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CEO Roger Snoble delivers official commendation signed by Board Members and personal best wishes to retiring Metro Librarian Glenda Mariner, who called the presentation "a lovely surprise!"



Photos by Gayle Anderson

Retiring Metro Librarian Glenda Mariner Helped Create Collection

- Contributed to Metro's 'role in transportation scholarship and research'

(Oct. 2, 2007) Metro Librarian Glenda Mariner, who retired Monday, has a vast body of work to show for her 16 ½ years on the job.

She has catalogued more than 20,000 of the books in the Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library. She was instrumental in creating Metro's large collection of transportation-oriented books, documents and manuscripts.



Presentation took place in the Library's 'stacks,' which houses most of the 20,000 books in the Dorothy Peyton Gray Transportation Library catalogued by Mariner. Library Archivist Jim Walker, at far right, captures the moment.

Mariner also developed an entirely new subject classification for transportation materials that was accepted by the Library of Congress. And she served on a nationwide team of librarians who reviewed the new online version of the Library of Congress' subject headings.

Mariner, according to Library Services Administrator Matt Barrett, "was a cataloging machine" during her years with the agency. He also noted that, as a hearing-impaired employee, she advised the agency on TTD services for the deaf and other diversity issues.

"It's significant, the contributions you've made to the library and to Metro," said CEO Roger Snoble, who presented a Board of Directors proclamation to Mariner on Monday. "These were very big tasks that helped make this a nationally recognized transportation library."

The proclamation said, in part, that Mariner's "years of dedicated work have ensured that our library collection will always be accessible through the World Library Catalog. This means that other government agencies, libraries, colleges, universities, and archives will always have access to what's on the Metro library shelves, and that Metro has an important and continuing role in transportation scholarship and research."

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More than 30 employees from Arthur Winston Division 5 and Carson Division 18 ran or walked in the 17th annual American Heart Association *Los Angeles Start! Heart Walk 5K*. Division 5 employees appear in black shirts and Division 18 employees are in yellow. Transportation Operations Supervisor Sharif Ford (extreme lower left) finished first among the Metro participants. Photo by Jimmy Stroup



Metro Employees Walk for Heart Disease and Personal Health

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 2, 2007) On a winding course marked by stars fixed to the ground, more than 30 Metro employees ran or walked five kilometers around Exposition Park, last Saturday morning. The event was meant to raise awareness and money for heart disease and stroke, and was hosted by the American Heart Association.

Arthur Winston Division 5 and Carson Division 18 employees turned out for the event as part of ongoing health regimens at both divisions. Acting Assistant Transportation Manager Regina Bird said employees at Arthur Winston have lost a combined 40 pounds through recent health efforts.

"It was a challenge, but one we were all up for," Bird said of the 5K event. "Ultimately, we all prevailed because we endured."

Assistant Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown has been propelling the wellness efforts at Division 18, and said the event was as much fun as it was a good cause.

"A lot of the folks who ran here today are looking to take [the wellness programs established at our divisions] Metro-wide, since this was so much fun," she said. "It was for a good cause and it felt good to get out and do this exercise, but also to represent Metro."

The "winner" for Metro was Transportation Operations Supervisor Sharif Ford of Division 5. He was closely followed by Operator Rahsaan Earl from the same division.

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Metro Board OKs Negotiations for Massive Complex in NoHo

- Call for Projects, bus speed improvement program also approved

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(Oct. 2, 2007) A huge new development in North Hollywood that will include residences, stores and high-rise office buildings got the nod, Thursday, from the Metro Board. The \$1.3 billion complex will dominate the area around the Metro Rail and Metro Orange Line stations at Lankershim and Chandler boulevards.

The Board also approved an almost half-billion dollar Call for Projects, along with motions concerning bus speed improvements and a bus accident investigation unit.

Item 10, North Hollywood Development. The Board authorized the CEO to negotiate an agreement with Lowe Enterprises to build a 1.72-million square foot, mixed-use development on 15.6 acres of Metro-owned property at the North Hollywood station.

The "No-Ho Art Wave" project, proposed by Lowe Enterprises, would include almost 1.2 million square feet of office, retail or entertainment and community space, 562 residential units and 6,200 parking stalls.

Metro will receive annual revenue of \$10.9 million from the minimum base rent, adjusted by the Consumer Price Index every five years.

Because 11 of the Board's 13 members were conflicted on the proposal, the Board Secretary conducted a lottery, as authorized by state law, to select five members who would be eligible to vote along with directors John Fasana and Richard Katz.

Selected during the lottery were directors Antonio Villaraigosa, Gloria Molina, Ara Najarian, Bonnie Lowenthal and David Fleming. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 49, 2007 Call for Projects. The Board approved a motion programming \$454.5 million for 169 projects included in the 2007 Countywide Call for Projects.

The Call for Projects includes funding for regional surface transportation improvements, signal synchronization and bus speed improvements, and bikeway and pedestrian improvements, among other programs.

Item 9, Bus Speed Improvements. The Board approved a staff recommendation to seek Federal Transit Administration funding for projects aimed at improving bus speeds in the Wilshire, Van Nuys and Sepulveda transit corridors.

The Wilshire Corridor Bus-Only Lane project would be a 9.6-mile peak period bus-only lane between downtown Los Angeles and Santa Monica, estimated at a cost of \$31.5 million. The proposed lane is expected to improve bus travel times by an average of 24 percent.

The Van Nuys project calls for construction of a half-mile bus-only lane and other roadway improvements estimated at \$8.5 million. The Sepulveda project would include construction of a seven-mile bus-only lane and other roadway improvements estimated at \$42.9 million.

Item 26, Bus Accident Investigation Unit. The Board approved a motion to establish a Bus Accident Investigative Unit with a staff of four certified accident investigators who would be supervised by the director of Corporate Safety.

Members of the unit will be the primary investigators of serious accidents that involve injuries, multiple vehicles and pedestrians, and those that result in fatalities.

The investigators also will evaluate the current bus operator training programs, recommend and develop program improvements, and institute new accident prevention programs.

Item 39, 260 New Buses. The Board approved the purchase of up to 260 new 45-foot composite buses over a two-year period.

Of the 260 buses, the staff recommended that 210 be powered by CNG, while the remaining 50 would have gasoline-hybrid propulsion systems.

Those 50 are expected to replace some of Metro's oldest diesel buses assigned to Venice Division 6. The division is not suitable for fueling CNG buses, but could accommodate the hybrid vehicles.

Item 40, 135 Sedans. The Board authorized the CEO to award a \$2.36 million contract to Victor Buick Pontiac GMC Truck, Inc., for 135 four-door sedans. The cars will replace older vehicles in the operator relief fleet.

Item 41, High-Rail Truck. The Board authorized the CEO to award a contract to a firm that can offer the best price and availability for a high-rail truck with an articulated crane to carry such heavy materials as rail ties and track segments along the rail lines, to help perform repairs and to remove debris from the tracks.



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Employees Save 20% on Tickets to Smash Hit 'Wicked'

By KIM UPTON
(Oct. 3, 2007) Metro employees and riders can get 20 percent off tickets to any Tuesday performance of the smash hit musical "Wicked," now playing at the Pantages Theatre in Hollywood.

It's the first time the Broadway production of "Wicked" has partnered with a government entity.

To get a ticket discount, present your valid Metro ID badge, pass or Metro Rail ticket at the Pantages box office, 6233 Hollywood Blvd., directly across from the Hollywood/Vine Station. Or call 213-365-3500 to order tickets or go online to www.ticketmaster.com.

To obtain the discount, employees must mention or enter the discount code "Metro" at time of purchase. The offer is subject to ticket availability and is not valid on previously purchased tickets. Performance prices and dates are subject to change without notice. Fees may apply and there are no refunds or exchanges.



"We want theatergoers to find out just how convenient Metro can be," said Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor. "The Pantages is just steps from the Metro Red Line Hollywood/Vine Station and Metro bus stops."

"One of our greatest priorities is to be a part of the community we are in," said "Wicked" producer Marc Platt. "Helping to motivate people to ride Metro is a great way to support caring for the environment and we are pleased to be putting our show into a campaign that supports riding public transportation in Los Angeles."

Winner of 15 major awards, including the Grammy Award and three Tony Awards, "Wicked" is the untold story of the witches of Oz. Long before Dorothy drops in, two other girls meet in the land of Oz. "Wicked" tells the story of how these two unlikely friends grow to become the Wicked Witch of the West and Glinda the Good Witch.

For more information on "Wicked," go to www.wickedthemusical.com/LA.

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Architect Martha Welborne, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and former Brazilian official Jaime Lerner ride the Metro Orange Line. Each played a crucial role in creating the popular service.

Inspiration for Metro Rapid and Orange Line Tours LA's System

- Former Mayor of Curitiba, Brazil rides Los Angeles versions of his visions

By NED RACINE

(Oct. 3, 2007) Although transit systems are too complex to be the creation of one person, the Brazilian official who inspired Metro Rapid and the Metro Orange Line toured the Los Angeles versions of his vision, Sept. 28.

Jaime Lerner, former governor of the Brazilian state of Paraná and three-time mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, joined Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, LA architect and transit advocate Martha Welborne, and Metro officials in riding Metro Rapid Line 754 on Vermont Avenue. They also rode the Orange Line between North Hollywood and Van Nuys.

How did Lerner, a former guest professor at the University of California, Berkeley, react to riding Metro Rapid and the Orange Line?

"I think they are great achievements," he said. "Great contributions for the city. And now since this Orange Line works so well, there won't be any difficulty to increase the lines. People will understand . . . mobility is good for the quality of life."

In welcoming remarks prior to the tour, CEO Roger Snoble acknowledged the debt Metro owes Lerner. "This wouldn't have happened without our policymakers having had the opportunity to meet you, see your system

and believe it also could work in Los Angeles."

Model for Metro Rapid

During his first term as Curitiba's mayor, Lerner implemented the Rede Integrada de Transporte, a model for the Metro Rapid system and the Orange Line. Rede Integrada de Transporte sought to move a maximum number of people with a minimum investment in infrastructure.

Snoble credited Welborne – who coordinated LA officials' visits to Curitiba in the late 1990s – with having the foresight to recognize that the city's bus rapid transit system could be adapted to Los Angeles. Metro now operates 18 rapid lines throughout LA County.

For Welborne, seeing Lerner ride the systems he inspired was a rare treat. "It's absolutely overwhelming. It's a moment of professional joy, like few people ever get."

Welborne was working as an architect on a light rail line in Chicago when she heard Lerner give a lecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He said Curitiba wanted to build a subway but could not find the funding.

According to Welborne, Lerner asked "Can I do this with a bus?"

Beneficiary of success

Now the Metro Orange Line, the beneficiary of Curitiba's success, averages between 24,000 to 25,000 riders each day and a 65-foot articulated bus is being tested to increase ridership capacity by 15 percent.



Lerner interrupts his Orange Line tour to visit the Laurel Canyon station with Yaroslavsky

Lerner has already used the Metro System as an example for other cities. "In São Paulo, they are always saying, 'We're a car-oriented city.' And I told them, look, there is no more car-oriented city than Los Angeles, and they are doing very well. It's working well. And it will help a lot to increase the quality of life in every neighborhood."

Still, the biggest surprise for Lerner was that Los Angeles followed his vision. "I never expected this from a city like Los Angeles. It's a great example." He sees public transit as inevitable and notes that 74 percent of carbon emissions are in the cities, the majority from cars.

Welborne believes, "The right people were at Metro who were willing to accept the ideas from this 'Lone Ranger'.... They were willing to go to Brazil and consider the ideas. That wouldn't be true in every city."

"Thanks for being our inspiration," Gary Spivak, East Valley Division 15 transportation manager, told Lerner.

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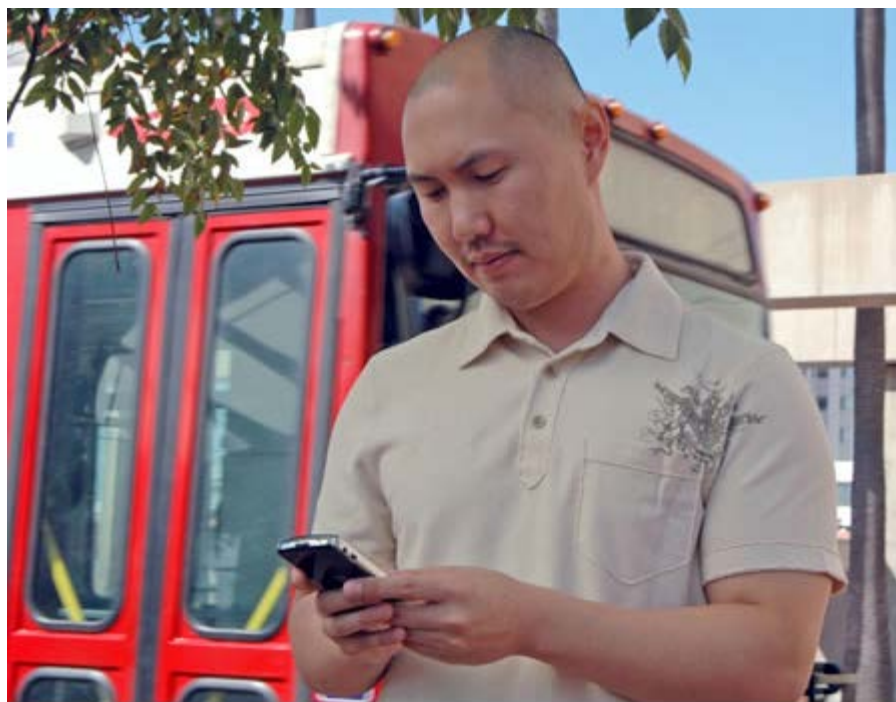
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Kevin Woo, assistant webmaster, checks the Metro bus schedule by connecting to the metro.net/mobile website. Tailored for web-enabled devices, metro.net/mobile has fewer graphics than metro.net but features quick downloads and uses little bandwidth capacity.

Metro.net/Mobile, Tailored for Hand-Held Devices, Debuts Oct. 5

- Focused site offers key info, fast downloads

By NED RACINE

(Oct. 3, 2007) Beginning Friday, Oct. 5, a little offspring of www.metro.net will bring essential information to the growing number of commuters who carry hand-held electronic devices.

For those travelers, www.metro.net/mobile will provide Metro's Trip Planner, fare information, maps of the Metro System and a wealth of rider information tailored to their small screens and slower internet access.

"What we're providing is a very focused version of Metro.net," said Kevin Woo, assistant webmaster. "You will have access to maps and all the necessary information when you're out on our system."

To reach those riders, Woo tweaked the new site to function on a variety of web-enabled devices. Consequently, Woo estimates that www.metro.net/mobile will run on approximately 90 percent of current hand-held devices, all but the most basic machines.

Woo, a Metro employee since 2002, defines those devices as "really

basic black-and-white phones that have only nine lines of text.”

Information quick

To accommodate the devices’ small screens and limited controls, the new site quickly leads visitors to information.

“Because of the limitations of the devices, you’re not able to easily jump back and forth on the web pages, so we built in a pathway for users,” Woo explained. “In doing that, we had to really look at the metro.net site and see what was the most important stuff.”

One of Woo’s target audiences is new arrivals to Los Angeles, people who “may not have access to a computer wherever they are staying; they can now find information with their cell phone.”

As an owner of a web-enabled device, Woo understood some visitors would be paying for every minute they spend on www.metro.net/mobile, so he optimized the site to download quickly and use little bandwidth.

“I have a data plan and I wouldn’t want to download a picture that I really don’t care about,” Woo said. “I think for the majority of riders and people who will be on the mobile site they’re going to want a site that is fast and has information that they need.”



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APTA: Public Transportation Ridership Continues Climb in 2007

- Metro ridership also increases from 2006 to 2007

(Oct. 4, 2007) The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced, Thursday, that Americans took 78 million more trips on public transportation during the first six months of 2007, compared to the first six months of 2006.

More than 5 billion trips were taken during the six-month period, representing a 2.3 percent increase in the second quarter and a 1.1 percent increase in the first quarter of 2007.

A total of 10.1 billion trips were taken nationwide in 2006 – the highest in 49 years. In Los Angeles, Metro ridership between January 2007 and June 2007 increased 2.3 percent when compared with the period from January 2006 to June 2006.

“The good news is that public transit ridership is growing on top of last year’s record ridership,” said APTA President William W. Millar. “Whether it is because of high gas prices, increased congestion, or new and expanded transit services, more and more people are choosing public transportation.”

In the first six months of 2007, commuter rail had the highest growth rate of all modes at 5.5 percent.

Light rail had the second highest percentage of ridership growth among all modes of transportation, with a 4.1 percent increase. Heavy rail (subways) ridership grew nationally by 2.8 percent during the first six months of 2007.

Bus ridership in small and large communities also showed increases. Nationally, bus ridership increased by 0.6 percent. Paratransit ridership increased by 3.7 percent.

Survey Shows:
6 in 10 Riders
Take Public
Transit to Work

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Survey Shows: 6 in 10 Riders Take Public Transit to Work

Also: [APTA: Public Transportation Ridership Continues Climb in 2007](#)

(Oct. 4, 2007) Almost six in 10 riders questioned in surveys conducted across the country from 2000 to 2005 said they use public transportation to get to work (59.2%). The second largest reason for using transit was to go to school (10.7%).

The data, released Thursday by APTA, came from 150 on-board vehicle passenger surveys, summarized by transit agencies from responses by more than 496,000 public transportation riders. The transit systems carry 60 percent of all U.S. transit trips.

Other findings in the report, titled "A Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics Reported in On-Board Surveys," include:

- 30 percent of riders said that this was the first year they had taken public transportation, although most transit riders have been riding for more than two years (57.1%).
- More than one-third of all transit riders have household incomes of \$50,000 or more (34.3%). Almost 10 percent of transit riders have household incomes of \$100,000 or more. Almost half of respondents said they have household incomes ranging from \$15,000 to \$49,999 (45.6%)
- Women transit riders outnumber men transit riders by a 55 percent – 45 percent split.
- Riders come from all racial backgrounds; the largest groups using public transportation are: Caucasian (41%); African American (33%); and Hispanic (14.3%).
- Most transit trips are taken by people who regularly use public transportation. Nearly two-thirds of trips are taken by riders who take transit five or more days a week. (65.5%)
- 25 percent of transit trips are taken by riders for personal purposes such as: shopping, dining, social events, and medical trips.



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Environmental Report: Metro's Going 'Green', But Needs Better Coordination of Effort

- Agency should lead a regional environmental effort, report says
- Board's new Sustainability Committee targets climate action

By BILL HEARD, Editor
(Oct. 5, 2007) Metro has made significant strides toward becoming a "green" transportation agency, but needs to better coordinate its environmental efforts and provide regional leadership in programs aimed at improving air quality and helping mitigate global warming.

That was the message given at the first meeting of the Board's new Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee, last week, during a presentation by Tim Lindholm, director of Capital Projects for Facilities Operations, and other Metro staff members.

Lindholm defined "sustainability" as methods of using resources in ways that don't deplete or permanently damage them. For Metro, he said, it means "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

And he said achieving sustainability at Metro "will take a coordinated effort from planning, operations, construction, procurement – from the Executive Office to the Board chair's office."

Board Chair Pam O'Connor heads the ad hoc committee, which she says is aimed at "comprehensive sustainable climate action." Directors Yvonne Burke and Bonnie Lowenthal also are committee members.

"We have an opportunity here at Metro to really be the leaders within the transportation community on the issue of sustainability. We have a headstart with our CNG fleet – the largest in the nation – and we can build on that success," said O'Connor. "The ad hoc committee will meet every month because we want to keep this issue high-profile and on the front burner. Our goal will be to pull together a set of recommendations to present to the full Board for action."

Metro's environmental efforts have ranged from agency recycling and solar projects, energy-efficient buildings, water- and energy-saving plantings along the Metro Orange Line to developing and operating high-tech alternative fuel buses.

'Getting cars off the road'

"Everything we do here is directed at getting cars off the road," Lindholm said. "And that's probably the single greatest thing you can do to improve air quality and ensure sustainability."

Lindholm and Chris Liban, environmental compliance and service manager, are project managers for the sustainability project. The project's executive sponsors are Metro Construction Chief Rick Thorpe

and Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers, Deputy Chief Capital Management Officer K.N. Murthy and Metro Rail General Manager Mike Cannell.

Last June, the Board adopted an energy and sustainability policy. Among other things, it requires energy-efficient construction for all buildings over 10,000 square feet. It also requires sustainable practices on infrastructure and rail construction, as well as other appropriate projects.

In the report presented at the Sept. 26 meeting, the ad hoc committee was reminded that Metro currently has no coordinated sustainability efforts. The report said all agency departments should participate in a coordinated sustainability effort.

'Leadership in sustainability'

The agency has not yet set goals and has no system to measure the cost impacts and benefits of implementing sustainability and climate change strategies. The report said Metro "must provide leadership in sustainability within the region to complement our core mission of moving people efficiently and effectively."

To help Metro carry out a sustainability program and establish an "environmental ethic" in the agency, the report recommended formation of an Environmental Management System (EMS). Through an EMS, "Environmental stewardship becomes part of the daily organizational responsibility," the report said.

Metro recently applied for a Federal Transit Administration training and assistance grant as the first step toward establishing an EMS.

Among the proposed next steps the report recommended for Metro's sustainability program are:

- Developing strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change,
- Incorporating sustainability goals into the agency's Long Range Transportation Plan and related plans,
- Reducing Metro's "carbon footprint",
- Identifying public/private partnerships to fund sustainability programs,
- Partnering with other agencies to develop a regional climate change action plan,
- Revising design criteria for infrastructure projects to include sustainability design and construction principles, and
- Organizing training sessions for Metro departments that will play a role in implementing sustainability programs.



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Survey Says: Rider Satisfaction With Metro Remains High

- 15,000 riders surveyed said bus, rail service is better now

(Oct. 5, 2007) A newly released survey of Metro riders indicates that satisfaction with bus and rail service has remained high – in the mid-80 percentile – for the past two years.

The survey of more than 15,000 riders was conducted between May 5 and July 26, 2007. Of that number, 13,196 bus riders and 1,933 rail riders completed surveys.

Satisfaction with Metro has experienced a slightly rising trend line since it stood at 81 percent in a survey conducted in the fall of 2002.

Seventy-eight percent of the spring survey respondents said Metro bus and rail service is better now than last year, and 80 percent said the agency's image is improving.

"Overall, satisfaction with Metro service runs high, tempered somewhat by the recent fare increase," said Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond. "We survey our riders every six months to gauge their overall satisfaction and to look at specific areas of service. The proof will come in future surveys to see if our trends improve."

Buses, trains 'generally clean'

Seventy-five percent agreed that their bus or train was "generally clean" and only 46 percent said graffiti was a problem, down from 52 percent in spring 2004. Eighty-one percent of respondents – the majority of whom ride Metro five or more days a week – said they normally have a seat on their ride.

On specific bus service questions, 69 percent of riders said their bus is generally on time, while 41 percent of riders said they had been passed up in the last month, down from 60 percent in fall 2004. Seventy-four percent said they did not have a car available to make the trip on the day of the survey.

On specific rail service questions, 86 percent of riders said their train is generally on time. Seventy percent said they had been asked to show proof of fare payment in the last month. Fifty-six percent said they did not have a car available to make the trip on the day of the survey.

The survey's demographics indicate that 52 percent of riders are female and 48 percent male. Thirty-eight percent are between the ages of 25 and 44, while 22 percent are 45 to 61 years old and 21 percent are 18 to 24. Thirteen percent are younger than 18 and 6 percent are 62 or older.

Of the survey's respondents, Latinos made up the largest number of riders at 55 percent; blacks constituted 20 percent; whites 11 percent;

and Asian/Pacific Islanders, 9 percent.

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Bus Service, Rail Service Changes on Committee Agendas

- Finance and Budget, Construction committee meetings cancelled

(Oct. 9, 2007) The Operations Committee will consider a proposed plan for bus service improvements and will hear a report on a plan to provide consistent 7 ½-minute headways on the Metro Gold Line.

Item 24, Tier 1 Bus Service Changes. With the intention of attracting new riders by providing faster, more efficient bus service, the staff is recommending to the Operations Committee a series of changes in Tier 1 bus service.

Slated to be implemented effective Dec. 16, 2007, the proposed changes include two new Metro Rapids on Olympic Boulevard between Downtown LA and Century City, and along Garvey and Cesar Chaves avenues between Downtown LA and El Monte. The plan calls for reducing, restructuring or canceling service due to low ridership or service duplication on eight routes, implementation of two local lines and minor restructuring or terminal changes on two other lines.

The proposed changes were presented at public hearings in August and have been approved by the affected Governance Councils.

Item 27, Gold Line Service Improvements. Metro Rail officials are planning to eliminate the weekday express service instituted on the Metro Gold Line in February 2006, according to a plan outlined in a report to the Operations Committee.

To offset the change, which would be implemented Dec. 16, 2007, the plan also calls for increasing peak-period headways on the rail line to 7 ½ minutes, and non-peak and weekend headways to 12 minutes.

The benefits of the express service were mixed, the report said. Express riders gained an average time savings of approximately two minutes, but some skipped stations had large transit and business-oriented developments that generated passengers who also wanted express service.

Replacing express service with local trains operating at 7 ½-minute headways will provide service eight times during peak hours for all 13 Gold Line stations, and a total of 28 additional station stops during a single peak period.

October Committee Meetings
Wednesday, October 17 1 p.m. – Planning and Programming Cancelled – Finance and Budget 3 p.m. – Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee
Thursday, October 18 9 a.m. – Executive Management and Audit Cancelled – Construction 12 noon – Operations
Wednesday, October 24 12:30 p.m. – Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee
Thursday, October 25 9:30 a.m. – Full Board Meeting

Implementing a consistent 7 1/2 –minute weekday headway will provide better frequency for all stations, the report said, and will eliminate customer confusion about train service while reducing the impact on automobile traffic at grade crossings on the 13.7-mile line.

Operating at 12-minute headways in off-peak periods – as is the practice on Metro’s other rail lines – will improve connections from the Gold Line to the subway, reducing overall trip time, according to the report.

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Div. 2's Robert Rodriguez Honored for Decade of Volunteering

- Awards presented by government and union groups
- Former UP railroad executive is now a Metro bus operator

By JIMMY STROUP

(Sept. 9, 2007) Not one to brag, Crossroads Depot Division 2 Operator Robert Rodriguez didn't tell anyone from work about an award ceremony that honored him for the volunteer work he does.

City, county, state and union organizations presented Rodriguez with certificates of appreciation for his decade-long "labor of love" with volunteerism that has had him delivering food and gifts to the needy and packaging Easter baskets for sick and abused children.

"People say, 'I don't have the time.' But you do have the time, if you're driven to it," Rodriguez, 52, says. "I think you have to be driven to it to really enjoy it and love it, like I do."

Rodriguez started loving it about nine years ago, he says, when Metro teamed with the AFL-CIO and United Way for an Easter Drive through the Division Advisory Council (DAC).

"Metro did a drive with them and supplied a bus," he says. "We delivered – and I was shocked that we could fit this many on a bus – almost 4,000 Easter baskets to kids across the county. It was a sight."

Since then, Rodriguez has become hooked on volunteerism, lending his driving and managerial skills to whatever tasks need a driver or organizational ability.

Rodriguez's journey

Rodriguez returned to his native Southern California after a 20-year career with Union Pacific Railroad. He began as a switchman/brakeman, moving into management after only five years, and ended up at company headquarters in Omaha, Neb.

After becoming an assistant vice president at Union Pacific, Rodriguez felt



Crossroads Depot Division 2 Operator Robert Rodriguez holds just one of seven awards he received from various city, county, state and union organizations championing his volunteer work. The June 2 ceremony where he was honored was held in the clubhouse at Dodger Stadium.

like his work was taking away from his time with his daughter. Once he became eligible for retirement, Rodriguez submitted his papers and moved back home to be near his family.

He decided to take a position with Metro while he figured out what he wanted to do after Union Pacific.

"I found I loved driving the bus. I wasn't planning to stay driving; I'd even thought of going into management here," Rodriguez says. "But I like being out there, with the people."

Rodriguez finds operating a bus is easy on his disposition and gives him the opportunity to devote himself to volunteering in his off time, to union activities (he's the UTU shop steward and the state legislative representative for Local 1563) and to coaching high school football at his alma mater, Woodrow Wilson High.

At Wilson, as a student, Rodriguez played both football and baseball. He rode his baseball skills to a scholarship with the University of Texas at Austin, starting as a catcher and utility infielder in his last two years. After graduation he was drafted into the Milwaukee Brewers organization and played AA ball in Charleston, S.C.

"You have to come to terms that there are people who are way better than you, even when you're best at high school or even college level," Rodriguez says. "So I came to realize that and decided to move on."

He remains close to the game and roots for the Brewers, despite his family's traditional allegiance to the Dodgers.

Giving back to others

Rodriguez's rich experiences give him a feeling that he ought to "give back." His efforts do take a lot of his personal time, but he says his family takes pride in the work that he does to help others.

"My family understands and knows that I love to do these things: the volunteer work and the union work," he says.

Though he was in a union at Union Pacific, he didn't really get involved with union activity until he got to Metro. His previous management experience gives him a unique perspective on Metro's management in relation to union concerns.

"It makes me understand the thinking of Metro's management. I was doing what the managers here are doing when I was with Union Pacific," Rodriguez says. "It's easier for me, as union shop steward, to deal with local management because I understand what they have to do."

But it's the volunteer work that really makes a difference in Rodriguez's life. The majority of his charitable efforts are focused around children – especially the Easter Drive.

"The kids that we go see at these shelters are kids who have been taken away from their parents for whatever reason. We'll see the same kids for three or four years in a row, every time we go. When I see that one kid, and we give him an Easter basket, and he smiles – that makes my day," he says. "It makes my whole year."

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Gold Line Collisions Prompt Mass Safety Mailing to Neighborhoods

- Almost 47,000 safety reminders sent after two September collisions

By NED RACINE

(Oct. 10, 2007) In response to two September collisions between automobiles and Metro Gold Line trains, Transit Safety mailed almost 47,000 safety reminders this month to residents along stretches of the Gold Line.

The two-color poster features a photo of a collision between an SUV and a Metro light rail car. The posters were mailed Oct. 5 to every household in Highland Park, Mount Washington and Lincoln Heights.

Written in both English and Spanish, the posters reminded Gold Line neighbors of their role in transit safety, including the fines for violating safety laws.

"It's a refresher," explained Barbara Burns, regional communications manager, who has led the Transit Education and Safety group for four years.

"To have no accidents of consequence since it opened and then to have two within 10 days [Sept. 11 and 21], we wanted to get that refresher out there now," Burns explained. According to Burns, her team thought, "Hey, we've got to do more; we've got to wake them up; we've got to get their attention again."

Ignoring rules and consequences

"The Gold Line has been open since 2003 and people get used to it," Burns said. "Apparently it begins to blend into the background, and [drivers] start ignoring the rules as well as the consequences."

Burns and her team were nearby when the Sept. 21 collision occurred. "That day we were two blocks away at Monte Vista Elementary School doing school presentations." The presentation ended because news helicopters circling above the accident were making too much noise for the children to hear.



Transit Safety mailed almost 47,000 of these safety reminders on Oct. 5 to remind residents along stretches of the Metro Gold Line of their role in transit safety. The mailing followed two collisions in September between automobiles and Gold Line trains.

Besides its school presentations, the Transit Education Safety group reaches adults by giving presentations to community groups and attending community events. "We do ask the students to take the [safety] message home to their parents and we know that they do," Burns said.

Six people were injured and transported to area hospitals in a Sept. 11 collision between a Gold Line train and a pickup truck just before 8 a.m. That collision, which derailed the Gold Line train, occurred about a block and a half south of the Highland Park station at the intersection of Marmion Way and Avenue 55.

Ten days later, an SUV broadsided a Metro Gold Line train during the Friday morning rush hour today, causing a fire and injuring six people. The train was heading north to Pasadena when it was struck shortly after 7 a.m. at the Ave. 50 and Marmion Way intersection crossing in the Mount Washington area.

'System requires vigilance'

"Living near a rail system requires vigilance, but people become de-sensitized and begin to behave irresponsibly. That kind of self-absorption can result in severe consequences. " Burns emphasized. "They have to abide by the safety rules. If there are gates, wait."

Burns believes drivers are simply distracted and trying to do too many things simultaneously in their cars. She scoffs at drivers who break safety laws to save time.

"We run so frequently and our trains are so short that it takes less than a minute for the arm to come down, the train to go by and the arm to go up again. There is no reason to try to beat [the train]."

Drawing on her experience in promoting rail safety, Burns cites drivers making illegal left turns and ignoring descending crossing gates as the main causes of rail accidents.

She also believes drivers and pedestrians begin treating the train as just another car. "Maybe that's because our trains are so short; I don't know. People also forget that a train isn't a car. It can't stop on a dime and it can't swerve off the tracks."



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Metro to Honor 127 Operations Employees at 'Night of Stars'

- Invitation-only event set Nov. 2 at Sheraton Universal Hotel

(Oct. 10, 2007) Metro plans to honor 127 bus operators and maintenance employees, Friday, Nov. 2, during a gala "Night of Stars" dinner and awards presentation.

The invitation-only event, to be staged as a night in "vintage Hollywood," will be held at the Universal Sheraton Hotel in Universal City. The reception will begin at 6:30 p.m. in the Poolside Patio. Dinner will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Rooftop Garden.

Invitations were mailed to honorees on Oct. 4. The awards dinner is free to honorees and one guest each. The charge for any additional guest is \$35.

Honorees must make reservations for the awards dinner no later than Oct. 22 or risk being denied admittance to the event, due to room capacity and meal availability.

Dress for men is sport coat, collared shirt and slacks, tie optional; dress for women is a dress or pantsuit.

Discounted self-parking will be available on the hotel property for \$8; valet parking for \$13. The Universal Sheraton is located adjacent to Universal Studios Hollywood.





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Graveside Services Planned, Saturday, for Metro’s Debra Cannon

(Oct. 12, 2007) A graveside funeral is scheduled Saturday, Oct. 13, for retired Metro Service Attendant Debra Cannon, who died Sept. 27 following a lengthy illness.

A viewing is planned from noon until 6 p.m., today, at Ashley-Grigsby Mortuary, 9920 South Central Ave., one block north of Century Boulevard in Los Angeles (323-567-7728).

A private funeral service will be held, Saturday, at Angelus Abbey Memorial Park, 1515 E. Compton Blvd. in Compton (310-631-1141).

Cannon, 49, joined Metro as a service attendant in July 1981 and over the years worked at divisions 3 and 18. She retired in September 2004 from Crossroads Depot Division 2.



Debra Cannon

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Sharleen Yoshimi, Metro senior creative designer, her husband, Jamie McLaughlin, and their dog, Sweet Pea, live in the Archstone apartment complex, which straddles the Gold Line Del Mar station in Pasadena. After living in transit-oriented housing, Yoshimi said she's never going back to a daily commute. Photo by Jimmy Stroup

moved away from Monterey Park – to Pasadena. Their apartment is in Archstone Del Mar, one of Metro's transit-oriented partnerships along the Gold Line.

Yoshimi's move has dramatically changed the way she looks at transit in the city. She takes the Gold Line to work each day, praising both the regularity of the schedule and the stress-free ride to and from work.

"I had to drive the other day and as soon as I got on the freeway, someone's tailgating me, you know?" she said. "It's a noticeable difference. I'm grumpier when I have to drive. I feel a sense of security when I take the train."

Living so close to – and regularly using – transit has caused Yoshimi to find religion, so to speak, regarding public transportation. Where once she'd take Metro sparingly, she and her husband are now looking for alternative transportation in all their activities.

'Opened our eyes about transit'

"It's encouraged us, I think, and opened up our eyes about transit," she said. "Living at the Del Mar Station is great because we walk everywhere now. There are weekends where we don't even drive the car."

Her husband, Jamie, has similar feelings and has become a regular

After Years of Commuting Alone, She's a Convert to Transit

- Metro's Sharleen Yoshimi and her husband, Jamie, now live just steps away from the Metro Gold Line.

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 12, 2007) Sharleen Yoshimi has worked in the Design Studio at Metro for four years. Most of that time, she lived in Monterey Park and commuted the 20 minutes it took to get to Gateway Transit Center.

"I was the SUV driver," she said. "Everyone else in the office rode transit and I was the one who commuted."

Lately, though, Yoshimi's life has been filled with change. She recently married Jamie

McLaughlin, a screenwriter, and

moved away from Monterey Park – to Pasadena. Their apartment is in Archstone Del Mar, one of Metro's transit-oriented partnerships along the Gold Line.

Yoshimi's move has dramatically changed the way she looks at transit in the city. She takes the Gold Line to work each day, praising both the regularity of the schedule and the stress-free ride to and from work.

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'Opened our eyes about transit'

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Her husband, Jamie, has similar feelings and has become a regular

transit rider – thanks in no small part to the spouse pass.

“With the spouse pass, the city is my oyster. It’s a great perk. It’s not the only reason I married Sharleen, but I have to say it was a factor,” he joked. “I’d never really take Metro before. This has been a great introduction and it’s better than I’d expected.”

Yoshimi has nothing but nice things to say about the Archstone complex. And as far as noise from the train goes, she said they never hear a peep. The experience has truly converted her little family’s outlook as far as how they want to live in the future.

“It’s just been great. I feel like I get my exercise done, my shopping done, everything – and all around my area,” she said. “We’ve fallen in love with being able to walk to places. When we look for a place to buy, we’re definitely looking more to areas within walking distance of a little village or shopping area.”

“Oh, and transit, too – close to Metro,” she quickly added.

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This pile of car parts and batteries represents some of the allegedly stolen car parts seized by TSB deputies from the sting operation set up against a Compton wrecking yard, October 9. Photo courtesy of the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.



Deputies Mount Sting to Catch Catalytic Converter Thieves

- Arrests follow thefts from cars at Green Line station

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 16, 2007) Some Green Line patrons recently returned to the Lakewood station parking lot to find their cars' catalytic converters stolen from their parked vehicles.

Alerted to the growing problem, Transit Services Bureau deputies staked out the station, Oct. 9, eventually arresting three people in possession of a stolen converter they'd literally hacked off of the parked car.

"A brand new one is worth \$1,300," said TSB Capt. Pat Jordan. "There's precious metal inside so sometimes they'll break it open, strip it and sell the metal to a junk dealer."

After interrogating the suspects, TSB Det. Frank Richter and his team discovered where the suspects had intended to sell the stolen catalytic converter. They had allegedly used the El Patron wrecking yard in Compton to sell stolen car parts.

Deputies set up a sting operation, eventually selling three ostensibly stolen catalytic converters to two employees at El Patron, who were both

subsequently arrested.

A successful sting

The sting also uncovered an employee at the wrecking yard who was in violation of his parole and another who had an outstanding warrant for possession of narcotics with the intent to sell.

Shortly after those arrests, a search warrant was served at El Patron and deputies discovered that one cars on the lot was stolen. They also found half an ounce of marijuana on the property.

“Typically [thieves] drive around in the parking lot, looking for whatever model it is they want. Then they’ll jump out quickly and take [the converters] out,” Jordan said. “They’ve got to get under the car to get the converter, so if you see somebody getting under a parked car in one of these lots, we need you to be reporting that.”

Jordan said that Metro employees are in a unique position to be able to help avert possible theft because they’re regularly in the parking lots – whether using them to park or operating a bus or train nearby. He said any suspicious activity should be reported to the Transit Services Bureau at (323) 563-5000.

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Metro Rail maintenance had to repair both the north and south tracks near the Gold Line Sierra Madre station on Saturday after a tractor/trailer crashed through the barrier on the 210 freeway and onto the tracks. The accident happened at around 1 a.m. and impaired service until noon.



Photos: Metro Rail

Tractor/Trailer Smashes Barrier, Damages Gold Line Tracks

- Saturday morning accident near Sierra Madre station occurred prior to start of service

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 16, 2007) Metro Rail repair crews were up and working early Saturday morning following a single-vehicle accident that had a tractor/trailer crashing through the eastbound 210 freeway Jersey barriers and onto the Gold Line tracks just west of the Sierra Madre station.

The accident happened at around 1:15 a.m. The driver of the truck appeared to be unharmed and was released at the scene. Trains don't run on the Gold Line at that hour, so there was no danger to Metro employees or passengers at the time of the accident.

Hector Guerrero, the assistant manager of Metro Rail transportation who oversaw the repairs, said the accident was "pretty bad" in terms of damage to Metro's tracks. The cause of the accident is unknown, but Guerrero said the rain – which had been coming down pretty hard at that point – may have been a factor.



Although the tractor/trailer was badly mangled, the driver walked away and no trains were involved in the accident, which occurred prior to the beginning of morning service.

"The truck actually bent one piece of track and twisted another – one on the north line and one on the south," he said. "The driver had to be going a pretty good speed to do that kind of damage. These are steel rails he managed to bend."

Over the next 10 hours, a crew of 25 was required to clear the demolished truck from the tracks and then repair the damaged rail segments. The truck wasn't hauling a load, which made the work easier than it could have been, Guerrero said.

Coping with the damage

Metro established a bus bridge between the Allen and Sierra Madre stations and had Sheriff's deputies on site at both stations to guide would-be passengers to where they needed to go.

"All our trains had to be short lined – turned back at the Allen station. The controllers did a good job of giving the best service possible with both tracks shut down," Guerrero said. "The bus side was excellent with getting us a bus bridge to cope with the damage."

The repair crew worked quickly to fix the damaged track. Single-track service was established at 11:30 a.m. and full service was restored at noon. With the lighter passenger load and fewer trains running on the weekend – as well as the accident occurring at the end of the line – Guerrero said it wasn't the worst of possible situations.

"We were toward the end of the line. It didn't cut our line in half or anything, which could have been a real headache," he said. "It could have been worse, but it was bad enough."

Caltrans won't be able to replace the broken Jersey barriers that separate the 210 freeway and the Gold Line tracks – which run between east- and westbound lanes – until the end of the week at least. Until it is, Metro Rail

operators will run at a reduced speed of 25 mph on the south (eastbound) track along the unprotected section.

Busy all over

Meanwhile, the Newhall Pass tunnel accident Friday night that saw 31 vehicles crashed and burned and three people killed had Caltrans working overtime on the other side of the county.

Metro Rail managers and bus divisions in the San Fernando Valley were prepared for the anticipated extra load of commuters riding Metrolink from north LA County to avoid the Newhall Pass accident.

But, Caltrans shored up the tunnel and reopened the I-5 Freeway in time for Monday morning rush hour. Even though larger than normal Metrolink ridership was noted, Metro Rail operated without incident on regular service schedules and extra buses weren't required.

"This whole weekend was kind of crazy," Guerrero said.

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CEO Roger Snoble, Board Chair Pam O'Connor, Board members Bonnie Lowenthal and David Fleming join city officials and developers of Wilshire-Vermont Station as Los Angeles City Councilman Herb Wesson cuts the ribbon to mark the official opening of the \$136 million, mixed-use development built above the Wilshire Vermont Metro Rail Station.



Photos: Gary Leonard

Traditional Ceremony Opens Wilshire Vermont Station Complex

(Oct. 16, 2007) Korean fan dancers in colorful traditional costumes set the tone, Tuesday, at a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking the formal opening of L.A.'s latest transit-oriented development – Wilshire Vermont Station.

The \$136 million, mixed-use development includes 449 apartments and more than 36,000 square feet of retail space built above the Vermont Metro Rail station. Featured in the building's brochure, which pictures a subway train, is the statement: "Go where you want, when you want...no car required."

Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor and Board members Bonnie Lowenthal and David Fleming, along with CEO Roger Snoble, represented the agency at the 10 a.m. ceremony. Following approval by the Board in June 2002, construction on the complex began in April 2004.



“Wilshire Vermont Station is the most recent example of our successful public/private development partnership that is re-creating transit-centered living in our urban communities,” said O’Connor.

Korean fan dancers celebrate the moment.

The retail space will include Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Washington Mutual Bank, T-Mobile, UPS Store, Wasabi Japanese Restaurant, and other restaurants and retail outlets.


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30 Employees Honored as Employees of the Quarter

(Oct. 17, 2007) Thirty employees have been selected as Employees of the Quarter for the fourth quarter of FY 2007.

The employees were honored for their contributions to six of Metro's eight core values. The core values are safety, employees, fiscal responsibility, integrity, innovation, customer satisfaction, teamwork and suggestions.

Employees

Floyd Paton, Chris Lee and Sergio Valle of Metro Rail Traction Power performed above and beyond the call of duty when they placed themselves in harm's way to tend to a person injured in a six-car accident on I-105. The men positioned their trucks to provide a protective barrier against oncoming traffic and turned on emergency lights to warn approaching motorists. When a Metro Security team and CHP arrived, the employees assisted them in controlling traffic and helped clear the lane around the accident scene.

Innovation

Carlos Fabro, Phanh Phongsak, Rudy Rey, Cesar Robeniol, Andi Wang, Jack Wang and Bill Wei of Facilities Engineering demonstrated exceptional innovation in managing the architecture, design and engineering of the new Division 9 Transportation building. The team met many challenges and worked tirelessly to make sure the objectives of the project were met. The building, Metro's first LEED-certified building, will use 50 percent less water and 33 percent less electricity than a conventional building, thus saving Metro money.

Teamwork

Jami Carrington, Cathy Feng, Elizabeth McGowan, Sharleen Yoshimi, Ned Racine and Kevin Woo worked together to launch the Metro Vanpool Program in April 2007. The team's efforts included program development and forms, construction of a data base and a web page. Other aspects included creation of a marketing plan, art and design work, and customer information. The program is a success with an enrollment of nearly 430 vanpools.

Fiscal Responsibility

South Bay Service Sector Division Maintenance Managers Alex DiNuzzo and Ken Matsuno, and Transportation Managers Curley Little and Cindy Karpman were selected for their excellent work in managing their cost center budgets, particularly in the area of division overtime labor. The managers worked well together as a team, sharing creative ideas and work plans.

Suggestions

Johnny Rodriguez, the Body Shop leader at Carson Division 18, took the initiative to make the job easier for mechanics and also to reduce the cost of repairing buses. Most recently, he found a way to save time and money in repairing entrance and exit doors on NABI buses. The repair

makes the doors much stronger and reduces the repair time from several days to about two hours. It also will save between \$1,110 and \$1,500 on the cost of replacing the doors. Reducing the repair cost will benefit not only Division 18, but also the entire agency.

Integrity

Mike Holguin, Tom Lee, John Jaramillo, Rod Pates, John Almeida, Ralph Sbragia, Alan Nakagawa, Vince Ybarra and Angelene Campuzano were responsible for various aspects of construction of the new Division 9 Transportation building, a \$13-million, three-story glass and steel building that also will house the San Gabriel Valley Service Sector staff and the Sheriff's substation. The building is Metro's first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified building, and has been designed to achieve a "Silver" Certification.



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These examples of the tagger moniker "SUSHI" were found in the bedroom of a Los Angeles youth suspected of doing more than \$7,000 in damage to Metro buses and trains.



Juvenile Charged with \$7,000 in Vandalism to Metro System

- 16-year-old was on parole for earlier vandalism charge

By NED RACINE

(Oct. 17, 2007) Sheriff's deputies arrested a Los Angeles youth, Oct. 11, who allegedly used the tagger moniker "SUSHI", and charged him with doing more than \$7,000 damage to the Metro System.

The 16-year-old John Marshall High School sophomore surrendered to Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau (TSB) deputies at his home, culminating an investigation that began in December 2006.

According to Deputy Jason Roberts, a member of the TSB's Special Problems Unit, deputies discovered markers, spray cans, slap tags, posters, black books and a back pack with graffiti in the suspect's bedroom.

The SUSHI moniker was sprayed several places within the bedroom, Roberts noted. A computer in the bedroom contained photographs of vandalism.

The SUSHI tagging name can be seen throughout Hollywood and areas of Universal City. TSB investigators believe the juvenile was responsible for damage to buses at Divisions 2 and 10, as well as Metro Red Line trains.

Marijuana, rolling papers

Roberts also reported that deputies discovered a sandwich bag with marijuana, as well as a small scale, rolling papers, and numerous small plastic bags.

The juvenile was arrested on charges of vandalism/graffiti, possession of vandalism tools, and possession of marijuana for sale. He was booked at the Sheriff's West Hollywood Station and released to his father.

During the subsequent interview, Roberts reported the suspect admitted to the vandalism and his past membership in the UMK (Underground Mobbing Kings) tagging crew. The deputy noted he saw the "SUSHI" moniker on the bus stop for Metro Line 175 near the high school.

Roberts began investigating the tagger after receiving a complaint from a Metro supervisor in December, 2006 that the SUSHI moniker was spray painted along the Los Angeles riverbed and viewable from the Metro Gold Line.

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Proudly holding the torque wrenches that are symbols of their trade, newly certified Metro mechanics are from left, back row, Geoffery Springer, Traci Hillard, Dawn Diggs, Gary Breaux and Ralph Oliver, Jr. Front row, from left, are Lillian Meneses, Elder Villafuerte, Francisco Medina and Samuel Williams. Flanking the group are class instructors, left, Steve Mullaly and, right, Brian Markey. Not pictured are graduates Tyrone Macy, Lonnie Bolden and David Morin.



Photo by Bill Heard

12 New Mechanics Graduate from Tough 18-Month Program

- They'll be 'leaders of the trade,' says ATU President Neil Silver
- 'Some of the best people we hire,' says Metro's Richard Hunt

(Oct. 18, 2007) Nine former service attendants were welcomed into the ranks of certified mechanics by union and Metro officials, Thursday, during a graduation ceremony at the Maintenance Support Service Center.

The nine, and three others who were unable to attend the event, have just completed a demanding 18-month course of classroom study and on-the-job training to qualify for their new responsibilities.

Members of the graduating class are Lonnie Bolden, Gary Breaux, Dawn Diggs, Traci Hillard, Tyron Macy, Francisco Medina, Lillian Meneses, David Morin, Ralph Oliver, Jr., Geoffery Springer, Elder Villafuerte and Samuel Williams.

In addition to their graduation certificates, each received a shiny new torque wrench – an essential mechanic's tool – engraved with their name and badge number.

To be eligible for the training program, jointly sponsored by Metro and the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), service attendants must have three years of good work, attendance and driving records. They also must pass an exam, show an aptitude for learning and be willing to attend classes and complete assignments on their own time.

‘Serious about their work’

And, according to ATU Local 1277 President Neil Silver, “they have to be serious about their work. These people are the future mechanics, the backbone of the ATU on this property.”

They not only will be the future leaders of the union, he said, “but leaders of the trade, keeping the trade going at a high level where they will advance in skills, pay and benefits.”

Over the years, as Metro’s bus fleet evolved from diesel into CNG and computers played an ever more important role, the mechanics’ training program was lengthened from eight months to its present 18 months.

“Ultimately, we want people who can troubleshoot and diagnose problems as quickly and efficiently as possible,” said Richard Hunt, deputy executive officer for Vehicle Technology and San Fernando Valley Service Sector general manager.

“The foundation of our training is to teach them the fundamentals, to think, to troubleshoot,” he added, noting that Metro is one of very few transit agencies with its own mechanics’ training program. Most rely on graduates of local trade schools or community colleges.

“Every manager I’ve ever talked to swears by the quality of the mechanics who come out of this program,” said Hunt. “They really believe that, in the long run, they’re some of the best people we hire.”

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Metro Chair Pam O'Connor types a response to a question during yesterday's first Metro chat. O'Connor took questions for an hour beginning at noon. She will also host next month's chat as well.

**Photo by
Ned Racine**

Board Chair Pam O'Connor Hosts Metro's First Online Chat

- Questions appeared to originate from cities across county

By NED RACINE

(Oct. 18, 2007) Convening a Town Hall Meeting—digital style—Metro Chair Pam O'Connor held an online chat at noon Wednesday with Metro riders and transit advocates.

The hour-long internet exchange was the first in a series of chats Metro will host. The questions O'Connor answered are available at http://interactive.metro.net/archive_chat/archive_oct_17_2007.php

Questions ranged from the general—"What is Metro doing to ease traffic?"—to the specific—"Why not place subways under freeways?" At one point, 115 Internet users were signed onto the chat. Sixteen contributed questions before the chat and, based on local reference in questions, chat members appeared to be writing from across the county.

"It's going to be a fun, new, innovative way of communicating with the folks who are the users of the system," O'Connor said before the chat began. "That's the heartbeat of what we do: serving people out there."

O'Connor, who was eager to do Metro's first chat, welcomed yet another way to hear questions about Metro, from simple questions about current service to complex questions about long-term planning.

"It gives us an opportunity [for] telling people what the agency is doing,

as well as... what the needs are," she said.

She noted that Internet users could be joining the chat from their home, their work, their mobile devices, possibly while riding the Metro System.

'No filter, direct communication'

One of the charms of the chat format for O'Connor is that she can communicate with online questioners directly. "There is not a filter. This is direct communication. It's an opportunity for us, Metro, to be able to be frank about issues."

"You have the immediacy without the filter," she said in praise of the chat format. "You have that interaction. But you also have the ability for people to pause and take a moment and think through their questions and not just do a knee-jerk question."

After the chat, O'Connor told media she was not surprised by the questions. "I really have believed that a lot of people use the system; people are interested; they pay attention, they have an opinion and a lot of folks out there know about transportation."

O'Connor, who found the chat "very exciting," will be leading next month's chat. "I'm having fun, so I'm ready to keep doing it."

"It's the sharing of ideas that will be the real strength of this chat," she said.



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Multi-agency Disaster Drill to Test Terrorism Response

(Oct. 18, 2007) A multi-agency transit disaster drill with as many as 100 law enforcement officers, firefighters and transit personnel participating is scheduled Saturday, Oct. 27, at Gardena High School.

Coordinated by the Sheriff’s Transit Services Bureau, the exercise will test first responders’ skills at handling a terrorist attack. The scenario includes a mock suspect releasing deadly saran gas aboard a Metro bus.

“We’re training so we can all be on the same page when a natural disaster or some sort of emergency occurs,” says Sheriff’s Lt. Melva Mitchell, drill coordinator. “We want to see how we work together, what our resources are, what we can do and cannot do.”

Scheduled to participate in the drill are personnel from the Sheriff’s HAZ-MAT and Force Protection Team, Metro, LAPD, CHP, LAUSD, LADOT, LA City Fire Department and the LA County Health Department.

“Anyone who would be involved in a real situation will participate in the training,” said Mitchell.



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Crenshaw Stories:

Station Art Project Morphs Into 'Opera'

Artist Buzz Spector teams with musician to present stage version of stories at Cornell University

By JIMMY STROUP

> Multimedia artist Buzz Spector created "Crenshaw Stories" in 1995 to adorn the walls of the Metro Green Line Crenshaw station. The project featured more than 5,000 multi-colored tiles and more than 100 statements of Crenshaw residents who recount their memories of the area and of its history.



If the Walls Could Talk...



Artist Buzz Spector collected the following statements, among many others, from local residents and set them into the tiles that grace the Metro Green Line Crenshaw station walls. Spector's

(Oct. 19, 2007) When multimedia artist Buzz Spector finished the "Crenshaw Stories" piece he was commissioned to create for the Metro Green Line Crenshaw station in 1995, he thought he was through with the project. Little did he know how connected he would stay to that particular piece of art.

"Since I said goodbye to Southern California, people keep getting interested in it," he said. "It's showed up in films, you know. And now it's being examined by my friends and colleagues at Cornell as an example of community and activist public art practice."

Spector began his current tenure at Cornell University in New York in 2001. When he created "Crenshaw Stories," he was a visiting professor at UC Riverside. And though he's exhibited at major institutions and galleries since, the Crenshaw work sticks with him.

recent extension of “Crenshaw Stories” at Cornell University will feature some of the statements in a spoken word opera, in which the “Stories” will serve as the libretto.

Learned to be ‘Cool’ in LA

“When I was ten years old I rode a train to California with my grandparents. It was the first time I saw the Rockies, and I will never forget how the mountains suddenly loomed against the horizon at the end of a day spent passing through flat Midwestern farmland. I realized the geographical immensity of America during that trip, as well as the immense psychic differences between my neighborhood in Chicago, with its brick apartment buildings and treeless streets, and the palm trees and stucco of L.A. I stayed for a month with my cousins in Inglewood, where I learned how to skateboard, a skill as yet unknown back home. When I returned to Chicago, I was, for the first time, cool.”

An Adventure on the Bus

“I remember that the first time I rode a public bus it was one that went down Crenshaw. I was ten years old and as soon as I got on I knew I was in for an adventure. I walked about three steps down the aisle when the bus started to jerk me back and forth until I found a seat. Black, White, Hispanics, and other ethnics were on the bus sitting next to each other like good friends. I felt so comfortable that I took a nap. Ever since I think I’ve been in love with the RTD.”

A New Year’s Celebration

“I remember riding the subway with my daughter at midnight on New Year’s Eve one year, and it was just like Times Square, with a carload of complete strangers hugging each other and singing ‘Auld Lang Syne.’”

“When I came to Cornell, they asked if I wouldn’t give a presentation on the project,” he said. “I’m sort of giving them more than they asked for.”

Spector has teamed with musician Kevin Ernste – who also teaches at Cornell – to create an opera based around the “Crenshaw Stories” project.

“We’ve developed an opera, in which the ‘Stories’ function as the libretto,” he said. “The story of the opera is propelled by the ‘Crenshaw Stories.’”

‘Something very powerful’

Ernste has set Spector’s work of art turned oral history to a style of music Spector called “aleatoric.” The music is minimalist, in the style of John Cage or Philip Glass, and wanders in complicated progressions of chords.

Spector has gathered 20 performers who will read the “Crenshaw Stories” text over the music, re-telling the stories that still appear on the wall of the Green Line Crenshaw station.

“People are nervous about singing, but everyone is happy to recite, so we’ll use the speaking to augment the music and package the whole thing together into something very powerful,” he said.

Metro Deputy Executive Officer of Creative Services Maya Emsden – who supervised the original project in the mid-1990s – said the expansion of the project is fitting.

“It’s quite moving and wonderful to see [how] this art project continues to grow and live outside the station,” she said.

Spector’s new “Crenshaw Stories” will be performed at the Cornell University Sage Chapel on Nov. 11.

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Sheriff's Lt. John Baylis presents a \$3,000 check to Sebastian and Xavier Figueroa, brothers of the late Army Pvt. 1st Class Gabriel Figueroa.



Photos: Bill Heard

Victims' Families are Beneficiaries of Charity Golf Tourney

(Oct. 19, 2007) Xavier and Sebastian Figueroa lost their brother Gabriel when he was killed in Iraq last April. Julia Luna's daughter Guadalupe was the victim of a murder-suicide last November.

The families of both victims were beneficiaries of a charity golf tournament sponsored in July by the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau and Metro. Each family received \$3,000 from the tournament's proceeds during a presentation, Thursday, at the Board's Operations Committee meeting.



Julia Luna, mother of the late Sheriff's Dispatcher Guadalupe Castaneda, is pictured here with Lt. John Baylis and Sgt. Carlos Jaen of the Transit Services Bureau.

Pvt. 1st Class Gabriel Figueroa, son of Metro Rail Transportation Operations Supervisor Javier Figueroa, was only 20 years old and an Army medic when he was killed by a sniper while on patrol with a First Cavalry unit. He had joined the Army in October 2005 and deployed to Iraq in October 2006.

Sheriff's TSB Dispatcher Guadalupe Castaneda, who worked in the Rail Operations Center, was killed by her estranged husband who then committed suicide. She leaves behind her three children, Edward, 10; David, 8; and Ailene, 7. Her parents, Jorge and Julia Luna, now care for the orphaned children.

A total of 144 golfers participated in the annual tournament at the Montebello Golf Course last July. Proceeds from the \$90 entry fee were compiled for the donations to the two families.

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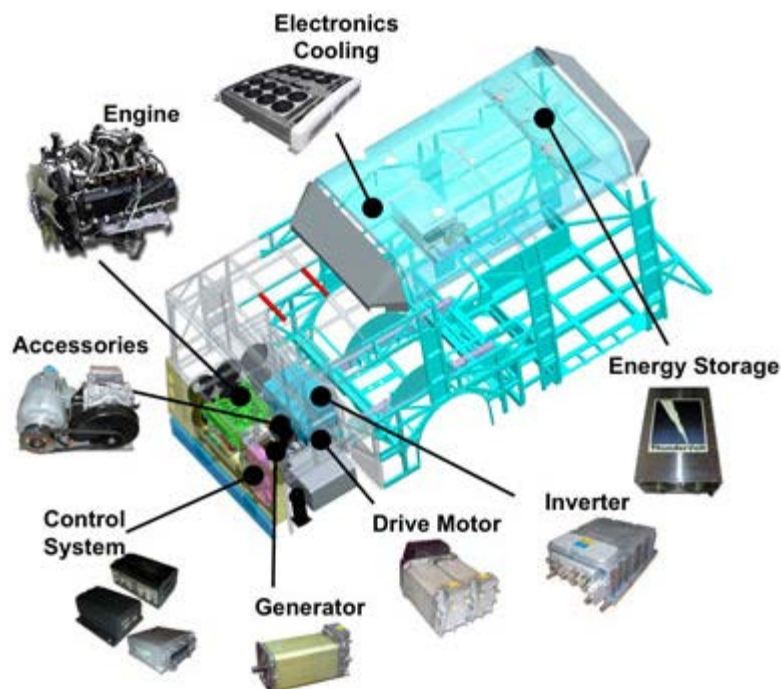
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Metro's 45-foot hybrid buses, to be built by NABI, will use a gasoline-powered engine to generate electricity for the electric motors that drive the bus. A regenerative braking system captures the energy during braking and returns it to the vehicle's energy storage system placed on the roof.

Illustration courtesy of ISE Corporation.



Purchase of Hybrid Buses Continues Metro's History of Innovation

- Vehicles expected to replace oldest diesel buses

By NED RACINE

(Oct. 19, 2007) When the Board approved the purchase of up to 260 new 45-foot, high-capacity composite buses at its September 20 meeting, it added to Metro's long history of bus innovation.

That's because part of the order includes 25 gasoline-powered hybrid vehicles to be purchased in FY 2009 and 25 more in FY 2010. These would be Metro's first hybrid buses in regular service.

Those 50 vehicles – powered by unleaded gasoline, considered an alternative fuel by the State of California – are expected to replace some of Metro's oldest diesel buses assigned to Venice Division 6. Although the division cannot fuel CNG buses, it could fill the unleaded-gasoline-powered hybrid

Electric Trolleys, Steam Buses – LA had 'em First

Metro and its predecessor agencies have always sought new bus solutions in addressing Los Angeles County's transit needs.

In 1910, the Laurel Canyon Utilities Company put into service a hand-built, electrically powered trolley coach. The electric trolley, built in Los Angeles, was the nation's first.

In 1929, The Los Angeles Motor Coach Company introduced what was then an unusual coach design. Its engine was in the rear.

vehicles.

To prepare for the hybrids, Metro is purchasing six, 42-foot hybrid buses and will operate these buses in three service sectors. North American Bus Industries (NABI) will build the vehicles; the hybrids Metro will purchase later.

More recently, the California Steam Bus experiment resulted in the first modern steam buses in the nation, carrying passengers along Metro's routes beginning in 1974.

Unfortunately, the steam bus used more energy than diesel buses.

Hybrid buses already move passengers in several major cities: Chicago, New York, Seattle, and Long Beach.

The engine of a Metro hybrid bus will generate electricity for the electric motors that power the bus. A regenerative braking system captures the energy during braking and returns it to the vehicle's energy storage system.

Advantages of hybrids

One advantage the hybrids bring to Metro is how cleanly they run. Over a one-hour period, the gasoline-powered hybrid are designed to run cleaner than Metro's present CNG bus, estimates Mike Bottone, director of Equipment and Vehicle Acquisition, who has worked 33 years at Metro.

After speaking with other transit agencies, Bottone expects higher gas mileage as well. "Omnitrans out in San Bernardino was realizing about 4.5 miles per gallon, which is pretty good for a 40-foot vehicle."

A typical Metro CNG bus averages 2.1 miles per gallon. "Long Beach is doing it in a diesel format, and they see an increase in their diesel economy," Bottone said. Another benefit of hybrid buses is that they are quieter than CNG or diesel-powered buses.

Initial plans would deploy two test hybrids to the San Fernando Valley, two to the Westside and two to the downtown Los Angeles area. Bottone sees the hybrids as ideal for local routes in downtown areas.

"You're constantly stepping on the brakes—stop and go—it's constantly keeping your energy storage system charged," said Bottone. "So it's really best suited for stop and go driving."



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Fires Cause Problems for Metro Employees and Loved Ones

- Some miss work to evacuate homes, but no one injured

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 23, 2007) Like so many in Southern California in the last week, Metro employees were not immune to the fires that have raged through Los Angeles, Orange and San Diego counties.

On Monday, Sun Valley Division 15 employees seemed to have gotten the worst of it – the division lies only 20 miles south of the Buckweed Fire in Agua Dulce near Santa Clarita. According to news reports, 25 structures had been destroyed in the 25,000-acre blaze that doubled in size since Sunday.

“We have a large number of people who have been affected by the fires that are happening all over,” Sun Valley Transportation Manager Gary Spivack said Monday. “Eight people missed out because of the fires today.”

Spivack’s daughter, who attends college in San Diego, was forced to leave school because of fires in the area.

Division 15 Assistant Transportation Manager Barbara Maycott said fierce, 75-mph winds tore about half the shingle roof off her Canyon Country home and broke limbs on a 500-year-old oak tree in her yard. Nighttime skies were bright with flames from fires around her neighborhood.

Evacuations on Monday

Division 15 Maintenance Manager Jim Pachan’s family was evacuated from their home for a time on Monday, but was allowed to return home that evening.

Division Stenographer Darlene Blake owns vacation property that may have been destroyed in the Running Springs fire, where more than 200 houses were lost to flames. Her daughter’s family was evacuated from the area.

Other Metro employees affected by the fires included Wendy Gerhardt and Scott Lloyd of Human Resources, and Robert New of Purchasing. Communication Manager Bill Heard’s daughter and granddaughter complied with a voluntary evacuation order when heavy smoke from fires east of the city made it difficult to breathe at their Carlsbad home.

Meanwhile, service on Metro Line 534 – which normally serves stops along Pacific Coast Highway through Malibu, past Pepperdine University and as far as Trancas Canyon Road – has been curtailed at Sunset Boulevard.

“We did have to cut down on the number of buses going out there because there’s hardly anybody riding them at the moment,” Division 6 Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco said Monday. “We’re basically running a shuttle service, it’s such a shortened line because of the fire.”

Metro also volunteered the use of its buses to aid fire officials in getting personnel and equipment to fire-affected areas, but has not yet been requested to provide emergency service. The agency helped fire efforts in 2003 by assisting with transportation of firefighters to blazes in Hesperia and San Diego.



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‘Celebration of Life’ Ceremony Set for Metro’s Marcia Scuka

(Oct. 23, 2007) A “celebration of life” service will be held, Saturday, for retired Equipment Records Specialist Marcia Scuka, who died at home in West Covina, Oct. 17, following a lengthy bout with cancer.

The service will begin at 4 p.m. at the West Covina Hills Seventh Day Adventist Church, 3536 East Temple Way in West Covina (626-915-7819). The service will be followed by a reception.

Scuka, 62, joined Metro in November 1978 and worked in the maintenance department at a number of operating divisions over the years. She retired from North Los Angeles Division 3 this past July.

She is survived by her sister Carmen Bradley of Riverside; brother Gary Scuka of Lodi; and sister Janie Priest of Kent, Wash., and numerous nieces and nephews.

“I would very much enjoy meeting everyone Marcia knew,” said Bradley. “We appreciate all the phone calls and all the cards Metro people have been kind enough to send.”



Marcia Scuka

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SGV Sector Office and Division 9 Move Into New Building



Transportation Operations Supervisor Laraine Weatherspoon, at left, Assistant Transportation Manager Phil Moores, Division Stenographer Arlene McLeod and Transportation Manager Doug Middleton stand among only some of the boxes filled with division equipment and paperwork being moved into the new building. The division packed up and moved Friday, Oct. 19 and Saturday, Oct. 20. Middleton was excited about the new building, but admitted that the entire affair was "a lot of stress!"



The dispatch window at the new Division 9 building offers more space and accessibility than did the one at the old building. Transportation operation supervisors will be able to perform their duties without having to fight for elbow room.



Operator Hugo Arreola has already staked out his new locker in the covered space next to the new building at Division 9. Restroom and changing facilities are still separate, but lockers are in a common area located just outside the operator break room.

(Oct. 23, 2007) With a formal opening planned at a later date, San Gabriel Valley Service Sector and Division 9 employees are moving into their newly completed headquarters building in El Monte.

The \$13-million, 45,515-square foot building will house sector and division offices, operator break room, dispatch and a Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau field office.

Division transportation facilities are on the first floor, the Transit Services Bureau offices are on the second, and sector administrative offices are on the third.

The building is environmentally-friendly in its design and earned a "silver" rating by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). It will permit a 50-percent growth in Division 9 operations.

- **Captions by Jimmy Stroup**
- **Photos by Ned Racine**



< A familiar sight during the move-in, a box of doughnuts rests atop some blueprints for the new combination Division 9 and San Gabriel Valley sector office building. Minor additions and façade work are still being completed on the building.

A moving van was parked outside the new building's atrium entry while employees offloaded office equipment and supplies transferred from the old service sector and Division 9



building.

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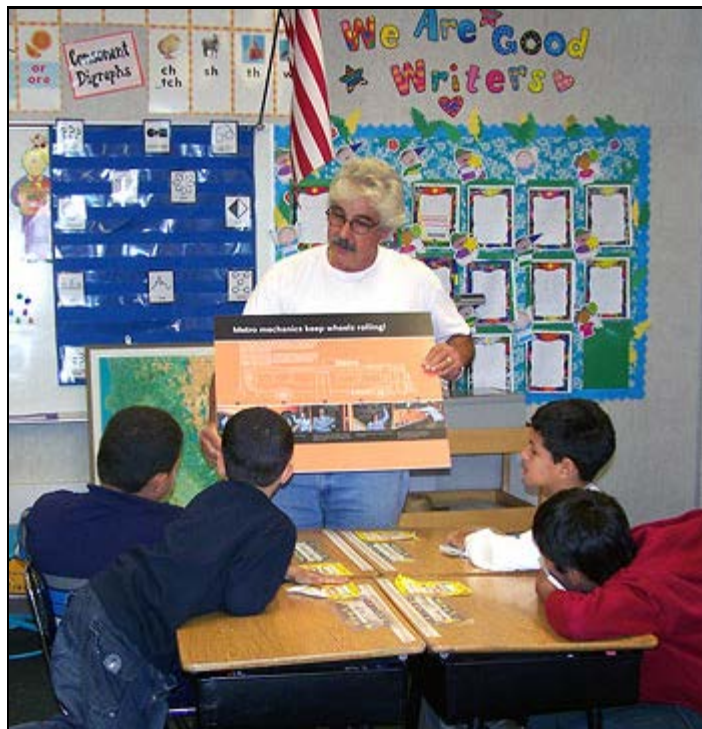
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Metro's Greg Mukhalian, a Mechanic "A" Leader at Carson Division, visited Birney Elementary School in Redondo Beach – his daughter's school – to participate in the "Mystery Reader" program. Mukhalian used the opportunity to talk about Metro, telling the kids about the agency, its various transit services and safety.

Carson Division's Greg Mukhalian was 'Mystery Reader' at Redondo School

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 24, 2007) Carson Division Mechanic "A" Leader Krikor "Greg" Mukhalian participated in the "Mystery Reader" program, Oct. 17, at Birney Elementary School in Redondo Beach. His 3rd grade daughter, Lena, attends the school.

Parents volunteer to come to class on a mystery day – unknown to their child – to read a chapter of *Charlotte's Web*. Mukhalian says the children are thrilled by the anticipation of not knowing which parent will come read that Wednesday.

"At that age, they think stuff like that is cool," he said. "They're very excited about little things like that."

After the reading, parents customarily talk to the kids about their jobs. Mukhalian took the opportunity to tell the students about Metro, about safety and about public transportation's role in the community.

"A lot of these kids live in the area and there's not a lot of Metro presence in Redondo," he said. "So I thought it would be a good time to start these kids on public transit; to expose them a bit to Metro. They'll be drivers someday, too, and need to get around."

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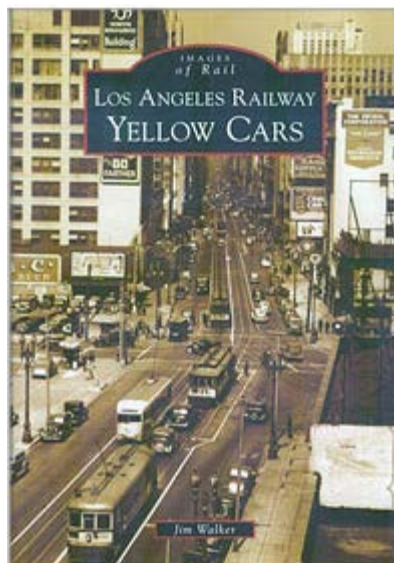
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Metro's Own Publishes Historical Book on LA's Yellow Cars

By JIMMY STROUP



Book Signing Thursday at Metro Store

Metro Archivist Jim Walker is scheduled to sign copies of his new book, *Images of Rail – Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars*, on Thursday, Oct. 25 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. in the Metro Store on the Plaza Level. The Metro Store will offer the book at a reduced price of \$17 for Metro employees. Major chains such as Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com also will carry the book.



Author Jim Walker
Metro Archivist Jim Walker's latest book – *Images of Rail – Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars* – is a photographic history of the railway system that ran until 1945. Walker uses Metro resources for research and donates the proceeds of his labor to the agency.

(Oct. 24, 2007) Metro Archivist Jim Walker spends his days gathering information on transportation systems that no longer run, and has done so at Metro for a decade.

But in the last year, Walker's been doing more than simply gathering dusty records and old photos – he just published his second book about Los Angeles Rail transportation since February.

The most recent effort, *Images of Rail – Los Angeles Railway Yellow Cars*, recounts the oft-forgotten Yellow Car system, which ran alongside the Pacific Electric Red Car system and complimented it for nearly 50 years.

"The Yellow Cars were the urban workhorse of the transit system linking the Metrolink-like service of the interurban Red Cars with local neighborhoods just north, south, east, and west of the central business district of Los Angeles," said Matt Barrett, Metro's library service administrator. "[It had] a fleet of 742 streetcars running more than 400 route miles in the center of city streets."

This latest book is a sequel to his last, *Images of Rail – Pacific Electric Red Cars*. That book details the history, scope and operation of the Los Angeles-spanning Red Car system that provided the bulk of public transportation in the city for the early 20th century.

For Walker, who's been interested in rail-based transportation his entire life, the work of pulling the photographic history of the Yellow Car was an extension of a previous book he published in 1977, called *The Yellow Cars of Los Angeles*.

'Before it was gone'

"I just wanted to publish this so people would understand it and how important it was to the city," Walker said. "I grew up with it here, and I wanted to write about it before it was completely gone."

The project entailed a comprehensive search of the Metro archives for appropriate photos. As historical photos can be scarce – and despite Metro's vast collection – Walker had to resort to contacting some private collectors to fill in gaps in his book.

This passion to explain the rail systems he used as a child is what Walker called a "hobby kind of run wild." The publication of two full-length books on Los Angeles rail transit between 1900 and 1960 speaks to that passion.

"A lot of the history here just needs to be explained," he said. "In these cases, pictures [combined with a] summary of how it came to be and how it was run is the way I'm best able to tell the story."

Walker's book details the genesis of rail car transit in the early 1900s by real estate magnate Henry E. Huntington (after whom Huntington Beach and the Huntington Library are named). He consolidated several independent lines into one, selling off the bulk of it in 1910 to Southern Pacific Railroad.

Huntington kept the Yellow Car system, though, and ran it until his death in 1927. His estate ran it until 1945, after which it was disbanded.

Like with his *Red Car* book, this one is published by Arcadia Publishing in their "Images of Rail" series, which has 87 titles detailing rail transit in every corner of America.

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This Metro Blue Line train was one of two whose windshields were broken Thursday in dangerous rock-throwing incidents.



Photo: Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau.

Deputies' Trap Snares Five Suspects in Rock-Throwing Incident

(Oct. 26, 2007) Kids will be kids, but when a group of boys broke the windshields of two Metro Blue Line trains in a rock-throwing spree, Thursday night, Sheriff's deputies quickly stepped in to make arrests.

After the incidents, the youths scattered into the neighborhood around Willowbrook and 108th Street, so Transit Services Bureau Watch Deputy Gary Quart set a trap. He posted a deputy in a train cab and instructed him to radio the rock-throwers' location if they struck again.

Sure enough, as the train approached 108th Street, a group of boys had gathered, some with rocks in hand. Deputies were able to take five suspects – including a 10-year-old – into custody.

With video confirmation of the suspects, all five were charged with a penal code felony – Throwing Rocks at a Train.

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Board Chair Pam O'Connor, center, with CEO Roger Snoble, K.N. Murthy, deputy chief Capitol Management officer, at left, center, and Dennis Mori, executive officer of Project Management, second from left, accept the 2007 Outstanding Environmental and Engineering Geologic Project Award for the design and construction of the Los Angeles Metro Rail subway.



Photos by Ralph Cangialosi

Metro Red Line Wins Prestigious Environmental and Engineering Award

- Group cites Red Line's innovative seismic tunnel structure
- Metro executive sees award as 'vindication' of subway's design and construction

By NED RACINE

(Oct. 26, 2007) When the Association of Environmental and Engineering Geologist (AEG) recently presented its annual award to the Metro Red Line, one of the project's engineering leaders saw the award as vindication of the subway's design and construction.

"There are several innovative things we did way back in 1983-1984 for the Red Line, which were not considered . . . by anybody else; that is why this project has produced something unique for the industry," said K.N. Murthy, deputy chief Capitol Management officer.

Murthy was program director for the Engineering Management Consultant (EMC), which designed the subway for Metro.

Murthy, with Dennis Mori, executive officer of Project Management, and CEO Roger Snoble, accepted the award for Metro at the AEG's annual convention in Los Angeles on Sept. 25. Board Chair Pam O'Connor also attended the



K.N. Murthy, deputy chief Capitol Management officer, was program director for the Engineering Management Consultant (EMC), which designed the subway for Metro.

Award Recognizes Top Projects

The Outstanding Environmental and Engineering Geologic Project Award, established in 1993, recognizes a project meeting these criteria:

- Displays national or international significance,
- Demonstrates application of environmental and engineering geology towards solving a problem affecting the public,
- Recognizes and respects a project area's culture, environment and history, and
- Provides an opportunity for public education in environmental and engineering geology, as well as environment issues and the culture and history of the area.

Previous Outstanding Project Awards include the San Antonio River Walk, San Antonio, Texas; Westside Light Rail Transit Tunnel, Portland, Oregon; Silicon Valley Groundwater Cleanup Project, California, and Hoover Dam and Lake Mead, Arizona.

event.

As part of its award, AEG will present Metro with a brass plaque commemorating the Red Line as an outstanding environmental and engineering geologic project. The plaque, which will be mounted in the subway, notes that Metro "introduced an innovative seminal underground seismic structural design method."

"I was involved from Day 1 on the entire Red Line design and construction," Murthy said. "I think [the award] is a sort of vindication." He characterizes the nationally recognized award as given only to signature projects.

Noting that AEG has "been collecting information on the Red Line for the past two years," Murthy points to the subway's lack of damage from the Northridge Earthquake as further proof the subway design is valid.

The plaque will also commemorate the Red Line's innovative solution to gas and water seepage: "The Red Line subway was the first to use high-density polyethylene (plastic) to completely wrap transit stations and tunnels thus preventing methane, hydrogen sulfide and water from entering the structures."

Murthy remembers the engineers testing 100 materials before they chose high-density polyethylene (HDPE) to be used for the protective membrane.

He obviously savors recognition of the subway's design. "We were told we didn't know what we were doing. Having gone through all that and gone through the fact there was a test of our design by the Northridge earthquake. . . [the award] is actually a testament that what we did was right; we had the right design."

Also cited on the plaque will be the modular system used to build the subway, a technique Murthy said would be used if the subway is ever extended. "We are ready," he said.

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IG William Waters Retires After Nine Years' Service to Metro

- He had held the Inspector General's post since July 2000



Metro Inspector General
William Waters

(Oct. 26, 2007) Metro Inspector General William Waters retired Oct. 22 from the post he has held since 2002, ending a 36-year career in law enforcement. No successor has been named.

Waters, 63, cited personal and professional reasons for his retirement in his letter of resignation to Board Chair Pam O'Connor. He joined the Office of Inspector General in 1998 as the deputy in charge of investigations.

"The Board appreciates Bill Waters nine years' service to Metro, its riders and to the people of

Los Angeles County," said O'Connor. "We wish him well in retirement and all good luck in the future."

Waters was named acting Inspector General in July 2002, following the retirement of Arthur Sinai, who became Metro's first Inspector General in 1994. He was formally appointed to the post in January 2003.

As Inspector General, Waters was one of five Board officers. He was responsible for a staff of 18 investigators and auditors who focus on investigating potential criminal violations and reviewing matters of fraud, waste and abuse at Metro. The OIG also operates a fraud, waste and abuse hotline at 1-800-221-1142.

Served in drug enforcement

Prior to joining Metro, Waters had a successful career with the U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). He also served as executive director of the Southern California Drug Task Force in Los Angeles.

Under his leadership, the task force gained local and national recognition as a model for outstanding performance and efficiency and was the recipient of state and national awards for superior accomplishment.

Waters earned a Bachelors degree in criminal justice and government administration from California State University, Sacramento, and became a Certified Inspector General (CIG) in June 2000.

Waters and his wife, Lisa, reside in Simi Valley. He has three grown children, two daughters and a son, and four grandchildren.

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Operator Ignatius Arellano has been at Carson Division 18 since 1974 and driving Line 120 on Imperial Highway for 25 years. His dedication, hard work and model behavior prompted sector management to "give" him his own bus.

King of the Road: This Operator 'Owns' his Division 18 Bus

Operator Ignatius Arellano's performance rated the unusual honor

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 30, 2007) Carson Division 18 Operator Ignatius Arellano has built a reputation as a model of dedication.

An operator since the mid-1970s, Arellano's record of excellence caught the attention of management. They rewarded him by giving him his own bus – Number 6570 is his to drive daily.

Arellano, 56, is the first Metro employee at Division 18 to be

honored with his own bus. It's not really his, of course, but you wouldn't know that to talk to him.

The principle of ownership is one Arellano has embraced throughout his career. He "owns" his line (120), his riders (along Imperial Highway) and now his bus ("my baby").

"I tell the customers that they need to be careful with my bus," he said. "I tell them that it took me 32 years to pay it off, so now it's mine."

That kind of banter is typical Arellano. His working philosophy is one that melds a respect for others and a jovial manner. It's this that probably contributes to his being on a first-name basis with a startling number of his riders.

"I joke with them, you know. And no one gives me any trouble," he said. "I've been running the line a long time. I know everything about that line – I time the lights, I know when it's busy and not. I love it."

The obvious choice

Transportation Manager Cynthia Karpman is first in line to sing his praises, citing his excellent performance. When South Bay Sector General Manager Dana Coffey's suggested "giving" a bus to an operator; Arellano was the obvious choice.

"No one else has gotten their own bus," she said. "We have a lot of long-standing, good employees at this division – we're lucky that way. So he's not the only one with the credentials to earn something like this. But

he's a standout in every way."

Arellano has seen a lot of changes during his long service on Line 120. The neighborhood has improved a good deal since the 1970s – a period he called his "combat training" – when drugs and gangs were much more in control of the areas along Imperial.

His regular passengers have also come to be very attached to him, just as he's become attached to them. Arellano lets the "regulars" know when he's going on vacation. A lot of them drive their own cars for the weeks he's gone, proving that he's a big part of the reason they choose to ride Metro.

"It's like this," he said. "There are operators and there are drivers. A driver will just drive down the road, eyes ahead, never even bothering to worry about the passengers. I'm an operator. We know it's about the passengers, too."

Arellano's eligible for his full retirement in another five years, but said he can't think of a reason to do it – not that he couldn't fill his time, but because he finds the satisfaction of driving Line 120 worth sticking around.

"I enjoy it out here," he said. "Why should I retire when I've got it made out here?"



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Funeral Mass Held Monday for Retired Mechanic Rodrigo Tovar

- Known as an inventor who made special tools for bus repairs

(Oct. 30, 2007) A funeral mass was held Monday for retired Mechanic “A” Rodrigo Tovar, who died at a hospice Oct. 24 following an 18-month battle with cancer.

Tovar, 60, joined Metro in April 1984 and worked at Central City Division 1 and Crossroads Division 2. He retired last April from Division 2.

Tovar was known as an inventor by his colleagues, who remember the many special tools he devised for use in repairing and maintaining buses. At home, he built a solar-powered gate for his driveway and restored old Mercedes-Benz cars.

“He was a valuable guy to have around,” said Donell Harris, maintenance manager, who was one of six Division 2 employees who served as pall bearers at Tovar’s funeral.

Tovar also was a long-distance runner who participated in the L.A.Marathons. Despite his illness, he was health-conscious and urged his co-workers to eat the right foods, Harris said.

“He wanted us to be happy for him and remember him the way he was,” said Harris. “Up to the end, he talked about how he loved working on engines at Metro.”

Tovar, who lived in Pico Rivera, is survived by his wife, Rosa, and two sons.



Rodrigo Tovar was a long-distance runner who participated in the L.A. Marathons. He’s pictured here among the Metro employees who earned a medal in the 2003 Los Angeles Marathon.



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Pandemonium broke out at Metro Headquarters when the parade of candy seekers met up with the line of candy givers in the Plaza lobby.



Pint-Sized Superheroes, Cartoon Stars Bring Halloween to Metro in 10th Annual Parade of Gateway Child Development Center Kids

MORE! [Customer Relations Hosts Costume and Candy Bash!](#)

(Oct. 31, 2007) The Gateway Child Development Center kicked off Halloween festivities Wednesday, when close to 90 pint-sized superheroes, cartoon stars, and fairytale characters paraded around the Metro lobby to the delight of onlookers.

A chorus of "Trick or Treats" could be heard from children ranging in age from 6-months to 6-years. Superman, Capt. Jack Sparrow, Wonder Woman, a banana, a skunk, Underdog and a scary ghost were among the parade attendees.

Led by children from the Gateway Child Development Center, the 10th annual Halloween Parade circled through the Plaza level foyer where the kids collected Metro bagfuls of candies and treats.

After regrouping and a candy check, those with the mettle for more candy took their teachers and



Seven-month-old Daniel is a sweet-smelling skunk in the arms of dad Gerry Alvarez, Transportation Planning

parents to a special invitation-only costume and candy bash in the Metro Information Center.



Superstars Capt. Jack Sparrow (Moises Ramirez, 4), Wonder Woman (Maddie Flores, 4) and Superman, (Trent Hata, 4) pay Gail Harvey a visit in Customer Relations.

Photos by Gayle Anderson

Manager IV.



Wonder Woman Maddie, 4, looks out for mom Anne Flores, Chief Administrative Analyst.



Amanda, 2, is a good witch, says dad Joe Marzano, Contract Administrator.

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Gail Harvey welcomes trick or treaters from the Gateway Child Development Center to the annual costume and candy bash in the Metro Information Center.



Customer Relations Hosts Annual "Trick or Treat" Party for Metro Kids

[Slide show:](#) Scenes from a Metro Halloween - Photos by Alicia Rodriguez

* A special Goblin report from Gail Harvey, Director of Customer Relations

(Oct. 31, 2007) The Third Annual Halloween Party for our "Metro Kids" was held on the second floor in Customer Relations and the theme this year was "Ghostly Goblins."

More than 35 kids from the Gateway Child Development Center, accompanied by their teachers and parents, attended. After touring the decorated cubicles, the kids selected their favorites in a judging contest. First place went to Jorja Jones, LaTonya Greathouse was second and Marie Alamilla won a respectable third place.

An independent panel of impartial "costume judges" – Ron Jue, Anna Mercaldi and Lou Bendijo-Wong – had a tough time of selecting three winning costume contestants. The most original was Anthony Yanuari as a genie; most creative/unique was Maria Hernandez as Raggedy Ann and the scariest was Debbie Coddington as an Ugly Witch.

The kids also drew ten names of agents, who won various participation "trick or treat" gifts. They then walked around the Call Center and had their bags filled with more goodies from agents who had plenty to share. Department staff made 100 "special" goodie bags that were given to each child and the rest were sent to Metro kids who could not come.



One last stop to regroup and account for all candy. then it's off to the elevator and back to the center for the annual after-bash nap.

"We were pleasantly surprised with the number of kids and parents, who accompanied the kids along with the staff this year," said Alonzo Williams, Communications Manager. Matt Raymond, Chief Communications Officer, stopped by and was also surprised with the number participants.

This Halloween party just gets better and better each year and we appreciate the attendance of the kids, families and friends.

The event was coordinated by the Morale Committee, which is comprised of Steven Texada, Jackie Exeart, Virginia Sanchez, Gregory Talamantes, Harriet Pettit, Marie Tervalon, Noe Reyes, Lila Gamino, Patricia Diaz, Paula Grigsby, Alonzo Williams and Gail M. Harvey.

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Chatsworth Division 8 Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds presents Operator Kamran Firouzi with a Certificate of Merit for stopping his bus to aid two elderly women he saw take a tumble on the sidewalk ahead of him.

Operator Earns Kudos for Coming to Aid of Elderly Women

By JIMMY STROUP

(Oct. 31, 2007) West Valley Division 8 Operator Kamran Firouzi was awarded a Certificate of Merit, Oct. 16, for stopping to help two elderly women who had fallen on the sidewalk.

Mildred Sherman and her elderly friend, who was using a walker, both fell following a misstep. Firouzi was headed back to the division when he saw them fall. He pulled over to help the women, ensured they weren't seriously injured, and escorted them to their car.

Sherman was so grateful she called the division to report the "Good Samaritan" act.

Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds was equally impressed and had the certificate drafted up to acknowledge the event as a perfect example of customer service.


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Sector Governance Councils Schedule November Meetings

By RICK JAGER

(Oct. 31, 2007) Metro's sector governance councils will conduct monthly meetings in November to discuss transportation issues in their service sectors.

Governance councils work closely with the service sectors to study and plan service improvements and efficiencies in Metro Bus operations. The meetings are scheduled for:

- San Fernando Valley Service Sector, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 7, Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, 6262 Van Nuys Blvd., Van Nuys
- Gateway Service Sector, 2 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 8, The Gas Company, 9240 Firestone Blvd., Downey.
- South Bay Service Sector, 9:30 a.m., Friday, Nov. 9, Carson Community center, 801 E. Carson, Carson.
- Westside/Central Service Sector, 5 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 14, La Cienega Tennis Center, Sunset Room, 325 S. La Cienega Blvd., Beverly Hills
- San Gabriel Valley Service Sector, 5 p.m., Monday, Nov. 19, San Gabriel Valley Sector Office, 3449 Santa Anita Ave., 3rd Floor, El Monte.


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CEO UpDate

Enjoying the Gold Line Commute from Pasadena

- Contemplating Metro's transit corridor studies



CEO Roger Snoble

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE

I'm now a resident of Pasadena, which gives me the opportunity to be a regular rider of the Metro Gold Line. I've ridden the line before, of course, but being a regular rider gives me a little different perspective. I learned quickly that the Gold Line is much more reliable than trying to drive either on the freeways or surface streets where you never know what you're going to run into.

The line has frequent service. The people are nice and friendly, and a big benefit for me -- if seats are available -- is I can get through my e-mails before I get into work. It's a great service—a one-seat ride, and the Gold Line certainly helps to reduce my carbon footprint.

Usually I park at one of the Gold Line parking lots, although occasionally my wife takes me and drops me off. And I can report that I've been checked several times for fares.

Coming home in the evening I hardly ever get a seat. And since I ride on a pass, if there is someone needing a seat, I always give mine up. Our policies require all of us riding on a pass to give up our seat to a paying customer. More than our policies, imagine what a good impression that would leave with our customers: a Metro employee showing that kind of courtesy to one of our riders?

Proceeding with transit corridor studies

On another topic, I was asked recently why Metro continues to do transit corridor studies when the state legislature has raided transit dollars for the general fund.

Remember that government funding, both federal and state, goes in fits and starts. If all of a sudden the state does come up with funds, we want to be in a position to say, "Hey, we've got projects ready to go. They're environmentally cleared. They're good projects; we know what results we will get from them. All we need is some money."

Also, the studies show the state and federal governments—even our own Board—what a huge need we have out there. They say, "Look what we could do to solve the problem. This is how much it costs. Let's figure out what we can do to come up with the money."

The Canoga Extension, for example, is in the long-range plan and money should be there for this project. Crenshaw has always been contemplated. These are important parts of our plan. I think we would be in much worse shape if we turned our back on it as opposed to staying aggressive.

On a holiday note, I'd like to wish all of you a safe and fun Halloween.

October 31, 2007

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