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## Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

## Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Metro Rail Operators and Maintainers, pictured here at Division 20, conclude a round of award presentations in June. From left, Maintainer coach Russell Homan, Maintainers Toshi Manaka, Ronnie Burt, and Eric Czintos; Operators Tu Phan and Robert Rodriguez and Coach Esther Pippins. Metro's team of rail equipment maintenance specialists took first place, June 2, in the maintainers competition at the APTA International Rail Rodeo in Toronto. Metro was third in the combined team score.



Photo by Deniz Durmus

## Rail Rodeo Winners in the Spotlight at Awards Luncheon

- [And the award goes to ....](#) Board presentations conclude a whirlwind of awards ceremonies for champion Metro Rail team. Metro Bus Roadeo team - who won the Grand Champion Award trophy at international competition - is also honored.
- "This is the first time that the winners of the maintainers competition at the (APTA) Bus Roadeo and the Rail Rodeo have hailed from the same transit agency," noted Board Chair Gloria Molina.

By JENNIE HARRIS

(June 29, 2007) Metro's 2007 Rail Rodeo maintainers and operators received awards and words of thanks from Metro at an awards luncheon on Wednesday.

Rail equipment maintenance specialists Eric Czintos, Ronnie Burt, and Toshi Manaka won first place at the APTA International competition in Toronto, June 2, and rail operators Tu Phan, Robert Rodriguez took seventh place. Metro was third in the combined team score.

Manaka, the maintenance alternate, replaced Rafaele Mastrangelo, Jr., who could not attend the competition. Ramon Reilly was the operator alternate.

"This is really a special honor for me to be here amongst international champions," said CEO Roger Snoble. Because of the competition, "we get motivated individuals out there working for us every day."



Rail champs line up for barbecue at awards luncheon hosted by Rail Operations.

"I think we should be invited to the White House," he chuckled.

"You guys are showing that you are valuable and that you have done everything in terms of honing your skills and demonstrating them," said Acting Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers.

Operator Robert Rodriguez said he felt honored. "All of your hard work pays off."

Metro employees have to qualify for the local competition throughout the year with good attendance and work performance, "and then it becomes a real competition," he said.

Maintainer Ronnie Burt was surprised when the team won. "When you're doing the events, you never really know how well you did. The events we struggled on, the other teams struggled on as well."

"The 15 minutes that you have is such a short amount of time, reading the instructions, trying to accomplish the task given to you," said Burt. "It's over before you know it."

Maintainer Toshi Manaka added, "Teamwork and harmony are really key."

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**And the award goes to ...**



Presenting awards certificates to Metro's bus and rail rodeo teams, **Board Chair Gloria Molina** said, "This is the first time that the winners of the maintainers competition at the (APTA) Bus Rodeo and the Rail Rodeo have hailed from the same transit agency."

Presenting framed certificates on behalf of Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the LA City Council, **Director Bernard Parks** said, "You certainly displayed talent that brings honor to this organization."

**CEO Roger Snoble:** "It's really an honor to be represented internationally by our employees... who work very hard every day for all of you...we appreciate the work they do and the excellence with which they do it."



The board also presented commendations to APTA International Bus Rodeo Grand Champion Award winners - Mechanic Frank Forde, Operator Mark Holland, Mechanic Rommel Vargas and Mechanic Andrew Warren. The team's combined score in the maintenance event and in the driving portion of the Rodeo carried it to the top against teams of operators and mechanics from transit properties across the United States and Canada. The APTA International Bus Rodeo was held in May in Nashville, Tenn.

**Acting Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers, head of Transit Operations:** "We're honored to have our team here today. This is a big year for the agency...we won the APTA Agency of the Year and we followed it up with the two Rodeo wins. We definitely demonstrated that we are the "best of the best."

Below, Bus and Rail teams are honored June 21 at Operations Committee meeting, chaired by Long Beach City Council Member **Bonnie Lowenthal**.





Below, Metro Bus Rodeo champs take a bow at Operations Committee meeting.

