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Expo Authority to Break Ground for New Rail Line

(Sept. 26, 2006) The Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority has scheduled a groundbreaking, Friday, to officially mark the beginning of construction of the 8.5-mile light rail line.

Expo Construction Authority CEO Rick Thorpe and Authority Chair Yvonne Brathwaite Burke will host elected officials at the event. They are expected to include Metro Board Chair Gloria Molina, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Culver City Mayor Gary Silbiger.

When completed in 2010, the \$640 million project will include eight stations along the Exposition right-of-way between downtown LA and Washington/National in Culver City.

Metro, Heart Association to Promote Stroke Awareness in October

(Sept. 26, 2006) Metro Corporate Safety and the American Heart Association (AHA) are partnering to promote Stroke Awareness for employees during the month of October.

Metro received a grant from AHA to educate employees in the signs and symptoms of stroke and its prevention.

During Stroke Awareness Month, AHA and members of the Corporate Safety staff will visit bus and rail divisions to teach front-line employees how to recognize the symptoms of stroke.

Employees will be shown a three-minute DVD on risk factors and signs associated with stroke. Tables with informational material and brochures will also be set up for employees.

AHA representatives will be on hand before and after the presentations to field any health-related questions that employees may have on the subject of stroke prevention.

U.S. House Overturns Ban on LA Subway Tunneling

(Sept. 26, 2006) The U.S. House of Representatives voted unanimously, Sept. 20, to adopt legislation authored by Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA) that would overturn the current ban on tunneling for rail in certain "methane zones" in Los Angeles.

The ban was originally instituted by Waxman in 1986 following the Ross Dress for Less fire in the Wilshire-Fairfax District. The bill must now be approved by the Senate and signed into law by President Bush before the close of the 109th Congress later this year.

Last November, a five-member panel of independent tunneling experts, appointed by Waxman and Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, reported that tunneling along Wilshire Boulevard and the operation of subway trains west of Western Avenue could be done safely using new tunneling techniques.

Rail Ops Improves Gold Line Express Service Run Times

(Sept. 26, 2006) Metro Rail Operations has recently completed work to shorten trip times on the Gold Line by five minutes between Union Station and Sierra Madre Villa.

The change was accomplished by installing a modified train control system and designating certain stations as express stops.

Northbound, the express stops are at Highland Park, Mission, Fillmore, Del Mar and Memorial Park. Southbound, the express stations are at Lake, Del Mar, Mission and Highland Park.

The modifications have resulted in a decrease in express service run time from 29 minutes to 24 minutes and in local service run time from 34 minutes to 29 minutes.

Over the next few months, the Rail Operations staff will develop a new schedule that will incorporate run time improvements and add up to two trips per hour during peak periods.

LA to Receive \$6.2 Million in Homeland Security Grants

(Sept. 26, 2006) The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced that Metro and other regional transit agencies will receive a Transit Security Grant (TSG) in the amount of \$6.2 million.

The grant will provide \$4 million for rail security, an amount that will be shared between Metro and Metrolink. The grant also provides \$2.2 million for bus security for Metro and other regional transit agencies.

The twin ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles will receive \$12 million in Port Security Grants. These grants are designed to enhance awareness in the ports, provide protection from improvised explosive devices and bolster defenses against non-conventional methods of attack.

The TSG program will provide a total of \$135 million, nationwide, in security grants this fiscal year for rail, bus and ferry systems.

Construction Progressing at Orange Line's New Canoga Station

(Sept. 26, 2006) Construction of the Metro Orange Line's new Canoga

station and 600-space Park and Ride lot is well underway.

The project includes a 1/3rd-mile extension of the busway and the existing bike and pedestrian path from Variel Avenue to Canoga Avenue.

The contractor, Sully-Miller Construction Company, is working on placing concrete for the two station platforms and installing station electrical and communications equipment.

In October, the parking lot will be paved and landscaping will begin. The Canoga station project is thus far on budget and is scheduled to be completed in December 2006.