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CEO UpDate

A Challenging Year Ahead for Metro

- Ambitious goals for the year, a new speakers bureau and a thank-you to some special employees



CEO Roger Snoble

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE

FY 2008 is shaping up to be a challenging year for Metro. On the one hand, we've set some aggressive goals for ourselves. On the other hand, we'll be fighting for our lives to get the funding we need from the state – especially since the Legislature has signaled that funding transportation is not one of its top priorities.

And, while the funding picture isn't good this year, I think it will be even worse next year because of the state's huge budget shortfall. That may very clearly affect such projects as construction of the Expo Line. For example, we were to have received \$314 million from the California Transportation Commission last month. That decision has now been postponed while the commissioners wait to see if there will be enough cash flow this year to allocate the money to us.

So, our money crunch continues despite our recent fare change, and it's not going to get better for the foreseeable future. This means we'll have to work harder to grow our transit ridership and to offer quality of service that will attract new customers.

Goals for FY 2008

That said, let's look at some of the goals we've set for FY 2008. The list runs six pages, but here are some of the important ones.

We'll continue to focus on our safety-conscious culture by providing a safe worksite. Our public safety goals include reducing the number of bus accidents and installing four-quadrant grade crossing warning systems at four Metro Blue Line intersections.

We expect to deliver several important capital projects on time and on budget – the new Division 9 transportation building, the Division 18 solar panel project and improvement projects at divisions 5, 10 and 18. We also want to maintain the construction schedule and budget for the Eastside Extension project.

Metro is tasked with providing transportation leadership for the region and, in that regard, we've been asked by the Board to develop a "congestion-pricing plan" for the county. In other cities, congestion

pricing has included tolls on roads and fees for entering congested downtown areas.

Separately, we want to promote transit-oriented development by reaching agreements with local developers on nine new projects approved by the Board. And to further encourage more transit ridership, we plan to increase use of our TAP cards from 14,000 to 50,000 this year.

As usual, we have a full plate, but I'm confident in our ability to fulfill our plan and keep the agency moving ahead in FY 2008.

Launching our speakers bureau

I want to quickly call attention to a great program called "Metro Speaks" that's just getting started. It's our new speakers bureau and it's headed by Helen Ortiz-Gilstrap of Public Relations. She's asking knowledgeable employees to volunteer as speakers and take the Metro story into the community.

Favorable public opinion is especially valuable to us at this time, and we need good speakers from all areas within Metro. If you're a confident speaker who talks easily about your area of expertise within the agency, please contact Helen and volunteer as a speaker.

11 very special employees

I want to close by adding my personal thanks to those given recently by members of the Board to 11 very special employees. Ten men and a woman who didn't hesitate to come to the aid of others who could easily have suffered serious injuries without their quick and decisive actions.

In May, four members of the Division 1 maintenance team rushed to the rescue of a vendor's employee who was pinned under a bus while changing tires. Working together with the proper tools and expertise, Tim Williams, Adam Barron, Fred Hines and Ed Bautista-Gonzalez lifted the bus off the man and probably saved his arm. It was good teamwork in a moment of crisis.

In June, four Metro Rail Traction Power employees – Floyd Paton, Donnie Davidson, Christopher Lee and Sergio Valle – happened upon a terrible seven-car accident on the I-105 Freeway. Debris was strewn over a quarter-mile of the roadway. Cars were on fire. One driver died, others were dazed and several injured.

The four, who within minutes were joined by Metro Security Officers James Pochick, Marlon Valdez and Andrea Hess, took immediate action, blocking the highway to oncoming traffic, fighting the flames and helping the injured.

Again, the quick thinking of these Metro employees and their eagerness to provide assistance prevented further injury in a very dangerous situation.

These are just 11 of our co-workers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty over the years to help our customers, fellow employees or members of the public. I was proud to stand with them when they were recognized, last month, by members of the Operations Committee.

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