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Hosting FTA Administrator James Simpson, left, and Leslie Rogers, FTA Region 9 administrator, for a comprehensive tour of the Metro System were CEO Roger Snoble and Board Chair Pam O'Connor. After inspecting the new 2550 light-rail car, the group rode the subway, Metro Rapid buses and the Orange Line.



Photos by Ned Racine

## FTA's James Simpson Tours Metro's High-Tech Transit System

- He 'admired the professionalism and level of service,' CEO says

(July 10, 2007) CEO Roger Snoble, joined by Board Chair Pam O'Connor, gave FTA Administrator James Simpson a whirlwind tour of Metro, July 5, hitting the high points that left him impressed with the agency's state-of-the art transit technology.

A visit to the Bus Operations Center illustrated how the surveillance camera system improves safety at Metro Orange Line stations. Transportation Planning Manager Peter Liu also briefed Simpson on RIITS, the program to integrate traffic management systems that enhance the flow of vehicles on freeways and roads throughout the region.

At Union Station, Simpson stepped aboard one of the new 2550 rail cars, which – with the flip of a switch – can be operated on any of Metro's three light-rail lines. He also made friends with the Transit Services Bureau's explosives detection dog, Bady, who was there with his handler, Deputy David Wessol.

Larry Kelsey, contract administration manager, briefed Simpson on the car, emphasizing its GPS unit that allows the car's position to be constantly tracked, its built-in diagnostic system and airplane-like "black box" event

recorder. The new car also is fully ADA compliant with wider doors, convenient hand rails and Braille signage.

Afterward, Simpson also toured the Exposition Line construction project, boarded a Metro Rapid bus for a ride along Wilshire Boulevard, and rode the subway to North Hollywood for a brief tour of the Orange Line.



Simpson also toured the Exposition Line construction project with CEO Rick Thorpe, center, and Joel Sandberg, director of Engineering and Construction.

#### **'Important to spend time here'**

"Part of our mission is to see what's going on all over the country," said Simpson, "and I haven't spent enough time on the West Coast. With LA being the second largest city in the country, it's really important to spend time here."

Simpson was accompanied on the tour by Leslie Rogers, FTA Region 9 administrator, and Ray Tellis, Region 9 transportation program specialist.

The FTA group was hosted by Snoble and O'Connor, along with Expo Line CEO Rick Thorpe, Metro Police Chief Cmdr. Dan Finkelstein and others.

The tour gave Snoble an opportunity to demonstrate to the FTA administrator the diversity and complexity of Metro's transit system. He said Simpson was "impressed with the vastness of our transportation challenges and awed by the many tools we have available to meet those challenges."

The CEO also said Simpson "praised Metro's many accomplishments and admired the professionalism and level of service employees delivered to our customers."