761 in time for the December shakeup, or sooner, says Richard Hunt, general manager of the San Fernando Valley Service Sector.

Currently, articulated buses are assigned only to the Metro Orange Line and to some Metro Rapid lines.

Thirty of the artics are due from the manufacture, NABI, by the end of September, according to Vehicle Acquisition Manager John Drayton. Of



Interior and, below, operator's cab.



those, he said 22 will be assigned to East Valley Division 15 in order to operate Metro Local Line 233.

Later this year, articulated buses may be assigned to Arthur Winston Division 5, according to South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey.

At present, 14 buses are at NABI's facility in Ontario, Calif., for final outfitting. NABI is installing the ATMS bus data and voice announcement system and the TAP fareboxes at it's Anniston, Ala., facility before delivering the buses to the Regional Rebuild Center – a new procedure initiated with this order of artics.

"These buses need only some very minor software downloads and adjustments," says Drayton, who notes that the

remaining 66 buses of the 96-bus order will be delivered beginning in December. "They are coming in turn-key and as ready for service as we've ever brought them in."

NABI builds the bus structures in Budapest, Hungary, and ships them to Anniston for final assembly and installation of engines and transmissions, wiring and seating.



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Funeral Services Set for Metro's Vernisa Mitchell

(Aug. 17, 2006) Funeral services are scheduled for Vernisa Mitchell, an administrative analyst in Operations Contract Administration, who died Aug. 11 following a lengthy illness.

A viewing is set for 12 noon to 6 p.m., Saturday, Aug. 19, at the Simpson Family Mortuary, 13843 Paramount Blvd. in Paramount (562-259-9847). Family members will attend the viewing from noon until 2 p.m.

The funeral will be held at 11 a.m., Monday, Aug. 21 at the True Vine Baptist Church, 5238 Clark St. in Lynwood (310-635-4300). The interment will be at Rose Hills Cemetery, 3888 Workman Mill Road in Whittier. A repast at the church will follow the interment.

Mitchell, 37, joined Metro in January 2001 and worked initially as a risk analyst in Risk Management. She had been on long-term sick leave since last February.

A native of Los Angeles, she is survived by her father, Willie; her mother, Martha; two sisters and three brothers.



Vernisa Mitchell



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From Aerospace to Metro Rail, Aida Asuncion Meets the Challenges

Former aerospace systems engineer was recently named deputy executive officer of Rail Operations



Deputy Executive Officer Aida Asuncion

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 18, 2006) Aida Asuncion spent much of her career as an aerospace systems engineer making things fly. For the past 13 years, however, her career has been firmly planted on the ground making sure Metro Rail keeps on rolling.

Recently named deputy executive officer of Rail Operations, Asuncion is responsible for rail communications, transit systems engineering – which includes the Bus Operations Center and ATMS – facilities services and facilities maintenance for the rail system.



Go to > [Meet Aida Asuncion: A Family and an Active Career](#)

In a department that includes some 260 employees, she oversees the work of transit system engineers, as well as rail communication maintainers and inspectors for communications and control systems.

Her staff also monitors all rail capital projects and contract changes, making sure the funding and financial documents are in order. In addition, they help initiate new projects, oversee project paperwork and submittals, and monitor project progress.

Recently transferred to Asuncion's department was the rail facilities and custodial services group. These employees are responsible for making sure Metro Rail facilities and stations are regularly cleaned and maintained.

Interesting challenges ahead

Asuncion’s department has some interesting challenges ahead, among them adapting to wireless technology, and expanding the SCADA train control and communications systems in preparation for operation of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and Exposition Line.

“In the next five years, things will definitely change, but I believe it will be for the better,” she says. “We’ll find that technology will push us to make changes and to adopt newer technologies as they become more efficient and more useful to us in transit.”

Although her new department has just come together following a reorganization of Metro Rail executive responsibilities, Asuncion expects it will be at least six months before she makes any further changes.

“I take pride because the people are all very technically qualified, both in engineering and in maintenance,” she says. “I’m very fortunate to have a group like that.”

Photos by Gayle Anderson

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Meet Aida Asuncion: A Family and an Active Career

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 18, 2006) Aida Asuncion was born Aida Rualo in Cagayan de Oro (Valley of Gold) on the southern Philippines island of Mindanao in 1947, the daughter of a medical doctor and a nurse who had met during World War II.

When she was barely 11 days old, the family flew back to Manila to be with her grandmother, who was ill. Aida grew up in the Manila suburb of Quezon City and graduated from the University of the East with a bachelor's in physics and math.



Aida Asuncion: Responding to a call from Metro, she kept her career on track.

She taught at the college for two years before marrying her husband, Edward, an American citizen, and immigrating to the U.S. in 1968. Edward, an aerospace engineer, retired several years ago and now dabbles in real estate and other interests.

The couple had four children – John, Mark, Grace and Danielle. Tragedy struck the family in 1992, when Grace was the victim of a homicide on the UC Berkeley campus. In 2002, the family established the Grace Asuncion Memorial Scholarship in her memory.

In addition to her family life, Asuncion – a petite woman who speaks in soft tones but has a glint of determination in her eye – continued an active career in aerospace, working in the early years for such companies as Litton and Northrop.

But, just as that industry was declining, she had an opportunity to change career directions. She enrolled in a fellowship program at USC where she earned a master's in environmental engineering. She later took another master's in computer science at West Coast University.

A call from Metro

As she was finishing the program at USC, she received a call from Metro, which needed an engineer with her systems background to work with the SCADA automated train control system. She joined the

agency in August, 1993.

In aerospace, Asuncion says, "We never really got to see how the things we built worked except in a test environment." However, at Metro, she thought, "Wow, this is remarkable because you even get to ride what you work on. It was very rewarding."

But, switching from an industry heavily influenced by the military way of doing things was a culture change. In the early '90s, things were "more flexible at Metro," she recalls, if not a little disorganized.

"I could influence this," she remembers thinking. "I could be a conduit for change and work with people to get them to the right goals."

As she rose through the ranks of Metro Rail – from engineer associate in 1993-94 to senior engineer, then to rail activation manager for Metro Red Line Segment 3, to supervising engineer and then to director of Wayside Systems in 2003 – she always chose to hire and work with motivated people.

Reflecting her own career attitude, she says, "I looked for people who had set some goals and had a vision of where they wanted to be. These are the people who will make public transit the best it can be. I am fortunate to very good people working for me and for the agency."

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Tools of the trade> Evidence turned up during a search of one graffiti vandal's home included spray paint, markers and "slap tags."



Photos courtesy of Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau

Tagger's Jailhouse Interview Fingers Suspect in \$44,000 Graffiti Vandalism Case

(Aug. 18, 2006) Aware that he was a suspect in 21 felony cases of vandalizing Metro buses, a tagger named Christian Delgado was on the run from Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau detectives.

But Delgado, 19, must have slipped up, because he was arrested on vandalism charges by Inglewood police and jailed.

So it was in the Inglewood jail in early August that Sheriff's Deputy Terrence Bell and Deputy Devin Vanderlaan of the Special Problems Unit questioned Delgado about his activities and those of other suspected graffiti taggers in the South Bay and Gateway Cities Service Sectors.

In addition to graffiti supplies, Sheriff's deputies also found a \$3 Day Pass and a Metro Bus schedule for Line 111, which operates out of the LAX Bus Center along Florence



Avenue.

And it was through questioning that the deputies, who specialize in anti-graffiti investigations developed information that led to the identity of another suspected vandal, William Figueroa, 19.

Figueroa is suspected of committing 17 felony and two misdemeanor cases of vandalism – about \$44,000 worth of damage – to Metro buses operating out of divisions 1, 2, 5 and 18.

LAPD officers had arrested Figueroa on a felony vandalism charge, July 14, and he also was in jail waiting a preliminary trial set for Aug. 21.

When Bell and Vanderlaan searched Figueroa's home, Aug. 16, they turned up what they said was "a substantial amount of evidence supporting our cases."

Confronted with the evidence as he sat in jail, the deputies reported that Figueroa "confessed to all of the damage that was documented on the buses."

The evidence and interviews with the two suspects, the Transit Services Bureau hopes, will lead detectives to other taggers who have vandalized Metro buses and property in the South Bay.


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CEO UpDate

Metro Volunteers: Our Ambassadors in the Community

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

In past columns, I've written about the great things Metro employees do every day to serve our customers and the general public. I've written about the technical expertise, the hard work and dedication it takes on the part of employees to keep our buses and trains rolling.

But there's an extraordinary group of people within the Metro family – about 200 of them – who deserve special recognition for their efforts. Not just for their work on a daily basis, but also for the personal time, talents and energy they devote to Metro after hours and on weekends. I'm talking about the Metro Volunteers.

In the past six months, alone, members of Metro Volunteers have participated in an amazing 72 community events that reached more than 100,000 people.

At some events, volunteers staff booths where they provide safety, anti-vandalism and public transit information. They also speak at school career days and community meetings, help at neighborhood cleanup drives, "show the Metro flag" in local parades, and support our rail openings. Dozens of employees also volunteered for the Metro Orange Line opening last October, when 83,000 people showed up to ride the line.

Promoted bus operator recruiting

Among many other recent activities, they helped promote our bus operator recruiting program at a fair in Long Beach, distributed transit information at the LA Convention Center and at Worldfest in Encino.

They were on hand during Government Day at Panorama Mall, staffed 14 Bike to Work Day pit stops in five different cities, distributed bus and train maps during ESPN's X Games, and promoted the environment during Pasadena's Earth Day celebration.

In September, Metro Volunteers will participate in the Huntington Park Centennial celebration and in the Compton Youth Expo.

The Metro Volunteer program is coordinated by Community Relations Manager Rich Morallo, who does a great job of organizing things,

getting people to volunteer, and then making it fun for them to participate.

Thanks to the veterans

Rich would also want me to thank the veteran Metro Volunteer members, who include Bill Moore, Jess Godinez, Benny Lorenzo and the recently retired Barbara Trigg, who says she'll continue to participate at Metro events. And, I'm not forgetting the 200 others who are the driving force of the volunteer group.

No doubt there's a certain satisfaction employees can get from participating as volunteers. Meeting our customers and the public can be invigorating and help recharge your batteries. And when our customers and members of the public see volunteers at a Metro booth, they get a great impression of what this agency is all about and the kind of people we are.

If you haven't volunteered, I encourage you to do so. To be a Metro Volunteer, you attend a short training program and commit to working at least one community event every three months. Incentives include Metro shirts, caps, tote bags, pins and coffee mugs – and building close friendships with fellow employees.

If you're interested in becoming a Metro Volunteer, please e-mail volunteers@metro.net or call Community Relations at 922-2338 or 922-2218. You'll be glad you did.

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Metro Project Manager Tim Lindholm of Facilities-Operations signs the new transportation building steel with, from left, Division 9 Transportation Manager Mike Greenwood, Maintenance Manager John McBryan and General Manager Jack Gabig of the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector.



San Gabriel Valley Sector Celebrates 'Topping Out' of New Transportation Building

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 23, 2006) Gripping bright yellow markers, officials from the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector lined up, Tuesday, to autograph the steel skeleton of a three-story building now under construction at Division 9.

The celebration, attended by members of the Metro project team, Metro safety officials, San Gabriel Valley Governance Council members and representatives of W.E. O'Neill Contractors, marked the "topping out" of the framework of the 45,515-square foot structure.

When it opens in spring 2007, the building will include space on the first and second floors for Division 9 transportation offices and bus operators, as well as a Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau field office, and the sector administrative offices on the third floor. The \$11.8 million building will permit a 50 percent growth in Division 9 operations.

Photos by Bill Heard

"I am delighted to see the steady progress of the new building," said General Manager Jack Gabig. "The

operators at Division 9 need this new building, and this milestone of steel shows us that we are well on our way to completion. We are grateful to the Metro project team for all of their continued hard work."

An overall upgrade

Gabig noted that the new building is part of an overall upgrade that began with renovations of the adjacent El Monte Transit Center, completed in 2005. Other plans now in the works include joint development with housing, retail, a hotel and office space on property surrounding the transit center.

Division 9's new transportation building has been designed to achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver designation.

"It's all about conservation and sustainability," said Tim Lindholm, Metro project manager. "It's a method of designing and constructing buildings to ensure energy efficiency, water conservation and recycling. It's from the way you design the building, to the materials you pick to make a 'smart building' that's healthy for the people who occupy it."



Sheriff's Deputy Gary DeBondt signs his name on the reverse of steel staircase during the "topping out" celebration.



At the conclusion of the "topping out" celebration for the new Division 9 transportation building, San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig, center right, is joined by, from left, Governance Council member Harry Baldwin, Transportation Manager Mike Greenwood, Project Manager Tim Lindholm, Administrative Analyst Jill Smith,

Maintenance Manager John McBryan, Governance Council member Bruce Heard, Metro staff members, Sheriff’s Transit Services Bureau deputies and representatives of W.E. O’Neill Contractors.

Facilities-Operations is managing construction of the Division 9 building in collaboration with Construction Management, Procurement, ITS, Creative Services and the San Gabriel Valley sector staff.

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The Arthur Winston Division 5 maintenance team proudly shows off their trophy for June's "How You Doin'?" maintenance award.



Division 8, Division 5 Take 'How You Doin' Honors for June; Division 3 wins quarterly trophy; Division 1 is 'Most Improved'

By SARAH WINFREY

(Aug. 23, 2006) West Valley Division 8 and Arthur Winston Division 5 took home the "How You Doin'?" honors for June.

Division 8 won the award for transportation and Division 5 won for maintenance.

Striving to achieve this award is not uncommon for these divisions. For 2006, this is the fourth win for Division 8 and the third win for Division 5.

"I am really proud of our employees here at the Arthur Winston Division," says Maintenance Manager Alex Di Nuzzo. "They all take pride in their work, they are a great group of people."

The West Valley division won in March, April, May and now June 2006. The Arthur Winston Division previously took home the award in January, February and March.

Division 8 plans to celebrate with a continental breakfast next week.

Awards for Division 3, Division 1

North Los Angeles Division 3 won the quarterly How You Doin'? award for both transportation and maintenance in the fourth quarter of FY 2006.

Division 3 also brought home the award for Best Performance for a Division in 2006, winning a total of \$3,000.

Central City Division 1 won the Most Improved Division over the course of a year for transportation and maintenance, and a cash prize of \$2,000.

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Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, center, shows members of the Danish Parliament's Transport Committee the entrance to the Union Station tunnel walkway in the East Portal.



Photos by Bill Heard

Danish Parliament Transport Committee Tours Metro System

- Visiting LA to compare Metro Rail with new Copenhagen subway

(Aug. 29, 2006) Fifteen members of the Danish Parliament's Transport Committee, accompanied by the country's ambassador to the United States, toured the Metro System on Tuesday.

With the growth of Denmark's population and the on-going construction of a Metro system in Copenhagen, the delegation has much to learn from large American cities like Los Angeles, said Ambassador Friis Arne Petersen, who is based in Washington, D.C.



Visiting Metro, from left are Danish Parliament members Flemming Damgaard Larsen and Poul Andersen, shown here with their host, Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis, and the Danish Ambassador to the United States, Friis Arne Petersen.

The recently completed first phase of Copenhagen's Metro is an automated driverless system with 26 trains, 17 stations and about 10.5 miles of track. In the future, the underground system will have four lines, including one that will circle the city by 2012 and one that will terminate at the airport.

The delegation is particularly interested in how LA is coping with its "enormous growth in numbers of citizens and vehicle traffic in combination with public transportation," Petersen said, adding that the Danes are interested in the integration of various modes of transportation.

Extensive bicycle network

Although the automobile is still the dominant means of transportation, Denmark is noted for its extensive bicycle transportation network. Nearly a fifth of all trips in Copenhagen are by bicycle, while nearly a third of all daily commutes in that city of 1 million are by bike.

Members of the Transport Committee, the ambassador noted, would work with the Danish secretary of transportation to determine "what kind of investment Denmark should make in the transportation sector – a sector which has become increasingly more important for economic development and the growth of our society."

"Without a well-functioning transportation sector and transportation policy," Petersen said, "you cannot have rapid economic development."

The delegation, led by Transport Committee Chairman Flemming Damgaard Larsen and Member of Parliament Poul Andersen, heard a presentation by Metro Rail General Manager Gerald Francis before setting out on their tour.

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Taking part in the Metro tour were, from left, FTA Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers, CEO Roger Snoble, TOS Mark Solomon, FTA Deputy Administrator Sandy Bushue, Metro Director Pam O'Connor, Deputy CEO John Catoe and Metro Director John Fasana.



Photos by Bill Heard

FTA Official Briefed on Metro's Transit Plans, Funding Needs

- Federal funds needed for Expo Phase Two and Metro Rapid expansion, Metro officials note

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Aug. 30, 2006) Visiting Los Angeles on Tuesday to see some of "California's great transit projects" for herself, Federal Transit Administration Deputy Administrator Sandy Bushue got a thorough briefing on Metro's transit plans and funding needs.

Bushue learned that, although local and state dollars are funding the first phase of the Exposition Line, Metro plans to request federal funds for the project's \$700 million second phase. FTA would play an important role in recommending that funding from Congress.

Metro also hopes for FTA support in Congress when it seeks \$50 million in "Small Starts" funding to expand Metro Rapid to the 28 planned lines, Bushue was told.

Starting the morning with CEO Roger Snoble's backgrounder on the overall Metro System, Bushue then moved on to the Bus Operations Center and then to the Eastside Extension project to ride a muck train through the newly dug tunnels.



TOS Mark Solomon, far right, explains the Bus Operations Center's monitoring system for the Metro Orange Line to FTA Deputy Administrator Sandy Bushue and FTA Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers. Joining them for the demonstration were, from left, Metro Directors Pam O'Connor and John Fasana, Deputy CEO John Catoe.

Rode the Metro System

She closed out her day with a ride on the Metro Orange Line, Metro Red Line and Metro Rapid Line 720 down Wilshire Boulevard.

Bushue was joined on her tour by FTA Regional Administrator Leslie Rogers, based in San Francisco, and Ray Tellis, team leader for FTA's Los Angeles Metro Office.

"This was a tremendous opportunity to highlight the features of the Metro Rail system to one of the highest-ranking federal transportation officials," said David Kim, Metro's director of Federal Advocacy.

Although Bushue described herself as "amazed and surprised" by the transit projects she saw in LA and, earlier, in San Diego, she noted that Metro's requests would compete with projects in other parts of the country for funding.

Bushue, who has been with the FTA for the past year, served as the agency's acting administrator until earlier this month when James Simpson was sworn into office as the new administrator following his confirmation by the U.S. Senate.


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Investigation of Alleged Gambling by Metro Employees Brings Stern Warning from Catoe:

'Gambling strictly prohibited by employees on Metro property'

- [Metro Operator's Code of Conduct](#), Section 4.11, Gaming Restrictions
- [Metro Employee Code of Conduct](#), Section 5-15-110

(Aug. 30, 2006) In the wake of a criminal investigation into alleged illegal gambling by Metro employees, Deputy CEO John Catoe has issued a strongly worded statement warning employees that "Gambling is strictly prohibited by Metro employees while on duty or on Metro property."

"We will not accept any violation of this policy by any employee, and we will take appropriate action against those who do so," the statement continued, "... (G)ambling is taboo on the job or at any Metro facility."

Catoe's statement said the agency, "...is cooperating fully with Metro's Inspector General and the California Department of Justice in the ongoing investigation of alleged gambling activity by some of our employees."

Both the Metro Operator's Code of Conduct and the Metro Employee Code of Conduct prohibit gambling at Metro facilities by on-duty employees.

Investigation began in late 2005

The investigation by the Office of the Inspector General and the California DOJ was launched in late 2005. Investigators have turned up betting slips and other evidence of alleged widespread operating division employee involvement.

According to California DOJ Special Agent Supervisor David Vialpando, who was interviewed by Fox News, the alleged illegal gambling apparently was based on the California Lottery numbers.

The alleged gambling involved several hundred thousand dollars over a period of several years. In June 2005, Vialpando said, at least 1,500 bets were illegally placed.

Search warrants have been issued naming several employees, but no arrests had been made and no charges had been filed as of Wednesday morning.

Metro Operator's Code of Conduct, Section 4.11, Gaming Restrictions	Metro Employee Code of Conduct, Section 5-15-110
<p>The Metro Operator's Code of Conduct, Section 4.11, Gaming Restrictions, states: All forms of gambling are prohibited while on duty or on MTA property. Dominoes, ping-pong, pool, checkers, chess, MTA authorized games and card games are permitted with the following restrictions:</p> <p>No gambling of any kind is permitted. No money, tokens, chips or other monetary substitute may be used.</p> <p>No card games generally associated with gambling may be played. These games include, but are not limited to poker, black jack, red dog, acey ducey, and tonk.</p> <p>Card playing in areas other than the train room is prohibited.</p> <p>The playing of cards, dominoes, checkers and chess will be permitted during designated hours, provided there is no interference with Division operations.</p> <p>Card playing privileges may be suspended if any of these restrictions are abused.</p>	<p>The Employee Code of Conduct, Section 5-15-110, states that employees "shall not use any MTA assets for personal gain or for any purpose other than MTA business." The section defines "assets" as, among other things, "time, facilities, equipment, stationery, records, mailing lists, supplies..." and declares that these and other MTA assets may not be used "for any use otherwise prohibited by law."</p> <p>Any employee who is aware of these types of activities, should contact Mimi Strauss, Deputy Inspector General for Investigations in the Office of the Inspector General at 213-244-7335.</p>

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Using a map on his office conference table, CEO Roger Snoble points out Metro's current transit projects to Congressman Joe Knollenberg and his wife, Sandie.



Photos by Bill Heard

House Transportation Subcommittee Chairman Visits Metro

- Michigan congressman plays important role in federal transportation funding

(Aug. 31, 2006) The chairman of the House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, Michigan Congressman Joe Knollenberg, visited Metro on Wednesday to "get as close a look as I can" at LA's transportation system.

Following a tour of the Port of Los Angeles, Knollenberg was given an overview of Metro's current transit programs and capital projects by CEO Roger Snoble. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Supervisor Yvonne Burke and Metro Director Pam O'Connor also participated in the briefing.

Later, Knollenberg visited the Eastside Extension to view construction of the 1.7-mile twin tunnels. He



Looking out the window of this 25th floor office, CEO Roger Snoble describes the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension construction project to Michigan Congressman Joe Knollenberg, chairman of the House Transportation

was briefed on the Appropriations Subcommittee. status of the project by representatives of the contractor, Washington Group International, and then taken into the tunnel excavation area by Metro Construction Chief Rick Thorpe.

“You can learn a lot about what local people are doing to innovate and produce ideas that work. Ideas that people in the Midwest or the East might not be thinking about,” said Knollenberg. “As chairman of the subcommittee, I need to get as close a look as I can.”

The House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, which Knollenberg chairs, helps determine how federal dollars are spent on transportation projects nationwide.

Knollenberg, who has served 14 years in Congress, was named chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development in 2005. He represents Michigan’s 9th district, centered around Pontiac and the suburban towns northwest of Detroit.



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Sector Governance Council Meetings Scheduled for September

By RICK JAGER

(Aug. 31, 2006) Metro's service sector governance councils will hold their regular monthly public meetings in September to discuss various transportation issues in their service sectors.

The following is a list of the governance councils' July meetings.

- San Fernando Valley Service Sector, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 6, Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd. Van Nuys.
- San Gabriel Valley Service Sector, 5 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 26, San Gabriel Valley Sector Office, 3369 Santa Anita Ave., El Monte.
- Westside/Central Service Sector, 5 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 13, La Cienega Tennis Center, Sunset Room, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills.
- Gateway Service Sector, 2 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 14, The Gas Company, 9240 Firestone Blvd., Downey.
- South Bay Service Sector, 9:30 a.m., Friday, Sept. 8, Carson Community Center, Room 206, 801 E. Carson, Carson.



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CEO Roger Snoble addresses community of small business advocates at annual Transportation Business Advisory Council reception and membership drive.



Photos by Gayle Anderson

Big Business: Metro's Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department and the Transportation Business Advisory Council Host Networking Mixer and Membership Drive

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(August 31, 2006) The fiscal year got off with a bang for Metro's Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department and the Transportation Business Advisory Council (TBAC), which together hosted a networking reception and membership drive Aug. 24 and welcomed 10 new small business organizations to the fold.



Chief Procurement Officer Lonnie Mitchell, center, is among some 100 guests attending the Hawaiian-themed summer mixer, catered by Metro Cafe.

The reception was a means to introduce TBAC members and the small business community to Metro Chief Procurement Officer Lonnie Mitchell and other key officials who figure prominently in the business of doing business with Metro.



From left, Linda Wright, Deputy Executive Officer for the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department, Los Angeles County Supervisor and Board Chair Gloria Molina and CEO Roger Snoble.

"Metro recognizes the value in opening the contracting process to all responsive, responsible and reliable vendors, big and small alike," said Linda Wright, Deputy Executive Officer for the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department.

"Metro's Procurement & Material Management Department is committed to providing opportunities for all vendors interested in meeting the goods and services needs for Metro's

Making the Scene

planning, operations and construction activities. The Diversity & Economic Opportunity Department is responsible for providing a host of support services to assist small business owners with accessing those contract opportunities," said Wright.

Nearly 100 people attended the event at Gateway Plaza. Keynote remarks were delivered by Board Chair Gloria Molina, who voiced a strong personal commitment to strengthening Metro's working partnership with small business community.

"As chair of the Metro Board, I can tell you that I am personally very interested in how this agency can improve its ties with the small business community." said Molina.

Molina noted changes ahead in the way Metro works with the small business community now that the Ninth Circuit Court has ruled against contract-specific goals in favor of race neutrality. But, she cautioned. "While we operate under new constraints, there is certainly no shortage of business opportunity for everyone."

CEO Roger Snoble was on hand to welcome the small business community and encourage new members.

"By joining TBAC, you are, in effect, becoming a valued business customer.

TBAC plays a vital role in assisting Metro in reaching its small business participation goals and has been actively involved with Metro since its inception," he said.

"It's a relationship that is vitally important in the work we do. We simply could not improve mobility in Los Angeles County without the help of the small business



CEO Roger Snoble, Metro Chief Capital Management Officer Rick Thorpe and TBAC member Bill Yang of William J. Yang & Associates, Engineering Services, representing the Asian American Architects/Engineers Association.



Lucia Tam, Tam Realty, TBAC Secretary and Chair of the TBAC Membership Sub-Committee, representing Chinese American Construction Professionals, with guests.



Robert Vasquez, Metro Contract Administrator, lends a musical air of elegance to the gathering.



Executive Officer Carolyn Flowers, Transit Operations, and Executive Officer Don Ott, Administration.

community,” said Snoble.

The TBAC council is a group of business organizations that advocates on behalf of greater participation of small business in the Metro contract process. TBAC also helps Metro meet or exceed participation goals for contracts.

Currently, 13 organizations, including the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Southern California, Filipino American Society of Architects and Engineers, Latin Business Association and the National Association of Women Business Owners, advocate for opportunities for small businesses and entrepreneurs through TBAC activities.



Todd Byer, Metro Video Systems; TBAC Chairman Bob Weir, Metro Video Systems, representing the American Indian Chamber of Commerce, and guest.



Board Chair Gloria Molina delivers keynote remarks. Below, TBAC Chairman Bob Weir, and, in background, Joe Hernandez, Diversity and Economic Opportunity manager.

