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Poised to cut the cake commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the division are, from left, General Manager Jack Gabig, Director Pam O'Connor, TCU Vice President Michael Winston, CEO Roger Snoble, Acting Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers, UTU General Chairman James Williams and others.



Photos by Ned Racine

## Metro Celebrates 100th Anniversary of Division 3

- [History](#): Division began as a streetcar operation, later introducing buses
- Snoble calls for continuing tradition of 'safe, quality service'
- 'Building today's transit system and making it better,' says Director O'Connor

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(May 25, 2007) Metro's heritage was well represented, Friday, by three venerable "institutions" during a 100th Anniversary celebration at North Los Angeles Division 3.

First, there was the century-old division, itself, which went into operation on May 22, 1907 to provide streetcar service – and later bus service – to downtown Los Angeles.



General Manager Jack Gabig, left, and UTU General Chairman James Williams, right, commend Operator Benjamin Walker on his 41 years of dedicated service to Metro.

The other two “institutions” were Operator Benjamin Walker and UTU General Chairman James Williams. Between them, they represent 82 years of service to Metro.

Walker, 66, Badge Number 787, joined the agency on April 9, 1966. Of his 41 years’ service, he has worked the last 15 years at Division 3. He was honored during the event with a certificate of appreciation for his dedicated service.

Williams, also 66, Badge Number 472, joined the agency on Feb. 5, 1966. In the early days of his career, he drove buses on Western Avenue. He was elected UTU general chairman in May, 1996.

Gathered under a white tent in front of the transportation building at the Cypress Park bus yard, 200 or so employees and well-wishers heard remarks from CEO Roger Snoble, Metro Director Pam O’Connor and Acting Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers, hosted by San Gabriel Valley Service Sector General Manager Jack Gabig.



CEO Roger Snoble congratulated Division 3 on its long history of service and said the Board’s action on fares “made it possible for us to look to a brighter future than we would have had otherwise.”

**‘Peek at the future’**

“We’re here not only to celebrate the past, but also to take a peek at the future,” Gabig said, noting that over the next two to three years, the Division 3 transportation building and maintenance shop will be renovated

and that the employee parking lot will be expanded.

Snoble commended division employees for their safety record – Division 3 won the “How You Doin’” safety competition last year.

Referring to Thursday’s Board action adopting a plan that will increase fares July 1, 2007 and again on July 1, 2009, he said the Board “made it possible for us to look to a brighter future than we would have had otherwise.”

But, he pointed out that a number of speakers during Thursday’s public hearing, many of whom live at poverty levels, had complained about Metro bus service.



Board Director Pam O'Connor said Division 3 is “part of (Metro’s) on-going history, building today’s transit system and making it better.”

#### **‘Quality service every single time’**

“If we’re going to charge them more money, we need to give them quality service every single time they get on a bus,” he said. “They should have a helpful, friendly operator, a bus whose air conditioning is working along with the other things that make a comfortable ride.”

“We have to continue to work to give our customers the safe, quality service they expect when they get on a bus,” Snoble added.

O’Connor, who will succeed Supervisor Gloria Molina as the Board chair in July, said the Division 3 100th Anniversary celebrates “our people, the people who made that history, whose idea it was to start transit in LA and to build. Today, we’re a part of that on-going history, building today’s transit system and making it better so that we provide a foundation for those in the future.”

An historic preservationist, O’Connor noted that Friday would have been the 100th birthday of one of the silver screen’s most popular cowboy actors ever.

“Division 3,” she declared, “is the John Wayne of Metro!”

**100th Anniversary Planners:** Members of the Division 3 coordinating committee were Francis Mauliola, Teresa Love, Ronald Chico, Arthur Alva and Rosalia Medina. Communication Services planners were Danielle Boutier, Fran Curbello, Jennifer Salamanca and Bibi Ramirez.

