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CEO UpDate

2007

Buckle Your Seatbelts, Metro Has a Busy Year Ahead

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

Happy New Year ... and Wow! What a great year we had in 2006! As good as it was, though, I think 2007 could be even better, a year we can all look forward to. One in which we'll see great progress in every part of our organization.

What's in store for Metro in 2007?

We'll move ahead with Metro Connections. The service sectors will look hard at our service, not only at how it operates, but how it can be operated cost-efficiently. They'll need to assess our current service and determine where it can be located to serve more customers.

We'll also expand the number of bus seats available to our customers as we continue to take delivery of 60-foot articulated buses – about 60 more by mid-year for a total of 296. Later in the year, NABI will ship us a 65-foot, custom-made artic that we'll test on the Metro Orange Line and other routes.

In June, I expect a lot of excitement around the debut of the Metro Rapid Express, which will operate during peak periods with only four stops between Wilshire/Vermont in LA and 4th and Wilshire in Santa Monica. Eight more Metro Rapid lines also will be opened this year – two of them to be operated by Big Blue Bus – for a total of 24. By June 2008, all 28 Metro Rapid lines will be in operation.

Spotless windows

Safety, reliability and cleanliness in the bus fleet continue to be important. And as I mentioned in my December column, I'm on a campaign to keep our bus windows clean. I appreciate the efforts the sectors and division maintenance staff are making to solve this problem – it's not an easy one because of the cleaning methodology and the labor involved. But, our customers expect to look out the windows without seeing dirt or water spots.

On the rail side, we've just taken delivery of the first AnsaldoBreda 2550 light rail "production car." As you may remember, we've been testing the 2550 car since mid-2005. With more than 30,000 miles behind it, the car has performed amazingly well. Eleven more cars are being assembled at the manufacturer's plant and will be delivered to us in coming months. We can expect great things from the 2550 car,

which we'll use on all three light rail lines.

Meanwhile, rail construction on the Eastside is moving along well. I toured the construction site a few days ago and watched the pouring of foundations for the Little Tokyo station. Tunneling is complete and the bridge over the 101 will be completed soon.

Over on the Exposition Line, construction has started, but it will be near the end of the year before we'll see the first excavations along Flower Street near the junction with the Metro Blue Line.

Countywide Planning also has a full plate since the passage of the state bonding measures. They're working on the proposed extension of the Expo Line to Santa Monica, as well as planning for improved transit in the Crenshaw Corridor.

Downtown connector

Planning is studying the Harbor Subdivision, a Metro-owned right-of-way between downtown LA, LAX and Wilmington. They're also are looking at alternatives for a downtown connector that will link the Blue Line and the Gold Line.

Finally, Metro will see a lot of transit-oriented development activity this year. We have a groundbreaking coming up soon at Hollywood and Vine; we'll decide who will develop our property around the North Hollywood and Universal City stations; and we'll see increased developer interest in our properties along the Gold Line in East LA.

I want to close this month's column by thanking the Metro Bus and Metro Rail staffs for their outstanding work over the holidays. Richard Hunt, George Trudeau, Steve Rank and all the TOSs and bus operators who volunteered for the President Ford memorial activities in Palm Desert were wonderful ambassadors for Metro.

Then, on New Year's Day, the bus and rail team provided world-class service to Rose Parade and Rose Bowl fans. Thanks to Bruce Shelburne, Steve Rank, the supervisors and bus and rail operators for that fine effort.

Buckle your seatbelts – we have a great year ahead!

January 10, 2007