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Deputy CEO John Catoe Will Head Washington, D.C., Transit System

- Plans to assume leadership of WMATA in January, 2007



Deputy CEO John Catoe

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Nov. 14, 2006) Deputy CEO John Catoe has been chosen as general manager of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, the chairman of the transit agency's Board of Directors announced today.

"John's enthusiasm for customer service and his proven record of success in transit is consistent with the Board's commitment to meet the region's transit needs," said Board Chair Gladys Mack. "The Board is pleased that John has accepted our offer."

Catoe, 59, who joined Metro in August 2001, expects to begin his new job in late January. Chosen for the job over seven other candidates, according to the *Washington Post*, he will assume the leadership of one of the nation's premier transit agencies under a three-year contract.

"I look forward to working with the WMATA Board and staff," said Catoe. "It's known as 'America's Bus System' and my job will be to make it 'America's Best Bus System.'"

Thinking back on his years at Metro, however, he added, "When I think of leaving Metro, I'm a little sad. I like the people here. I love this organization and, to me, an organization is its people. Not to work with them day-to-day is a loss to me and I'll miss that."

"For the past five years, John Catoe has been my partner here at Metro," said CEO Roger Snoble. "I have depended on his deep knowledge of transit, his innovative ideas and his leadership skills to help move the agency forward. John's work has been essential to Metro's many successes, and I give him great credit for his role in helping the agency win this year's APTA award. I will miss having John by my side and his departure will be a great loss to Metro. But, I'm confident he will be a great CEO for WMATA, and I wish him all the best."

1,500-square mile area

WMATA operates a 106-mile, 86-station Metrorail system that records 206 million annual boardings, and a fleet of some 1,400 buses with 131 million boardings. The agency, which has 11,000 employees, serves a 1,500-square mile area that covers the District of Columbia, southern Maryland and northern Virginia.

During his tenure as deputy CEO, Catoe considers his major accomplishments to include developing and putting Metro's service sectors into operation. He also points to considerable improvements in Metro's safety record with significantly fewer employee injuries and a 60 percent reduction in Worker's Compensation claims.

He gives great credit to the Transit Operations and Planning staffs for their response to the Consent Decree and for making measurable improvements in service, as well as for the development of such innovative services as Metro Rapid, Metro Express and the Metro Orange Line.

"I'm proud of the things we've done," he says. "This management team and this organization under Roger's leadership has done things people thought couldn't be done. And, while there are many more things yet to do, this agency is in good hands and I think it's just going to have more successes in the future."



Catoe led the team that successfully concluded labor negotiations in June.

Catoe also points to this year's successful labor negotiations that avoided a strike, were concluded ahead of their contract deadlines and were within the Board's authorization.

He thanked the Board of Directors for "the opportunity to do what I've done and for the support they've given me. I want to thank the Board for understanding during the labor negotiations that we had to take a different approach, and for having the confidence to give me complete authority to resolve conflicts. It was a tremendous political risk."

Homecoming for Catoe

Taking the WMATA job will be a homecoming for Catoe, the son of a taxi driver and a native of Washington, D.C. He plans to keep his current house in Santa Monica, with the idea of returning to California someday. His son Justin, 18, is a freshman at the University of Montana.

Prior to joining Metro, Catoe was director of Transit Services for the City of Santa Monica, having joined the Big Blue Bus in December 1995. Under his leadership, Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines won the APTA Outstanding Transportation System Achievement Award.

He previously served for five years as director of operations with OCTA. Joining that agency in 1977, he rose through the ranks as transit

services analyst, superintendent of operations, manager of operations and director of transportation.

Catoe earned a Bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Redlands in 1981. He is a former chairman of the California Transit Association and is a member of APTA and the American Society for Public Administration.

Reflecting on the past few years, Catoe says Metro's successes should be attributed to the hard work of employees, "the mechanics, service attendants, operators, supervisors, assistant managers, managers and all the support people. They've done an outstanding job."

"The recognition we received at APTA this year was well-deserved," he says. "We've come up from an agency that was perceived in the industry as being troubled, to an agency that is perceived as being the best in the country. Our employees have a lot to be proud of and I have complete confidence that they'll take this honor and move higher."

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