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Electronic display screens are part of the new Transit Passenger Information System (TPIS) being installed at Metro subway stations. The \$2.2 million project includes 350 screens displaying information provided by Rail Operations Control, and should be installed in each subway station by the end of May 2008.



Photos: Gayle Anderson

## New Information System for the Metro Subway Stations Installed at Union Station, Other Stations to Follow

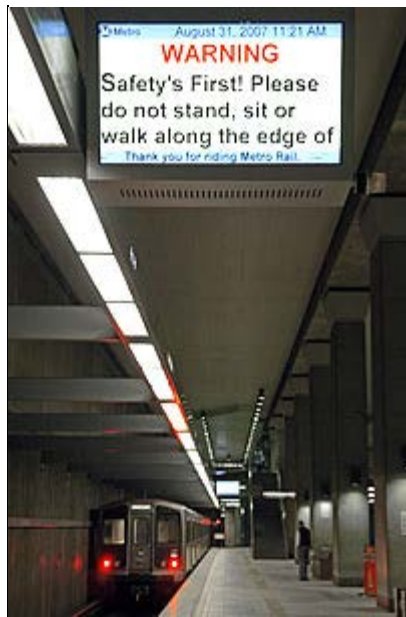
By JIMMY STROUP

(Sept. 7, 2007) Installation has begun on a new electronic signage system at Metro subway stations, replacing the single line ticker-tape style LED displays that were installed when the line opened.

Called the Transit Passenger Information System (TPIS), the board-approved \$2.2 million installation includes 350 46-inch LCD screens that are managed by Rail Operations Control (ROC) through a simple software program. The screens display up-to-date, relevant, independent information for each station.

"We've done Union Station. The contractor was responsible for putting this one in, getting it up and running, and showing us how it works," said Dan Lindstrom, manager of Wayside System Communications. "Next will be Civic Center; in a couple of weeks, we'll be out there, completely redoing that station with the new displays."

The TPIS displays are mounted directly over the old LED arms on the platforms – cut



Information system includes safety messages.

down a little for length – and are powered by existing wiring. The mezzanine-level screens will either suspend from the ceilings or be mounted on walls in conspicuous locations.

The new system only required a simple cable installation of what's essentially telephone wire to feed the screens data sent from the ROC.

### **Real-time, track specific**

Lindstrom said the displayed information will coordinate with train arrivals and departures, will be real-time, accurate and "track specific."

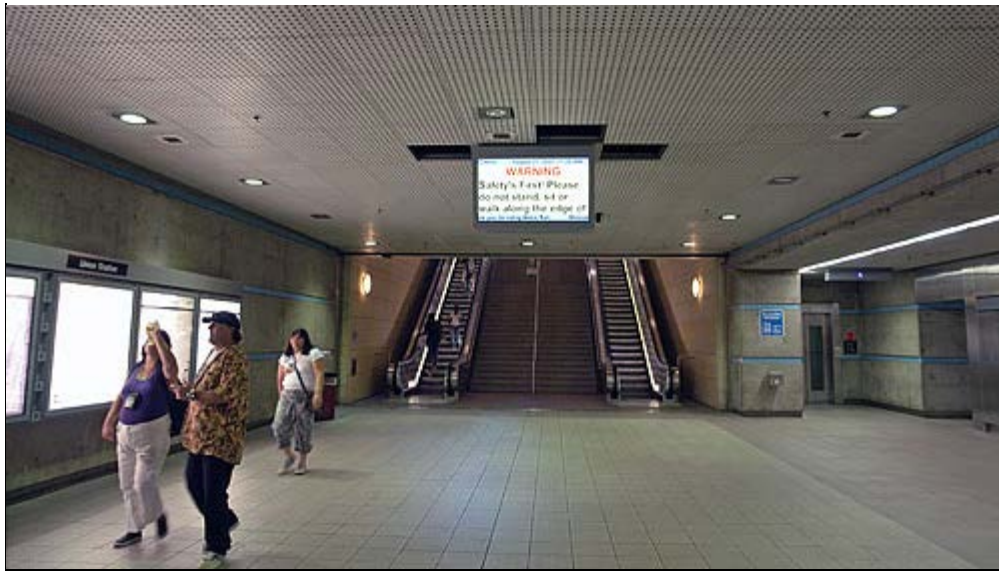
Since the screens can be programmed independently, the messages on the mezzanine screens may be different from the messages on the platform screens. And when a train arrives on the left side of the platform, the corresponding screens will be filled with information relevant to that arrival and subsequent departure.

In the event of an emergency evacuation, lights fixed to the side of the TPIS housing will flash and the screens will fill with a red-lettered message with instructions for passengers.

Installation was completed at Union Station by the contractor, JM Fiber Optics, a local company that's partnered with TransitVUE to provide initial installation and software support for Metro's TPIS.

Lindstrom said Wayside Systems has applied for funding to place the TPIS system on all the rail lines. One of the challenges to expanding this system is that LCD screens don't fare very well outdoors, though several companies are working to solve that issue.

"Part of the goal of this project is to get one set up and working in Union Station," he said. "Eventually you'll have one central visual message information system for the passengers."



Since the screens can be programmed independently, the messages on the mezzanine screens may be different from the messages on the platform screens.

### **One station each week**

From this point on, Metro will take over the installation, completing stations a few weeks apart until they're finished in April. Six-man crews will perform the mezzanine installations on weekdays and replace the platform LED arms with TPIS screens on the weekends – one side on Saturday and the other on Sunday. Cables are run in advance to hasten the installation process.

Graffiti is always a concern, but the height of the screens – which is 10 to 12 feet, with the screens angled down for ease of viewing – will deter a lot of vandalism. The screens also feature a protective coat, and are made of a resilient plastic a lot like “hockey glass.”

Lindstrom said that the screens will be a big benefit to the passengers and make it easier for the agency to communicate important information to riders in a quick, eye-catching way.

“If we can get people looking up here to see when the next train is coming, maybe they’ll stop using the phones as much to call for schedules,” he said. “We don’t have a lot of extra manpower, so anything we can do that’s helpful to save us from extra work is good.”