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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



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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.