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John Catoe: 29 Years' Transit Experience in SoCal

(Jan. 9, 2007) John Catoe, 59, joined Metro in August 2001, following almost six years as director of Transit Services for the City of Santa Monica and head of Big Blue Bus.

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.

All told, Catoe had some 29 years' transit experience in Southern California.

CEO Roger Snoble named Carolyn Flowers to serve as acting Chief Operating Officer. In that position, she has assumed some of Catoe's responsibilities.

Taking the job as general manager of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority will be a homecoming for Catoe, the son of a taxi driver and a native of Washington, D.C.

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-

Catoe's Departure from Metro: 'A Bittersweet Moment'

[PHOTOS](#)

He becomes general manager of WMATA later this month

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Jan. 9, 2007) One speaker called it "a bittersweet moment," last Friday evening, as Deputy CEO John Catoe bade farewell to Metro, the agency he has served for more than five years.

Some 130 well-wishers – employees, Board members, union leaders, transit advocates and others – gathered for an evening event in a courtyard at Union Station to say goodbye and good luck as Catoe prepares to assume leadership later this month of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

In his remarks, Catoe declared that his heart will remain in Southern California and he expressed appreciation to "all the people in this agency who understood excellence, who believed in honesty, and in service to our customers." Any successes were theirs, he said, not his.

"Washington is very lucky to have you," Board Member Bonnie Lowenthal, a member of the Long Beach City Council, told Catoe during her remarks.

"It's been a real honor to work with you," said Supervisor Michael Antonovich, who presented a county proclamation to Catoe. "We appreciate your tenure, your leadership, your vision, energy and enthusiasm."

Proclamations also were presented to Catoe on behalf of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Supervisor Yvonne Burke.

'Millions and millions'

Congratulating Catoe on his work at three Southern California transit agencies, CEO Roger Snoble cited the "millions and millions and

square mile area that covers the District of Columbia, southern Maryland and northern Virginia.

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.

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.

millions of customers you have served in your career," adding, "We know you'll do extremely well and we're proud of you."

UTU General Chairman James Williams, who sat across the bargaining table from Catoe during last year's successful union negotiations, said, "Here's to an honest man," and offered a hearty handshake.

Ernest Waters, president of AFSCME Local 3634, said, "It's always a pleasure to have someone as caring as you, and as honest and up-front."

Taking the podium, Catoe thanked a number of staff members, noting that, "If you believe in people and if people are given the opportunity, they will respond. That's what I'm going to take

to Washington."

As the new general manager, Catoe said WMATA needs to follow in Metro's footsteps and become America's best transit system. "But, they can only get there if the employees believe in their abilities, in the services they must offer."

"That's my mission in Washington," he concluded. "But my mission is not only to help Washington, but to help transit systems throughout the country, because we will be viewed by Congress, by the Senate and by others on how effective we are."

CEO Roger Snoble congratulates Deputy CEO John Catoe for his efforts in serving "millions and millions and millions" of transit riders in Southern California.



Supervisor
Michael
Antonovich
presents a
county
proclamation to
Catoe and thanks
him for his
leadership,



energy and vision.

*Photos by
Bill Heard*



UTU General Chairman James Williams, right, offers Catoe a farewell handshake and a tribute as “an honest man.”