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Getting into the celebratory moment are, from left, the UTU's Goldy Norton, Deputy Mayor Jaime de la Vega, APTA President William Millar, Board Member Pam O'Connor, CEO Roger Snoble, Board Chair Gloria Molina and Deputy CEO John Catoe.

## 'America's Best' Celebrate a Great Moment in Metro History

- Event at Division 1 underscores Metro's achievement and the importance of the APTA award

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Oct. 12, 2006) "Good job, Metro, you're America's Best!" That videotaped declaration by a happy customer set the tone for Thursday's celebration at Central City Division 1.

Some 400 employees, elected officials and Board members, gathered beneath a large tent and in the surrounding bus yard for the official presentation of the 2006 Outstanding Transportation System Achievement Award by APTA President William Millar.

After stepping off an articulated bus displaying the "America's Best" logo, Millar told the enthusiastic crowd, "From what I've seen of what you're doing it's the right stuff! To watch the progress you've been making over the years here in LA is nothing short of spectacular...you should feel very good about it."



Division 1 Operator Gloriann Scrugham enjoys a piece of

"You went up against 50 other transit systems throughout North America and you won," Millar continued, attributing Metro's award to "innovative changes and service, the Bus Rapid Transit system, a great rail system, good customer satisfaction numbers, and productivity numbers that were the highest."

the "America's Best" cake following the awards presentation.

Congratulatory remarks and the presentation of official proclamations by Board Chair Gloria Molina, Deputy Mayor Jaime de la Vega and others were punctuated by hard-driving music that caught the spirit of a transit agency on the move.

### **'We deserved it!'**

In her remarks, Molina described going on stage, Tuesday, at the APTA Annual Meeting in San Jose to accept the award. "I went up there and I not only was proud, but I wasn't modest at all because I knew that we deserved it!" she said as the crowd laughed.

But, she said, "It's your hard work, your dedication that got us this award." And she added, "It's also about the people of Los Angeles, who asked for more transit and hopped right on the minute we put it out there."

As the leaders spoke, employees waved large red and orange "We're #1" foam hands. Video presentations featuring employees, customers and descriptions of Metro's growing bus and rail system were interspersed among the speeches.

"We're very proud of this distinction because it's the very first time that Metro has won this award," said CEO Roger Snoble. "From knowing you all and knowing how dedicated you are, this will not be our last."

He added, however, that "it's one thing getting to the top; it's an entirely different thing staying on the top. And we not only need to stay on top, we need to continue to improve every single day."

For his part, Deputy CEO John Catoe thanked not only Transit Operations employees, but those in the wide range of departments within Metro, saying, "all of you had a hand in making this happen."

### **'A higher standard'**

"Now that we're Number One," he said, "you must take that level of performance to a higher standard. We will set the standard for the country. We will be known throughout North America as transit's best."

Goldy Norton, spokesman for UTU General Chairman James Williams, said, "You can imagine how proud we are and how delighted we are with this wonderful recognition."

Noting that UTU members drive the traffic-choked streets of LA every day, he said, "We believe this award shows they're doing an outstanding job of meeting that challenge. We want to thank everyone in this agency for making this award possible."

With the formal part of the program concluded, a blast of music cued a shower of confetti and the unveiling of a lengthy banner that proclaimed Metro had been "Named America's Best."

But, bringing the festivities to a rockin' conclusion was a Tina Turner look-alike

who got the audience moving with her rendition of "Simply the Best!"

*"You're simply the best, better than all the rest, better than anyone, anyone I've every met!"*

She sang it from the heart. She put everything she had into it...and, in the end, there were no doubts among the crowd that she was singing about the people of Metro.

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