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## Division 9 Earns “How You Doin’?” for Fourth Month Running

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 4, 2007) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 has been awarded “How You Doin’?” honors for the month of October, making it the fourth month in a row the division has topped the charts.

“I always have to give it up to the operators for doing a good job. But the TOS’s do great work, too,” said Doug Middleton, transportation manager. “It’s a team effort.”

Middleton pointed to the low accident rate and especially the low work injuries rate as reasons SGV took the title again for October. He said management working issues like those only goes so far when it’s the operators who are responsible for the actual work.

“Operators are the ones on the front lines,” he said. “They’re the ones who have to meet those performance indicators. If they don’t meet the requirements, we don’t do well. But they do make those indicators here so they deserve all the credit.”

West Valley Division 8 took “How You Doin’?” honors for maintenance for October.

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Customer Relations put together a massive effort to add to the Fred Jordan Mission, contributing 200 gifts to the overall goal of 5,000. Back, from left: Linda Perryman, EEO Program Investigator; Jay Figus, Senior Diversity & Economic Opportunity Representative; Gail Harvey, Director Customer Relations; Jeanne Kinsel, Director Contract Administration; Alicia Rodriguez, Administrative Aide, Customer Relations. Front, from left: Barbara Thomasson, Diversity & Economic Opportunity Rep and Alonzo Williams, Communications Manager.



Photo: Gayle Anderson

## Metro's Forces Gather for Charitable Christmas Efforts

- 'Toys for Tots' at Division 9
- Stevie Wonder's "House Full of Toys" at Divisions 5 and 18

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 4, 2007) As part of the major effort the agency has put together to aid the Fred Jordan Mission gather toys for underprivileged children, Metro Customer Relations presented 200 toys to the growing pile, Nov. 30.

Marie Tervalon and Alicia Rodriguez coordinated the effort that garnered donations like hooded sweatshirts, CD players and backpacks out of the Customer Relations department – which only has 103 employees.

"I [was] pleased that the staff was so excited about the opportunity to contribute to this annual activity and they did an outstanding job," said Alonzo Williams, Communications Manager.





Barbara Thomasson, Diversity & Economic Opportunity Rep, and Alonzo Williams, Communications Manager, collect unwrapped gifts from Customer Relations into clear plastic bags to include with donations the agency has made to the Fred Jordan Mission.

Donations for the Fred Jordan Mission drive are being accepted until Dec. 6 and will be distributed on Dec. 16. Volunteers are still needed for the distribution; for more information contact Barbara Thomasson at 922-4526.

### Toys for Tots

Elsewhere in Metro's vast organization, San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Assistant Maintenance Manager Sal Llamas is spearheading a "Toys for Tots" endeavor. He first heard about and worked with the program while enlisted as a Marine, and wanted to continue his involvement with it now that he's out of the military.

With the help of the service sector offices, Llamas is coordinating with a local Marine Corps unit in Pico Rivera to aid their nationwide organization which distributes toys to various non-profit organizations.

"We collect new, unwrapped toys," he said. "The Marines get information from the non-profits who want toys and then they distribute them. We're helping get the toys that they give away all over the country."

The donations are being accepted at Division 9 until Dec. 14. The Marines get the toys shortly thereafter and deliver them to kids on Dec. 21.



Lynn Montano, Michelle Cardenas, Freddie Flores, Tensy Alba and Jim Montoya are the volunteers spearheading the Gift Giving Drive for the Fred Jordan Mission at the Metro Support Services Center (MSSC). Automated Guideway Vehicle 11 cheerfully holds some of the gifts already collected. For some reason, Number 11 refuses to wear Holiday colors. Montoya, who leads the gift collection efforts for the MSSC and bus divisions this year, said, "We've gotten a lot of gifts from rail and the MSSC. We look forward to the bus divisions coming through during the last week of the toy drive." The deadline for the divisions to donate gifts to the toy drive is at the close of business on Dec. 6.

### Stevie Wonder's House of Toys

On the other side of town, Arthur Winston Division 5 and Carson Division 18 are working to contribute to Stevie Wonder's "House Full of Toys" annual toy drive, which corresponds with an annual concert by Wonder and various other artists.

Operator Jimi Greene is heading an effort that's now in its 12th year. Greene heard about the program 11 years ago and was so touched by the campaign that he was driven to become involved.

"I put myself out there and said, 'Let's see if we can get some more help here,' and the people at the divisions have been very helpful in making this a success," Greene said.

He and his Harley crew deliver the toys in a caravan of motorcycles that demands attention as it passes. Last year the divisions managed two truckloads of donations and Greene is eager to beat that this year.

To help, KJLH 102.3 FM is doing a special remote broadcast of Guy Black's morning show at Division 18 on Dec. 10 from 6 to 10 a.m.

"We've formed a kind of partnership with 'House Full of Toys' and it's been going very well for a lot of years now," he said.

The bulk of donated toys will be delivered to the organization on Dec. 15, but donations are being accepted until Dec. 22.


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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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## Board Approves Gating at Rail Stations, OKs Plan to Boost Ridership 5% per Year

(Dec. 4, 2007) The Metro Board tackled two high-profile issues in November – one intended to increase revenues while reducing fare evasion and the other a plan to increase ridership on bus and rail lines.

The Board approved a proposal to erect barrier gates at Metro Rail stations as a means of curtailing fare evaders while cutting fare enforcement costs. It also adopted a comprehensive plan to increase ridership by 5 percent per year.

Other actions included funding for the Expo Line, the Alameda Corridor East and the SCRRA; a study of self-propelled rail cars called Diesel Multiple Units; and the sale of a small, unused parcel of Metro Red Line Division 20.

**Rail Station Gating.** Metro can expect to reduce fare evasion and lower the cost of fare enforcement when it implements a motion approved by the Board that calls for erecting 275 passenger barrier gates at Metro Rail stations.

A recent study found that Metro loses more than \$5.5 million annual to fare evasion with the current "honor system." Installing gates, combined with the use of TAP card validators at stations where gates wouldn't be suitable, would result in 84 percent of passengers being checked for fares, according to a recent study.

The analysis by Booz Allen estimates that erecting barrier gates on the subway and at "strategic" stations on the light-rail lines would cost about \$30 million, while annual maintenance would be about \$1 million.

Citing the gating analysis, the motion offered by directors Yvonne Burke and John Fasana said "evasion and fare recovery and savings from fare enforcement costs will significantly offset the cost of Metro Rail gating with a net decrease in annual operations expenditures."

According to the Booz Allen study, gating the rail stations would yield an

extra \$6.77 million in recovered fares and other savings.

Installing barrier gates also is expected to improve system safety when an Early Warning Explosive Detection System is retrofitted to the Universal Fare System and the TAP equipment.

The motion directs the CEO to return in 60 to 90 days for approval of a contract with the TAP equipment contractor to install fare gates and a modification of a contract with the TAP consultant for technical oversight of design review, testing and implementation oversight of the project.

The Burke/Fasana motion said, "While it is conceivable that an 'honor system' was effective to control crowds, ensure public safety and security plus successfully enforce fare payment 20 years ago, such a system is simply inapplicable in Los Angeles County today and in the future...."

**Metro Ridership Plan.** Metro is setting in motion a plan to increase ridership at a rate of 5 percent per year as a means of moving the agency toward becoming a world-class transportation system. The plan was adopted by the Board at its November meeting.

The plan sets three strategies for achieving the 5 percent goal: realigning service hours to improve system productivity; aggressively promoting services and targeting high ridership-return areas; and improving the exchange of information with customers and the public.

The three strategies comprise 19 operational or marketing elements that include expanding the Metro Rapid network beyond the planned 28 lines; only operating peak service with headways of less than 15 minutes; ensuring customers simple, frequent and easy connections; targeting discretionary riders; providing 24-hour trip planning; and improving operator and customer service training.

The estimated cost of the plan in FY 2009, which begins July 1, 2008, is \$2.75 million with the addition of six full-time employees. The staff will monitor transit lines to determine whether more field supervisors will be required. Additional funding also may be required to take advantage of technology innovations and cover other costs.

However, the plan "could potentially increase annual revenues by as much as \$7.9 million per year..." according to a staff report to the Board. A report is due in 90 days.

The staff report notes that Metro's rate of ridership growth since 2004 is three times the national average – 12 percent vs. 4 percent. During that period federal statistics show that many municipal transit operators experienced an average decrease in ridership of 5 percent.

Metro's largest ridership gains stem from a 50 percent growth in discretionary riders. Another key factor, says the staff report, was the introduction of the Day Pass, which "eliminated huge barriers to (riders) trying the system...."

The Communications, Operations and Countywide Planning and Development departments will work together to achieve the ridership goals.

**Expo, ACE, SCRRA Funding.** The Board approved a motion to provide an additional \$145 million for construction of Phase 1 of the Exposition



Line project. The funds increase the life of project budget from \$663.3 million to \$808.3 million.

According to a staff report, when the Phase 1 budget was developed in 2004, construction costs estimates were based on a 3.5 percent per year escalation of labor and materials. Actual costs have risen more per year than anticipated, impacting the current budget.

The Board also agreed to provide up to an additional \$112.3 million to the Alameda Corridor East (ACE) project to reflect Metro's 17 percent contribution to the project. The agency's total contribution will be \$274.3 million. Among other provisions of the motion, ACE must provide 83 percent in matching funds from other sources.

Finally, the Board approved programming \$14.6 million in Proposition C 10% funds to the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) for Metrolink's Eastern Maintenance Facility Project.

**Diesel Multiple Unit Study.** The Board authorized the CEO to award a \$484,682 contract to LTK Engineering Services to analyze the feasibility of operating diesel multiple units (DMU), self-propelled rail cars, on Metro-owned rights-of-way.

A staff report says the analysis will identify the possibilities, opportunities and issues associated with DMU or other self-propelled car technology. The contractor will evaluate DMU use on Metrolink's Ventura County, Antelope Valley and San Bernardino rail lines.

An amendment to the motion directs the CEO to include a clean-fuel alternative to the feasibility analysis contract. DMUs, operated by rail properties in the United States and around the world, can be powered by diesel mechanical, diesel electric or diesel hydraulic motors.

**Sale of Division 20 Parcel.** The Board approved a motion to declare a small, unused portion of Metro Red Line Division 20 property between 4th and 6th streets to be surplus and to authorize its sale.

The 18,731-square foot, eyebrow-shaped parcel, oriented generally north and south, lies on the southern tip of the Division 20 property near the LA River. The parcel is vacant and can't be accessed from a public street.

A report to the Board says this portion of the larger parcel is "not required for any future Metro transit projects and is recommended for disposition...."

Chalmers Santa Fe, LLC, has offered to purchase the land for \$596,000. Conditions of the sale require the new owner to grant Metro an emergency access easement from Santa Fe Avenue.



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**Metro to Enhance Service on 18 Bus Lines, Make Other Revisions**

- Changes go into effect Dec. 16 and include Metro Gold Line

By RICK JAGER  
(Dec. 6, 2007) Metro will enhance service on 18 bus lines and replace or revise service on four others when service changes go into effect Sunday, Dec. 16. Weekday service on the Metro Gold Line also will be revised.

The changes will include two new Metro Rapid Bus lines, additional Saturday bus service on four lines, route extensions on three lines and a new local/limited bus line serving downtown Los Angeles via Washington Boulevard.

Metro also plans to discontinue Metro Gold Line Express service and convert it to local service by increasing the frequency of trains to run every 7 to 8 minutes during peak periods. Weekday and weekend mid-day and afternoon trains will run every 12 minutes instead of every 15 minutes.

The service changes and enhancements are aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the system through better use of resources.

Metro Rapid Line 728 (Downtown LA-Century City via Olympic Blvd.) will operate along Olympic from Cesar Chavez and Vignes to Century City. Metro Rapid Line 770 (Los Angeles-El Monte via Garvey Ave. and Cesar Chavez Ave.) will operate in the San Gabriel Valley from the El Monte Bus Station into downtown Los Angeles. These two new Metro Rapid lines will operate Monday through Friday.

**20 Metro Rapid lines**

The addition of the two new lines brings the total to 20 Metro Rapid lines – including one operated by Santa Monica Big Blue Bus – that operate along major transit corridors. In 2008, Metro will have implemented a total of 28 Metro Rapid lines.

New weekend service will be added to Metro Rapid Line 780 (Pasadena-West Los Angeles) between Pasadena and Hollywood. Extra Saturday service will be added to Metro Bus Lines 18, 45 and 66.

In addition, Metro plans to operate a new local/limited bus line 35-335 (Downtown LA-Washington Blvd./Fairfax Ave.) along Washington Boulevard, replacing a portion of service previously provided by Line 68-368.

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Metro Chief Planning Officer Carol Inge opened the Western STAC conference by emphasizing the importance of providing transit commuters with a pleasant experience.



Photo by Bill Heard

## Transit Officials Look to Improve Bus Stops for Commuters

- Conference at Metro draws 50 officials from western states

By BILL HEARD, Editor

(Dec. 6, 2007) Some 50 western states transit officials involved with improving bus stops, bus shelters and other amenities for bus and rail commuters wrapped up a two-day conference at Metro, Tuesday.

Members of the Western Stop and Transit Amenities Council (Western STAC) heard presentations that included Metro's experience with Bus Rapid Transit and the agency's cell phone 511 real-time bus arrival information program.

The group also heard talks on the use of solar power at bus stops, Seattle's public art program at transit stops, trash collection at bus stops and how outdoor advertising can enhance bus stop amenities.

In her welcoming address, Metro Chief Planning Officer Carol Inge noted that the agency serves some 16,600 bus stops, of which some 3,000 feature shelters and 7,100 have benches. The agency is in the process of installing stops with 200 solar-powered lighting.

Although Metro doesn't own the bus stops, she said, it partners with local jurisdictions and, where local contractors don't provide amenities, Metro provides funds for shelters, lighting, trash receptacles and other things.

"It's a major challenge for us to coordinate and get these amenities in

place," Inge said. "It's important to the experience of the person riding the bus and can make it a more pleasant experience."

James Rojas, a Metro transportation planner and co-chairman of Western STAC, said Metro expects to fund a couple dozen projects such as transit malls, bus shelters and transit centers from the Call for Projects over the next five years.

**Keeping stops and shelters clean**

Keeping bus stops and shelters clean is a major undertaking. Through its Metro Clean program, Metro this year cleaned more than 55,000 bus stops and shelters, according to Facilities Maintenance Manager Pete Serdienis. A similar program operated by ShelterCLEAN, Inc. is responsible for 2,300 shelters in LA County, which it cleans two or more times a week.

Western STAC, started some years ago by seven transit systems in the Pacific Northwest, brings together transit officials and bus shelter product vendors from the western states for training programs and regional conferences. Membership now stands at about 100.

Chuck Beadle, Western STAC director, said the quality of bus stops has improved in recent years thanks to sponsorship by advertising companies that have built new shelters and financed other amenities.

"Throughout much of the West, bus shelter advertising had not been looked on favorably," he said. "It's now a dominate force in cities throughout the West."

Western STAC conferences are sponsored by Friendly Streets, a non-profit organization that promotes pedestrian-friendly and transit-friendly streets and neighborhoods.

"That gets down to the nuts and bolts of how to keep streets free of litter and graffiti and take care of our transit infrastructure, pedestrian crosswalks and safety issues," said Bill Allen, Friendly Streets executive director.

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Daniel Galindo, a master mechanic leader, works in one of his places of business—the engine compartment of a Metro Liner.



Photos by Ned Racine

## Metro Liners Challenge Mechanics with High-Tech Sophistication

- Laptops and schematics become primary tools, not wrenches
- [See also:](#) Are You Master Mechanic Material? Evaluations Set for February 2008

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 7, 2007) Sleek, modern and roomy, Metro's 60-foot articulated buses have been invaluable in moving passengers along the agency's most crowded lines. They have also presented quite a learning curve for the mechanics who keep them running.

Take Daniel Galindo and Rommel Vargas. Galindo, a master mechanic leader, and Vargas, a master mechanic, service the 60-foot buses —also known as Metro Liners—for Arthur Winston Division 5. No strangers to buses, Vargas began working on them in 1989; Galindo began in 1990. Even so, the 60-foot articulated buses surprised them.

"Even the engine itself is saturated with sensors and control valves," Galindo said. Vargas remembers that early in his experience with the





Rommel Vargas, a master mechanic, points out components of the Metro Liner's undercarriage. For Vargas, learning to service the Metro Liners centered on understanding the software controlling them.

buses, he traced an electrical problem and wondered how he would spot it in such a large vehicle.

If Vargas and Galindo do not wax poetic about the Metro Liners' passenger capacity and pleasing appearance, it is because their focus turns to those components—such as the computer aided braking system and the 24 fuel tanks—that keep the 76 60-foot articulated buses at Division 5 running.

### **Learning where things are**

"Like any new bus, it's just learning where things are, how they react and the symptoms," Vargas said, sounding like a bus physician. "If you get a certain kind of symptom, you kind of know where to look."

An onsite warranty mechanic helps them diagnose the symptoms, as do their contacts at NABI, the bus manufacturer, and Vehicle Technology staff. On the day we spoke, Cummins, the engine manufacturer, was onsite upgrading the articulated bus engines.

Surprisingly, not all of the bus divisions face identical challenges in maintaining the Metro Liner, according to Galindo. "It all depends on what type of streets they drive them on. We have the problem of wire shaking."

In the early days of operating Metro Liners, Vargas remembers Division 5 mechanics facing electrical problems because the data cable would ground out, giving the vehicle a nervous breakdown.

Hearing Vargas refer to a data cable, one wonders if the Metro Liner is a bus or a computer? As Galindo and Vargas found out, it's both.



Alex DiNuzzo, Division 5 maintenance manager praises master mechanics Daniel Galindo and Rommel Vargas for tackling the new technologies found in Division 5's 60-foot articulated buses.

### **Training meant understanding software**

For Vargas, learning to service the Metro Liners centered on understanding the software controlling them. "The whole bus is controlled by a computer. Everything is related."

"Our heavy tools, we hardly ever touch them," Vargas said. "It's all voltmeter, laptops. . . that is basically our troubleshooting. There's a lot of information in [the bus], but you have to know how to get it out."

What happens if the Metro Liner's computers don't play well together?

"Each computer sees a signal from a different computer," Vargas said. "So if it doesn't see the signal" the computer may nap. "Sometimes the first thing you do is grab a laptop and your schematics."

Galindo explains that "a certain logic has to be met." If it is not being met, he examines a vehicle's hard wiring and components to diagnose the problem.

Alex Di Nuzzo, Division 5 maintenance manager, began working on buses in 1980. He praises Galindo and Vargas for tackling the new technologies. "I know a lot of these guys read manuals on their own; they'll do research on their own."

### **Old buses easier to troubleshoot**

Di Nuzzo is amazed how different the older buses were. "It was easier to troubleshoot. In those days, if the electrical system was not at 100 percent, the bus would still run. But now if the electrical system is not charging correctly, it's going to create a lot more problems."

This month the 60-foot articulated buses will have been at Division 5 for two years. Galindo and Vargas have become Metro Liner experts, perhaps even more than the technicians who built them.

"We see [the buses] day in and day out," Vargas said. "They probably just

test them, but we see the results of what happens to them."

Neither Galindo nor Vargas complain about the technological wrinkles they continually face. "It's also our playground," Galindo insisted. "That's why we became mechanics, because we like tinkering around. So when we get new technology, it's like a new toy for us."

"The transmission is a new generation," Vargas said with excitement. "The engine is also something new. The new [articulated buses] are coming with a new [input/output] system. It's nice because we're staying on the cutting edge...."

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### Metro Passes Not Accepted as Fare Payment on LADOT Buses

(Dec. 7, 2007) Beginning Jan. 1, Metro passes no longer will be accepted as fare payment on LADOT Commuter Express or DASH buses.

Metro officials informed LADOT earlier this year that the agency no longer would reimburse the city for riders who use Metro passes to pay for their fares on LADOT buses, according to a City News Service story.

Riders who use LADOT buses can buy an LADOT bus pass, priced from \$40 to \$99, or they can purchase an EZ Transit Pass for \$70. EZ passes also may be used on Metro and many municipal transit lines.

Metro employee ID badges also are not accepted as fare payment on LADOT buses.



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## Are You Master Mechanic Material? Evaluations Set for February 2008

- [See also:](#) Metro Liners Challenge Mechanics with High-Tech Sophistication

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 7, 2007) Daniel Galindo and Rommel Vargas are master mechanics. You might be master mechanic material as well.

Maintenance Instruction will next perform master mechanic evaluations in February 2008. Steve Mullaly, senior equipment maintenance instructor at Operations Central Instruction, anticipates 40 to 50 mechanics will be invited to the evaluations.

Metro began its master mechanic classification in 2005. Since then, according to Mullaly, the Central Instruction—Maintenance staff has evaluated almost 100 mechanics. Eighteen of those mechanics passed the evaluation process.

Currently, 16 master mechanics work throughout the agency.

Before mechanics are invited to an evaluation, managers post a job bid and screen mechanics. Managers look for a history of good attendance and work record as well as skill.

Mechanics recommended for evaluation, according to Mullaly, are high level journey mechanics who have:

- Technical knowledge
- Diagnostic skills
- Troubleshooting skills
- Safety habits
- Documentation required to be evaluated

Mullaly notes that most of these skills are obtained by a mechanic A during his or her years at Metro.

Mullaly describes master mechanics as technical experts in repairing buses with superior knowledge of transit bus components, systems, and subsystems. They are expected to train other mechanics in troubleshooting and repair. Additionally, a master mechanic must be able to work with little or no supervision.




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## SCAG Gives Southern California Poor Marks in Key Areas

- Region has made progress, Snoble says, but still falls short on relieving traffic congestion

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 7, 2007) The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) released their annual "State of the Region" report for this year and gave Southern California less than favorable grades in key areas. Transportation received a "D-" rating for the year.

According to a report by City News Service, the low air quality, low income rates, and traffic problems that could cost more than \$500 billion over the next 30 years to correct prompted SCAG to give the region a "D" overall.

The transportation score was low, though the report acknowledged that gains had been made in public transit areas and increased carpooling. The grade prompted Metro CEO Roger Snoble to release a statement to explain why the region would receive such a poor rating.

"[The] report shows that while progress has been made in our efforts to improve mobility throughout the region, we still fall short on what is needed to relieve traffic congestion," he said. "This is primarily because there is just not enough money for transportation purposes."

"Clearly we know what works and how to solve much of the problem. The key ingredient we're missing is funding," he continued. "We know that public transit works, Metro Rapid Lines work, Metro Rail works, carpool lanes on freeways work, so the real issue is having the dollars to do the things that will ease congestion and improve our mobility."

"If we are to keep this region moving, we must secure additional transportation funding, change drivers' behavior and increase the use of public transit or face the nightmare of constant gridlock on our streets and highways," Snoble said.

## Possible solutions

SCAG's report made a budget crunch a clear problem to overcome, arguing that current budgets and plans include a \$132 billion shortfall for the region's transportation future. The report suggested measures like a future gas tax increase of 10 percent or the use of toll roads in the future to compensate for the difference.

Metro is currently looking into toll possibilities in the region and recently announced a plan to explore making HOV lanes on the 10, 210 and 110 freeways into "High Occupancy Toll" (HOT) lanes.

The lanes would create a graduated pay scale allowing all drivers access to what would be pay-per-use lanes. Single drivers would pay a premium

rate, cars with two occupants would pay a lesser rate, and cars with three would pay even less. Rates would also vary depending on levels of congestion and time-of-day.

Buses and vanpools would be exempted from paying to use the HOT lanes – hopefully enticing people to make more use of those forms of transportation. The idea is part of a “congestion pricing” strategy that’s aimed at reducing congestion region-wide and could create an opportunity for Metro to grab some additional federal funding.

The SCAG report also gave regional employment a “B,” air quality and housing “Ds,” and education a “D-.” Last year’s regional rating was a “D+.” The transportation rating increased for this year from an “F” last year to a “D-” in this year’s report.

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## Sheriff's Arson Unit Seeks Help Identifying Suspects in Green Line Fires

- Seeking two 'persons of interest' in elevator fires ruled arson

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 11, 2007) Transit Services Bureau (TSB) detectives are asking for help in locating two "persons of interest" who might have information regarding two fires in Metro Green Line elevators.



Sheriff's arson investigators are trying to identify two black males caught on surveillance cameras. They are suspected of starting fires at two Metro Green Line stations. If you have information about this case, please contact the Arson & Explosive Detail and Crime Impact Team, attention Detective M. Digby or deputies Smith or Mammolite, at 323-881-7500 or 323-563-5000. Digby can also be reached at [mdigby@lasd.org](mailto:mdigby@lasd.org).

On Thursday, Dec. 6, TSB deputies responded to an elevator fire at the Green Line's Harbor Freeway Station at 7:42 p.m. They responded to another elevator fire, at the Vermont Station, at 8:09 p.m.

Based on the suspicious natures of the fires, deputies notified the Sheriff's Department arson unit. An investigator from that unit determined on Dec. 7 that the fires were not caused by an electrical problem, were caused by arson and were started using the same method.

A review of station closed circuit television records showed a black male in his 20s wearing an oversized gray hooded sweatshirt at both stations near the time of the fires.

According to Luis Castillo, Rail Operations supervisor, the elevators have been repaired but await final Metro approval.

Sheriff's arson investigators are seeking information on two persons of interest:

> A black male, 18-25 years old, approximately six feet tall and between 195 and 215 pounds with medium complexion. On the video the person is wearing a Sean-Jean long-sleeve gray hoodie sweat shirt with blue stripes on the sleeves, white T-shirt, dark baggy pants, and basketball shoes with white shoe laces, black toe, and white sole

> A black male, 18 to 25 years old, approximately six feet tall and between 175 and 190 pounds with dark complexion. He was wearing a black baseball cap, extra large white T-shirt, dark baggy pants and black and white shoes with a white toe.



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Taking a moment for the camera before the start of Monday's emergency evacuation exercise in San Pedro are, left to right, TOS Michael Morris, Mechanic Larry Pradier, Operators Hugo Lopez, Kenneth Avery, Wisconsin Lim and Silvester Tapia, TOS Jeannette Mayo, Operator Shameka Herod and TOS Luis Alcantar.



## 'Poison Gas' Drill at Port of LA Evacuates Hundreds

- Metro Liners take prominent role in moving evacuees

By BILL HEARD

(Dec. 11, 2007) A cloud "poison gas" billowed up from tanker cars parked on a rail siding in San Pedro harbor, Monday morning. The gas endangered employees in nearby buildings – City Hall, the Port of Los Angeles headquarters and the LA Maritime Museum.

It was all a drill sponsored by the Port of Los Angeles, but local fire departments and law enforcement and other first responder agencies – a total of about 200 personnel – sprang into action.





Port of Los Angeles police officers and Sheriff's deputies accompanied the San Pedro City Hall employees during the evacuation exercise.

LAFD and Long Beach fire trucks rolled to the scene. Port police, LAPD officers and Sheriff's deputies, Coast Guard officers, emergency response teams and even Animal Control sped to the area.

Firefighters in haz mat "space suits" were deployed to deal with the gas leak. They set up a decontamination tank for those affected by the poisonous gas.



The LAFD haz mat team suits up for the emergency drill. According to the exercise scenario, poisonous gas escaped from tanker cars on an adjacent rail siding. The team was sent in to control the "leak."

Meanwhile, a team of transportation operations supervisors and Metro bus operators drawn from Arthur Winston Division 5 and Gateway Division 10 drove up in five brand new 60-foot Metro Liners.

Shepherded by motorcycle officers, they boarded some 300 evacuees at the affected buildings and transported them to safety at Ports of Call, upwind from the drifting gas cloud.

By a little past noon, firefighters and haz mat teams had the situation under control. It was time for a fresh fish lunch provided by the Port of LA.

"It went really smooth," said Steve Rank, assistant Operations Control

manager, who coordinated Metro's participation in the exercise. "It was a piece of cake. This will lead to many more exercises with law enforcement and Homeland Security."

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Willie Jordan, President of Fred Jordan Missions, welcomes the spirit of Christmas at the 12th Annual Metro Gift Giving Drive for needy families in Skid Row.



Photos by Luis Inzunza

## Metro delivers holiday cheer at 12<sup>th</sup> annual Fred Jordan Missions toy drive for Skid Row kids

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 11, 2007) Metro employees loaded more than a sleigh full of gifts and lots of cheer Monday morning onto a 60-foot Metro Liner. It was Metro's 12<sup>th</sup> annual gift-giving drive and the plaza full of presents was for the Fred Jordan Missions annual holiday toy drive and Christmas party for Skid Row Kids.

Following a brief program, the toys, food baskets, clothes and household goods such as blankets, were loaded into a Metro Local articulated bus for a trip to the Mission, located near 4th and Alameda in Los Angeles, where they will be distributed to needy families on Sunday, Dec. 16, at the annual Fred Jordan Missions Christmas party.

CEO Roger Snoble, wearing the traditional green sweatshirt with the Metro logo, proudly announced the collection of nearly 5,000 gifts for the city's needy families. "It is my honor to commend all of our employees from the bus side, the rail side, from all of Metro who so generously donated gifts to those in need during this holiday season."

Willie Jordan, president of the Fred Jordan Missions, was on hand with her two sons, Tom and Peter Jordan, both mission executives. She commended



Metro employees for demonstrating the true spirit of Christmas.

"I can't tell you what these gifts will mean to so many little children. Their mothers and fathers struggle to provide food on a day-to-day basis. And, there's just never any money left over for the extras. And this is the lovely season of the year when people of good will want to share. I want to thank you for being those very people for making a lot of kids happy," she said.

**The *real* Santa**

Snoble noted the tremendous effort put out by Santa Claus, who was busy handing out chocolate Hanukkah gelt to the visiting children from the Gateway Child Care Center.

"Just to let you know," said the CEO to the wide-eyed children festooned in paper antler caps and painted red noses, "he's the *real* Santa Claus."

Tashai Smith, serving her fourth year as lead coordinator of the Gift Giving Drive, took on the project after the retirement of Bessie Rush-Johnson, the founder and original coordinator of Metro's gift-giving partnership with the Fred Jordan Missions.

Rush-Johnson, who came to see the festive event, stood by as Smith gave the gift drive's very first promoter a nod of appreciation: "Bessie started this 12 years ago. And, we're still going strong!"

The beaming Rush-Johnson, pleased to see the effort alive and well, said the new team of coordinators led by Smith is succeeding beautifully. "They are doing a fabulous job," she said.

"We started planning in early October," said Smith, "which was the earliest we have started in the past three years." The coordinated effort included three open houses held simultaneously at the Gateway building, the Metro Support Services Center and the Rail Operations Center. "This was the first year that the Rail Operations Center and all four rail lines participated," she noted.

**The gift that keeps on giving**

"Watching to see all of the great toys and other items the employees bring in from bikes, skateboards, games, toy trucks, canned goods, backpacks, is the best part. And, every year, the quality gets better. The number of toys is great, but when you look at the quality of toys that come in – you truly see the generosity of the employees," said Smith.

As the Metro Choir sang Christmas carols and holiday tunes – *We bring you glad tidings and lots of good cheer – we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year!* – volunteers disguised as Metro elves in green sweatshirts helped Santa Claus load the waiting Metro Liner sleigh.



Santa Claus and 'head elf' CEO Roger Snoble.



The Metro Gift-Giving Drive's first promotor, Bessie Rush-Johnson, meets the Jordans, from left, son Tom, mother Willie and son Peter.



Lead coordinator Tashai Smith leads the program with a word of thanks to the generous gift givers of Metro.



Metro Choir collaborates with children from the Gateway Child Care Center for a round of holiday songs.

More Metro volunteers will help distribute the toys and food to the 12,000 to 15,000 families who will gather at the decked-out warehouse facility on Sunday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Willie Jordan’s closing remarks put it all in perspective. “And after all the trees are dead, after we’ve all eaten too much and after the decorations are put away and, maybe, after the toys are broken, these children will remember one thing. They’ll remember that somebody loves them this Christmas. Thank you for being those loving people to so many thousands of children. Today, we celebrate joy and I celebrate you.”

**It takes an entire transportation agency ...**



*Elves*



*Santa's Support Units*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tashai R. Smith, Lead Metro Toy Drive Coordinator</li><li>• Jim Montoya, MSSC and Division Coordinator</li><li>• Amador Silva, ROC and Rail Yards</li><li>• Jeanne Kinsel, Open House Coordinator</li><li>• Linda Perryman, Media Relations Coordinator</li><li>• Barbara Thomasson, Toy Collection Coordinator</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Administrative Services Strategic Business Unit</li><li>• Communications Strategic Business Unit</li><li>• Operations Special Events</li><li>• Metro Choir</li><li>• Gateway Child Care Center</li><li>• Employee volunteers</li></ul> |
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## Metro, Bicycle Coalition to Survey Rail Riders on Station Access

By JOSE UBALDO

(Dec. 12, 2007) Metro and the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition (LACBC) will survey passengers at a number of Metro Rail and Metrolink stations during December and January to identify ways to improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the stations.

The survey, in English and Spanish, is part of a comprehensive study of existing conditions and recommendations for improvements at the rail stations.

The results of the passenger interviews will be incorporated into a final report of recommendations which will be completed in the fall of 2008. These reports can be used by cities to apply for grant funds to improve access to the stations.

The stations selected for the survey, which include Wilmington/Imperial, Compton, Florence, Vernon, Van Nuys and Newhall, are in areas of high transit use. The study was funded by a Caltrans Environmental Justice Planning Grant.

Along with the survey, Metro and LACBC will be handing out bicycle tire patch kits, small reflectors, and information cards to encourage safe bicycling and walking.

Metro and LACBC also will conduct meetings early next year with members of the community and local organizations that are interested in bicycle and pedestrian access to rail stations.

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Managers, assistants and operators surround Guy Black (center, in the hat) and a box of toys donated to the cause, Monday, as Black and his crew broadcast his morning radio program, which is found on 102.3 FM from 6 to 10 a.m.



Photos by Ned Racine

## Local Radio Station Makes Visit to Division 18 for Toy Drive

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 12, 2007) In an atmosphere that seemed more like a dance party instead of a working Metro bus division, at least 500 toys were collected in support of "Stevie Wonder's House Full of Toys" charity toy drive, Monday, when Carson Division 18 hosted a remote broadcast of the Guy Black Morning Radio Show.

The promotional visit from 102.3 FM KJLH was arranged by Division 18 Bus Operator Jimi Greene, who's been a major force in the charity since he first heard about the toy drive 11 years ago.

But Jimi "G" – as he's known around the division – doesn't want any credit. He just wants people to bring in toys that will help brighten Christmas for some of the underprivileged children in the Los Angeles area.

"Most of our operators participate in the drives," he said. "Our own kids don't have everything that they want, but they have more than most – and they have more than the kids who are going to get these toys."

Greene thanked the radio station, all the managers who supported the event and the employees at Arthur Winston Division 5 and Division 18 – who he said were the real reason the drive had been successful this year.



Guy Black and his team broadcast their morning show from Division 18, Monday, as part of an effort to get more donations for "Stevie Wonder's House Full of Toys" charity toy drive.

**Dancing and laughing**

Operators on break mobbed the remote radio show – in a good way – shouting, laughing and dancing along with Guy Black and his morning team. Black broadcast his whole show in Division 18's train room from 6 to 10 a.m.

He even held on-air giveaways for the Guy Black Christmas Party. Bus operators Angela Hardiman and Tracey Alexander won special passes to the event and are on the "Blacklist" with access to celebrity attendees.

Fun aside, Black was on point all morning long, working to get listeners to bring toys to Division 18 for the drive. And they did: the radio show inspired listeners and operators from the division to donate six large boxes of toys the short time they were on the air.

"We're here to help Metro and they've been here to help us," Black said. "These guys have helped us raise money and toys for so long that we decided to try to give them a treat as far as our radio show goes, by coming out here and doing the remote. People have been having a great time."

Early in the show, Black and his staff allowed division members to go on air and "shout out" to their families and friends. The atmosphere was playful all morning – 20 employees even broke into the "Cupid Shuffle" at one point, which is a sort of line dance that accompanies a hip-hop single of the same name.



Arthur Winston Division Transportation Manager Curley Little, South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey, Carson Division 18 Transportation Manager Cindy Karpman, and Division 18 Bus Operator Jimi “G” – who organized the event – were all on hand to lend assistance to the Guy Black Morning Show and the “Stevie Wonder’s House Full of Toys” charity toy drive.

**And in the end...**

Metro South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey was on hand for the event, closing out the event with an impromptu on-air “thank you” to KJLH, the Guy Black show and especially the operators from divisions 5 and 18.

The event was deemed a success by all involved, and at the end, Jimi “G” was grateful for the effort that elicited hundreds more toys for “Stevie Wonder’s House Full of Toys.”

“I’m really satisfied with what’s happened here today. It’s been really nice,” he said. “I just hope we can keep it going – keep the spirit alive. The season’s not over yet.”



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Attending the farewell party for the UTU's Victor Baffoni are, from left, James Woodson of Manpower Systems and Support; Richard Hunt, San Fernando Valley Sector general manager; Fidel Mendoza, president, Local 1608; Ed Del Genio, DEO Labor Relations; Aaron Montgomery, newly elected chairman, UTU Local 1608; UTU General Chairman James Williams, Victor Baffoni; Maria Reynolds, Division 8 Manager; and Carolyn Flowers, Chief Operating Officer.



## Division 8 Says Goodbye to UTU Local 1608 Chairman Victor Baffoni

- The Metro veteran will take a new position with UTU International

(Dec. 12, 2007) Employees at West Valley Division 8 hosted a farewell party, Dec. 7, for one of their alumni – UTU Local 1608 Chairman Victor Baffoni, who is leaving Los Angeles for a new position with the UTU International organization.

Baffoni, 59, who also serves as vice general chairman of the UTU general committee, consisting of five locals, recently was elected vice president and director of the international union's bus department. He begins his new job in January.

Attending the farewell party in addition to his wife, Theresa, were UTU General Chairman James Williams, Metro Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers, San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt, Division 8 Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds and others.

Baffoni joined Metro's predecessor agency as a bus operator in 1974, and was assigned to Division 8 for many years. He became a full-time UTU employee in February 1997 and has served as chairman of Local 1608 since 1995.

In a September interview, he told myMetro.net, "I'll be coming out to LA. This is my home property and a lot of our membership is here. When there's an issue and my assistance is needed, I'll be here."





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The Division 3 Transportation Building will be reconstructed inside and out, adding life to the nearly 30-year-old structure. Presently, the building is U-shaped, with a two-story side, a single story in the middle and another two-story side. But the two-story sides aren't connected to each other directly – the planned upgrade will fix that. The employee parking structure will also be lengthened to create more spaces in the jammed parking lot.



TRANSPORTATION BUILDING • WESTSIDE VIEW

Illustrations courtesy of Maintenance Design Group

## Division 3 to Get a Much-Deserved Facelift and Expansion

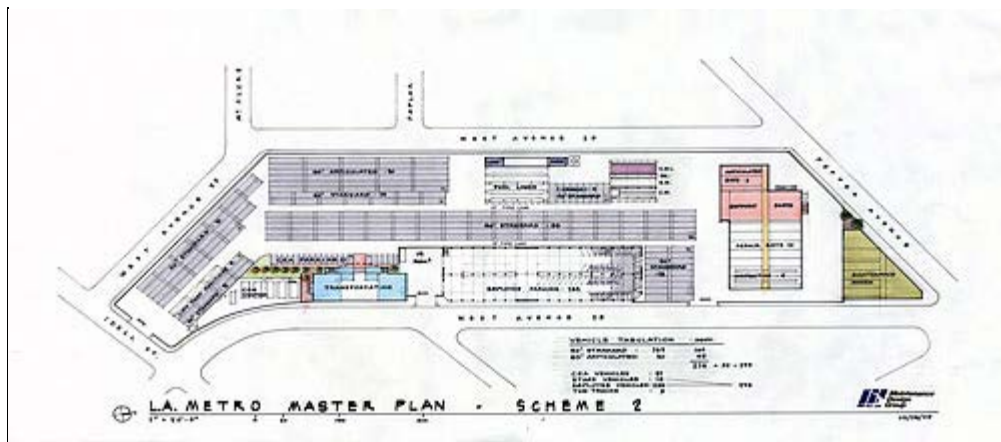
By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 13, 2007) Kicking off a three-year, \$19.8 million project, North Los Angeles Division 3 has started construction on a much-needed reconstruction project that will add space to maintenance and transportation areas.

The redesign will make use of space that's currently being used as outdoor storage and turn it into a Maintenance Annex that will store all that equipment and create a proper tire shop.

It will also add space to the existing Maintenance Building, give the Transportation Building a facelift and expand the employee parking structure.

"You're totally hemmed in by development. You've got the park on one side, mobile homes, apartments, residential homes on the others," said Tim Lindholm, director of Capital Projects for Facilities Operations. "It's a great location, but it's constrained, so there's no way we could ever expand it."



This artist's rendering of the planned changes at North Los Angeles Division 3 show how much will be added over the next three years. The green area on the right is the new Maintenance Annex, which will eliminate the need for outdoor storage and create a proper space for the tire shop. The pink area is the extension of the existing Maintenance Building, which will expand the parts shop and add two new bays outfitted for working on articulated buses. The blue area at the bottom is the Transportation Building, which is getting a facelift.

Metro knew more space needed to be created, but was unsure how to proceed. After hiring Maintenance Design Group to consult on the problem, the agency soon found itself with a plan to fix the crowded division.

"We've got a fleet of 220 buses out there now and it was only designed to have 200 on it," Lindholm said. "But because we're so over-capacity across the system, we just have no choice right now other than to pack them in."

The reconstruction will happen in four phases. The Maintenance Annex will be the first, followed by an expansion of the Maintenance Building to create a more sizeable parts shop. The Transportation Building will get its new façade in the third phase and the employee parking expansion will be the last.

"It's going to be a pretty good deal. We needed it: the division is stuffed," said newly promoted Division 3 Maintenance Manager Cliff Thorne. "For the next three years it's going to be constant change around here."

The construction should be finished sometime in 2010. Financing for the project was in large part grant money with the rest coming from the general capital program.

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Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor answers questions online during 'live chat' on metro.net.



Photo: Gayle Anderson

## Second Online Chat Explores Metro's Sustainability Efforts

- Board Chair Pam O'Connor hosts digital town meeting

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 13, 2007) Revolving around a theme of reducing Los Angeles County's carbon footprint, Metro Chair Pam O'Connor held a second online chat yesterday with Metro riders and transit advocates.

The hour-long internet exchange began at noon and allowed Gateway staff members to monitor the digital town meeting. Questions and answers from the chat are available in the [chat room archives](#) at metro.net.

Questions ranged from what buses O'Connor uses—Big Blue Bus, Metro Wilshire Rapid and DASH—to why Metro still operates some diesel buses—Venice Division 6 has no space for a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling facility.

O'Connor answered 25 questions, some of which had been posted on Metro's chat site before the event. She explained the work of the Board's Ad Hoc Sustainability and Climate Change Committee and defined "sustainability" as "the need to ensure that we meet our current needs—environmental, economic and social—without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same."

A number of questions touched on the possibility of Metro's receiving more funding for expansion of the Metro System. O'Connor also explained Metro

Orange Line’s right-of-way on Chandler Boulevard and whether the subway will go to a 24-hour schedule.

Several times the Board Chair asked participants to call her “Pam” rather than “Ms. O’Connor.” And while the online conversation touched on immediate concerns and long-range plans, she also found time to share her conflicted loyalties when USC plays Illinois in the Rose Bowl. (O’Connor grew up in Illinois.)

O’Connor will host the next chat at noon, Wednesday, Jan. 23.



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## Sen. Barack Obama Makes Campaign Stop at Union Station



Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama made a campaign stop at Union Station, Wednesday, for a fundraiser. A crowd quickly gathered in the station's courtyard where the Illinois senator, accompanied by aides and Secret Service agents, spoke informally with local supporters for a few moments. Photos by David Monks. (12/13/07)



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The policy that eschews gifts from outside vendors and contractors is valid throughout the year but never more so than during the holiday season, when glad tidings from contractors, vendors and business associates attempt to make their way down Metro's chimney. Above, Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman and Ethics Officer Rebecca Gilden remind us that these gifts make the holidays a little brighter for someone in need: Gifts ranging in value from \$10 to about \$150 or more are bundled up and distributed to various charities each week.

## The Gifts That Keep on Giving

**Ethics Department Rebundles Gifts from Outside Vendors and Contractors for Local A-rated Human Services Charities.**

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 15, 2007) Chief Ethics Officer Karen Gorman encourages any employee who receives a gift from an outside company to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest by turning it over to the Ethics Office.

"It's very easy to want to be gracious and not see any harm in a gift and just accept it," says Gorman, but in the long run, "It's easier to say thanks, but no thanks."

Under the law a gift valued at \$10 or more from a Metro contractor and those doing business with a public agency such as Metro must be

returned or donated to a charity. In such instances, the Ethics Department can collect the gifts from employees and donate the items to charity, and provide the employees with records of the transaction.

"We do this as a service to our employees to make it easier for them to comply with the law, to do something nice for a person in need, and help maintain Metro's credibility with the public," said Gorman.

This program should not be confused with a solicitation of gifts from employees, which is not permitted, or contributions to charities affiliated with any employee, said Gorman.

Recently, Metro's gift policy was cited in a San Jose Mercury News article by Judy Nadler, a director of the Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, as the model gift program in the nation that makes it easy for employees to comply to state law.

"When employees learn how happy these gifts makes someone in need, it's a very rewarding experience worth far more than the gift itself," said Gorman.

The gift policy is in effect the whole year round.

A case in point: An employee received four tickets to the Dodger game last summer and dutifully turned them in to the Ethics Office, recalls Ethics Officer Rebecca Gilden. "We turned them over to a non-profit foster care center who gave them to children who had never been to a major league baseball game. The kids were absolutely thrilled."

The [Employee Code of Conduct](#), which can be accessed on the Ethics & Lobbyist web pages from the "Select a Department" drop-down menu on the myMetro.net homepage, includes a description of the gift rules in Section 5-15-130.

The purpose of the rule on gifts, according to the Code, is "to assure the public that public employees are not influenced to show favoritism to a contractor based on receiving gifts or for being rewarded for doing his or her job in a way that will benefit the giver of the gift."



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## 50 Million More Transit Trips Taken Nationwide in Third Quarter

- Nationwide, light rail leads with 8.9 percent rise
- Go to: [APTA's complete report](#)

Metro Bus ridership declined slightly in October, but rail ridership was up from previous year

(Dec. 18, 2007) The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) reports that Americans took nearly 50 million more trips on public transportation during the third quarter of 2007, compared to the third quarter of 2006—a 2 percent increase in ridership.

Against a background of high gasoline prices and efforts in Congress to raise the minimum gas mileage standard for automobiles sold in the United States, the third quarter of 2007 saw light rail use grow 8.9 percent, the highest percentage of ridership growth among all modes of transportation.

Commuter rail had the second highest growth rate of all modes, rising 5.4 percent. Heavy rail ridership grew nationally by 4.0 percent.

Bus ridership throughout the country showed a slight increase of 0.1 percent, although that rise varied by community size. In communities with a population below 100,000, bus ridership grew 7.5 percent.

Paratransit ridership increased by 4.5 percent for the third quarter of 2007, while trolley bus ridership increased by 1.5 percent. Other types of public transportation increased by 6.7 percent.

In Los Angeles, Metro Bus ridership in October declined 7 percent from October 2006, although ridership on the Orange Line was up 18.5 percent. Ridership on all four Metro Rail lines increased in October from the previous year: Red Line, 7.7 percent; Blue Line, 3 percent; Green Line, 10 percent; and Metro Gold Line, 7 percent.

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Bill Heard rides off into the sunset Dec. 21, ending 15 years as a trusted voice for Metro's people and goals.



Photo by Ned Racine

## Thanks for the Memories: Looking Back on 15 Years at Metro

By BILL HEARD, Editor

Friday, Dec. 21, will be my last day to work at Metro. After 15 years, I'm retiring.

I can look back over those years and remember my days in Media Relations, then in Employee Communications and for the past eight and a half years as Intranet editor. It's been one of the most interesting, challenging and satisfying jobs I've ever held.

I feel as if I've been a witness to history as Metro has moved from one triumph or difficulty after another – much of it reflected in some 6,000 Intranet articles we published over the years.

I've been involved in almost all the grand openings for our rail lines and helped introduce our new high-tech compo and articulated buses. But, I've also stood on Hollywood Boulevard during construction of the Metro Red Line and tried to explain to the media what we were going to do about a gaping hole in the street.

Best of all, as editor of *myMetro.net* news, I've had the opportunity to meet hundreds of employees from every corner of the agency.

Men and women who help plan transportation projects and who construct

our rail and bus facilities. People who operate, maintain and clean our buses and trains, and who manage our bus and rail divisions. And those who keep the agency going with their administrative, purchasing and personnel management skills.

### **Hard work and talents**

I continue to be impressed with the good will, dedication, hard work and talents of Metro employees. Over the years, we've showcased scores of such people on the Intranet.

Some set an example for customer service or safe practices. Some have found ways to improve work processes or have invented new tools to use on the job. Many of those we wrote about are remarkable musicians, writers and entertainers.

Others volunteer their weekends to represent Metro at community events. Still others give back to their communities through their churches, local organizations or through charity efforts they started on their own.

I've enjoyed bringing these stories to you because they show that, no matter what their jobs may be, they're all valuable members of the Metro team.

I want to thank those who have helped me as we built *my.Metro.net* into what I hope has been a valuable employee news and information resource. The Intranet will continue in good hands with editor Ned Racine, with my indispensable associate Gayle Anderson, whose page designs and other outstanding contributions from the beginning have enhanced our daily postings, and with reporter Jimmy Stroup.

For the past three years, I also have been editor of a dozen issues of *Metro Quarterly*, the magazine we distribute to our stakeholders. My greatest appreciation to Yvonne Price, whose editorial insights have helped steer the publication and whose production management skills have kept *MQ* on track. Also to her associate, Todd Mitsuata, and to the designers in the Metro Design Studio.

In the Navy, when we said goodbye to someone, we had a special farewell – "Fair winds and following seas." And that's what I wish for Metro and for all of you.

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## Changes in Thrift, Compensation Plans to Benefit Employees in 2008

(Dec. 18, 2007) Federal legislation passed in 2001 continues to provide employees with an opportunity for tax relief with changes that will take effect for 2008.

Metro's Accounting Department provides the information about the Economic growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act and some reminders to keep employees up-to-date about the thrift and deferred compensation plans, as well as changes in Social Security taxes.

### Increase in Annual Elective Deferral Limits:

Here is an opportunity for employees who are enrolled in Metro's 401(k) Thrift Plan and/or 457 Deferred Compensation Plan to sock away even more funds towards retirement.

#### 401(k) Thrift Plan:

As of January 1, 2008, you will be allowed to defer up to \$15,500 annually from your salary. A special provision in the law allows an additional \$5,000 if you are a "Baby Boomer" (age 50 or greater by December 31, 2008).

#### 457 Deferred Compensation Plan:

As of January 1, 2008, you will be allowed to defer up to \$15,500 annually from your salary. A special provision in the law also allows an additional \$5,000 if you are a "Baby Boomer."

If you are eligible for retirement within three years, you are eligible for the pre-retirement "catch-up" provision in the 457 Plan. Your total deferral may increase to \$31,000 effective January 1, 2008. "Catch-Up Provision" packets are available in the Pension and Benefits Office.

### Both Plans:

You may contribute to both the 401(k) Thrift Plan and the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan for a total deferral of \$31,000. If you are age 50 or greater by December 31, 2008, you may defer up to a total of \$41,000 in both plans.

If you are in "catch-up" and less than 50 years of age, you may defer a total of \$46,500. That is \$31,000 to the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan plus \$15,500 to 401(k). If you are in "catch-up" and age 50 or older, you may defer a total of \$51,500. That is \$31,000 to 457 plus \$20,500 to 401(k).

**Note:** Contributions are deducted each pay period (26 per year).

To be effective with the first pay check in 2008 (payday, Jan. 4, 2008), changes to the 401(k) and 457 plans must be submitted to Benefits no later than 3 p.m., Dec. 28, 2007.



Please contact the Pension and Benefits Office at 922-7170 for enrollment and/or contribution changes forms. Investment information is available from Erick Spencer at ICMA-RC (866) 339-8795, Orlando Delgado at ICMA-RC (866) 266-7312 or from ICMA-RC Investor Services (800) 669-7400.

Both the 2008 Payroll Calendar and Holiday Schedule are available on the Accounting and Human Resources Intranet sites.

**Social Security and SDI Taxes:**

As of January 1, 2008, the wage base for Social Security will increase from \$97,500 to \$102,000. This means that some employees will experience an increase in Social Security taxes even though the tax rate percentage will remain the same. At a tax rate of 6.2%, this is an increase of \$279 in the maximum amount of Social Security tax that can be withheld from an employee's paycheck. Deductions for Medicare remain unchanged.

The wage base for State Disability Insurance (SDI) will increase to \$86,698, and the tax rate will increase from .06% to .08%. This is an increase of \$193.75 in the maximum amount of SDI that can be withheld in 2008.

**W-2s:**

Metro is in the process of finalizing the Form W-2 Wage and Tax Statements. They will be mailed to employees' homes no later than January 31, 2008.

Please keep your 2007 FORM W-2 in a safe place. If you need a replacement copy of your FORM W-2, you must complete a replacement form. You can obtain the form from Forms Online on the Metro Intranet or contact Payroll at (213) 922-6825 and a form will be sent to you. *Once the form has been received by Payroll, it may take up to a five working days to process.*

Metro will offer again this year a service (available January 31, 2008) for those employees who use or are interested in using TurboTax 2007 to prepare their Federal and state income tax returns. This means that you can download your W-2 information directly into TurboTax, and voilà - a good part of your tax filing is completed for you. The web site will be included on your 2007 Form W-2. Additional information can be obtained at [www.probusiness.com/turbotax](http://www.probusiness.com/turbotax).

**Reminders:**

**Address Change**

Please verify your address shown on your pay stub. If you have a change in your mailing address, please notify your Department/Division Manager so that the change can be updated in the Human Resources system before noon December 26, 2007. If your Social Security number is not correct, please contact Gwen Keene in Human Resources immediately (213) 922-7148.

Also, please verify the name on your Social Security card against the name on your pay stub. The IRS may impose a \$50 penalty to the employee and employer for every W-2 if the employee's name does not match that shown on the Social Security card. If there is a difference, please contact Gwen Keene in Human Resources immediately.

**Form W-4, Employee's Withholding Allowance**

Now is the time to check your Federal and State tax withholding allowances. Did you marry or divorce, gain or lose a dependent, or have major changes in your family income? If you answered "yes", you may need to file a new 2008 Form W-4.

If you are currently claiming "exempt" from tax withholding, you must submit a new Form W-4 by Feb. 15, 2008 if you wish to retain your exempt status. If a new form is not filed and submitted to the Human Resources Department (M.S. 99-14-3), withholding for Federal and State taxes will automatically default to "Single" with zero (0) withholding allowances.

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Volunteers donate their lunch hour to help assemble gift bags for "Operation Holiday Stocking," a program of the St. Vincent Senior Citizen Nutrition Program, popularly known as "Meals on Wheels." On the assembly line are, clockwise, from left, Lynn Ong, Tess Fitzpatrick, Renita Anderson, Barbara Olsen-Bonk, Debbie Bishop, Fe Alcid-Little, Tommye Williams and Helen Cosner. Click [here](#) for complete list of volunteers.



## Heart-warmers: Volunteers Assemble Holiday Gift Bags for Homebound Seniors

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Dec. 18, 2007) A number of Metro staff donated their lunch hour on Dec. 11, cheerfully stuffing 100 gift bags for Operation Holiday Stocking, a holiday gift program for elderly clients served by the St. Vincent "Meals on Wheels" program.

"The holiday season is the loneliest time of the year for the city's poorest seniors, many of whom are homebound without the means or capability to get around," said Tess Fitzpatrick, a senior administrative analyst at Metro San Fernando Valley service sector offices.

"We've put together 100 gift bags for the seniors, and those who are otherwise confined to their living quarters. The items included new socks, toothbrushes, tree ornaments, soap, combs, Q-tips, candies, shampoo, lotion, Christmas mugs and several other useful items," said Fitzpatrick.

Fitzpatrick knows first-hand the joys a hot meal and warm greetings can bring to the forgotten elders. She and her sister, Fe Alcid-Little, are volunteer runners for the St. Vincent "Meals on Wheels" program. She and other Metro volunteers have been collecting useful items for the goodie bags that will be delivered to seniors along with their holiday meal on

Christmas Day.

"Without the volunteers, it would not be possible," said Fitzpatrick. "They were all coordinating it, buying things that we needed for the bags and sorting the donations. They sacrificed their lunch hours and after-work hours to put it together."

Photos: Gayle Anderson



Sister Alice Marie Quinn, St. Vincent Senior Citizen Nutrition Center program director, takes stock of 100 gift bags collected by volunteers for delivery to homebound seniors on Christmas Day. From left, volunteers Cristina Coronado, Jerry Catuira and Debbie Bishop,

This is the fourth year that Lynn Ong, a senior secretary in ITS, has volunteered to assemble the gift bags. "I love the thought of making people happy, especially this time of the year," she said, noting she also enjoys getting to know co-workers during the festive assembly. "It's the time of year when people need to feel warm in their hearts," she said.

Ong coordinated the delivery to the St. Vincent's Senior Citizen Nutrition Center on Friday, helping to load the items into volunteers' cars. The items were delivered by volunteers Debbie Bishop, Jerry Catuira and Cristina Coronado.

St. Vincent Meals on Wheels is privately funded, serving an average of 2,500 meals a day, including some 1,500 meals delivered directly to each home.

- \* Volunteers 2007**
- \*Evelina del Castillo, \*Renita Anderson, \*Mila Asuncion, \*Barbara Olsen-Bonk, \*Ralph Carapia, \*Alan Tang, \*Richard Christie, \*Diana Estrada, \*Barbara Burns, \*Liz Campos, \*Lynn Ong, \*Maggie Chen, \*Nancy Untalan, \*Susan Cariasa-Ginsberg, \*Avis Brame, \*Nela De Castro, \*Juliet Glindro, \*Edina Pagadora, \*Tommye Williams , \*Debbie Bishop, \*Fe Alcid-Little, \*Tess Fitzpatrick, \*Helen Cosner, \*Carol Silver, \*Anne Adelman, \*Fred Polscheit, \*Frank Shapiro, \*Elizabeth Bennett, \*Cory Uy, \*Beverly Davenport-Waldon, \*Jerry Catuira, \*Cristina Coronado, \*Juli Fowler, \*Mary Nugent, \*Regina Lim




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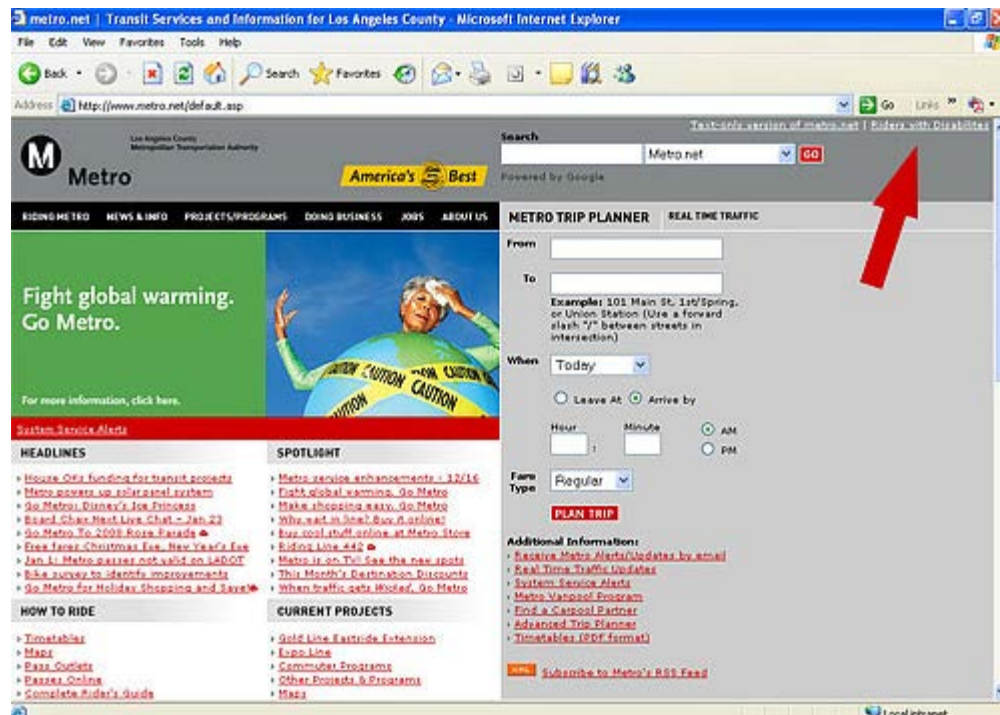
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Metro.net has recently added a feature that allows riders with visual disabilities to access the site more easily. The "Riders with Disabilities" link in the upper right hand corner takes viewers to a text-only page which is easier to read by programs that translate pages for those with impaired viewing capabilities.



## Metro.net Gets Easier for Visitors with Disabilities

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 18, 2007) A new link on Metro.net allows those with visual impairments to more readily access information.

Located in the upper right hand corner of the page, the "Riders with Disabilities" link redirects disabled users to a text-only page that's easier for "screen reader" programs like *Window Eyes* or *JAWS* to translate. The programs read the text aloud to the user.

"It's easy to navigate the web if you aren't disabled," said Mary Reyna, an attorney with the County Counsel's office. "You point your mouse, click on the sites you want to explore further and ignore the rest."

"But for those of us who are old, arthritic, have Parkinson's disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis [Lou Gehrig's disease], cerebral palsy or Multiple Sclerosis and don't have good motor control necessary to point the mouse, it can be a frustrating to insurmountable barrier unless the Web is made accessible," she said.

The "Riders with Disabilities" page is a stripped-down version of Metro.net with larger text, a straight-forward layout and highly visible links to common features like Metro Trip Planner. Trip Planner itself has been formatted for easier use when accessed from this page.



The agency worked with its Accessibility Advisory Committee for several months to make the page as accessible as possible.

"With this alternative means of information Metro offers an opportunity for all people to interact with us, to share information and to contribute," Reyna said.

Metro's Web site, [www.Metro.net](http://www.Metro.net), receives more than 50 million hits each month. The "Riders with Disabilities" page is an additional outlet the agency has created to assist Metro's customers; the Customer Information phone lines continue to provide audio assistance to riders with disabilities.

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## Seven Call Center Agents Achieve Performance Awards



CEO Roger Snoble, here with Communications Chief Matt Raymond, Communications Manager Alonzo Williams, and Director of Customer Relations, Gail Harvey, honors seven Customer Service Agents: Maria Alamilla, Kong-Song Liao (Abby), Meryiel Massey, Yecenia Serrano, Jesse De La Torre, Narcisco Alonzo and Michael Yanuaria – who distinguished themselves in the performance of their job.



< Customer Information Agent Vickie Brown was ready when CEO Snoble came by with the cookie tray: She gave him a present of holiday goodies first, then helped herself to the festive array of cookies offered by Matt Raymond.

In the midst of the annual Matt Raymond Holiday Cookie Run to Metro Information Call Center on Tuesday, CEO Roger Snoble and Communications Chief Raymond paused for a seemingly impromptu meeting in the center of the second floor room to issue performance awards to seven outstanding Customer Information agents who distinguished themselves in the performance of their jobs, reports Gail Harvey, Director, Customer Relations.

CEO Snoble thanked all the agents for the great job they had done in reducing the wait time, increasing the number of calls taken and reducing absenteeism. "I know you're doing a good job because I haven't gotten any complaints," he said, "and I appreciate the service you are providing our customers."


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## Federal Approval Moves Wilshire Bus-Only Lane Closer to Reality

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 19, 2007) The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has approved the Bus-Only Lane on Wilshire Boulevard in the City of Los Angeles to advance into the development phase under the Very Small Starts program.

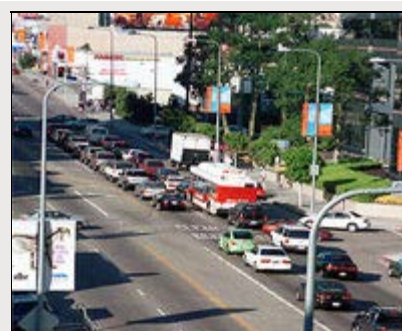
While the approval doesn't mean the project is fully funded, it does allow Metro to work with the City of Los Angeles to create a project management plan and begin drafting engineering and technical strategies for fully implementing the lane.

The FTA approval also makes it possible for the Wilshire Boulevard project to be included in the President's fiscal year 2009 budget, which is submitted to Congress in February. If it's approved by Congress, construction on Wilshire would need to begin sometime between October 2008 and September 2009.

An initial one-mile segment of a peak period Bus-Only lane went into effect in March 2004 as a pilot program in West Los Angeles between Federal Avenue and Centinela. That pilot project was ultimately made permanent by the City of Los Angeles. It was later cut back by two blocks and, earlier this year, removed completely until the larger program can be implemented.

By restricting parking in the curb lane during peak periods, that lane can be used for Metro and other buses. Automobiles were also allowed if they were turning right at the next intersection or coming in or out of a mid-block driveway. Project managers say that the Wilshire bus lane in West Los Angeles improved travel times during peak hours by 6 percent in the morning and 14 percent in the afternoon and evening. Transit patrons also experienced improved travel reliability.

The new Bus-Only Lane, when implemented, will run on Wilshire in the City of Los Angeles from just west of downtown Los Angeles to the Santa Monica City line – nearly nine miles. Staff is working separately with the County of Los Angeles and the Cities of Beverly Hills and Santa Monica on improvements to portions of Wilshire Boulevard within their jurisdictions.



A busy afternoon along Wilshire Boulevard. The Federal approval to advance the Bus-Only Lane project into the development phase should help to expedite Metro service and ease congestion along the nine miles from downtown to Santa Monica.

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Fresh from morning donuts, Mike Cannell (center) general manager for Rail Operations, joins David Wilson (left), train operator, and David Reyes, train operator, at the Gold Line's Sierra Madre Villa station. Moments later Cannell rode the Gold Line to Gateway.



Photo by Ned Racine

## Mike Cannell Brings Varied Rail Experience to Metro Rail Operations

- Post-9-11 assignment anticipated terror attack in Chicago subway

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 19, 2007) Mike Cannell says his new job as general manager for Rail Operations "is the most challenging job I've every had." That's quite a statement given the variety of Cannell's transit experience.

One of those jobs had national significance. After the September 2001 terror attacks, the Federal Transit Administration chose Cannell to lead three teams composed of bomb experts, chemical engineers, and intelligent experts. Their task was to gauge the vulnerability of United States transit infrastructure to further attacks.

As a sign of his task's importance, Cannell reported directly to the deputy administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, where many of his recommendations were immediately implemented. Some remain classified.

Cannell's teams divided the United States into three geographic sections with Cannell visiting a third of all the sites. "They were fascinating assessments. I got to go down in the tunnels—way down deep—where no one ever goes."

Although Cannell found vulnerabilities in the Boston and New York

systems, he was stunned by what happened following his inspection of the Chicago subway system.

**Mysterious Rooms**

In the Chicago subway, "I noticed that between stations you have these long tunnels underground; and there are doors everywhere," he recalls. "There were rooms that no one had inventoried."

Cannell wondered if those rooms could be used to attack transit riders. In his exit interview in March 2002, he proposed the following scenario: a terrorist leaves a chemical agent in an open room and uses the suction of a passing train to spread the poison through Chicago's system.

Three days later an off-duty police officer saw a man and a teenager emerging from one of those underground rooms. In that room, a man known as "Doctor Chaos" had released a poison, hoping the momentum of the train would spread it.

"On Monday, I go back to do my assessment for [Chicago] Metro," he said, "and all the federal agents who had heard my [scenario] say, 'How the hell did you know?' "

The Chicago experience affected Cannell deeply. "It's helped me to see things differently in two regards: what are our challenges against terrorists and how vulnerable we are."

Cannell, who took his new position in early August, began working on rail at the age of 26, starting as a train agent for the San Diego Arizona Eastern Railway. After working on the San Diego Trolley from 1981 to 1988—where he eventually designed computer programs for train scheduling, timekeeping, and fare collection.

For the St. Louis light rail construction authority he managed engineering for train signals, traction power substations and the Overhead Contact System, as well as rail vehicle procurement. When the system was complete, he was picked to run it.

**Helped Build Salt Lake City Light Rail**

He also worked on a variety of engineering and management tasks for the Salt Lake City light rail system, where he worked with Rick Thorpe, now chief executive officer of the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority.

Immediately before taking his new position, Cannell was responsible for managing the environmental clearance process of the Gold Line Foothill Extension project.

No stranger to Metro, Cannell helped create the first activation plan for the Blue and Red lines in 1988. From 2001 to 2005, he worked with the Metro Gold Line Construction Authority (Phase I), where he was responsible for taking the 13.5-mile project from construction to operations.

Now he has filled about every role in transit: planning, engineering, construction, operations.

"People have used me to audit the efficiency of operations [of transit systems] around the world: Atlanta, BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit], even Los Angeles." His overseas work included a light rail project in London.

Within weeks of his arrival in Rail Operations, Cannell faced a mile of collapsed catenary wire and two Gold Line collisions on Marmion Way.



"When you have all these things happen, you see things quicker because they expose the weaknesses of a system," he said. "In a sense that is a good thing as it allows for fast corrections."

**Nursing an Aging Rail System**

Cannell sees his biggest challenges as nursing an aging rail system, developing practices to maintain that system and gearing up for completion of two new light rail lines over the next few years. Many Metro rail vehicles, he points out, have a suggested service life of 15 years. They now average 17. "Most all the cars need mid-life rehabilitation."

To address the rail car "mid-life crisis," Cannell wants maintenance to be less reactive. He has hired a consultant to estimate what rehabilitating the Blue Line and Red Line cars would require.

Carol, his wife of 34 years calls from their home in Orlando, Florida—where she is caring for her mother—and advises Cannell to tackle one thing at a time. He insists that in his position that is not always possible.

In the midst of his competing priorities, Cannell takes considerable hope from the growth in Metro's rail ridership since he helped activate the Blue Line in 1988. He recalls the line originally carried 19,000 riders daily. Now Metro Rail carries 75,000 riders each day.

Cannell has already improved service by adding greater frequency of service and more reliable schedules on Metro Gold Line. He hopes to soon have a body and paint shop facility for the stainless steel train cars which will carry riders on the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension.

Why is a professional who could easily retire living in a one-bedroom apartment in Azusa, far from his wife and two grown children, worrying about whether the Wayside Systems Facilities teams are properly supported.

"Just doing the right thing—pure and simple," Cannell says. "I'm not here trying to make a name for myself."

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Photo by Samuel Saucedo



Gary Eller, equipment maintenance supervisor; Rachel Rodriguez, Walking Program coordinator, and John Freeman, equipment maintenance supervisor, advertise the Central Maintenance Shops Walking Program. Eller and Freeman have been diagnosed with Type II diabetes.

## A Healthy Step Forward Goes a Mile at Central Maintenance Shops

By AMY HUGHES

(Dec. 20, 2007) Something is afoot at the Central Maintenance Shops (CMS), and it happens to be a healthy step forward.

On Oct. 12, at a Safety Recognition luncheon, CMS introduced a Walking Program, unveiling a one-mile walking course laid out by Rachel Rodriguez, Walking Program coordinator, on the 28-acre grounds of the Metro Support Services Center.

Employees participating in the walking program during their breaks are awarded prizes based on miles walked. Currently 12 walkers participate in the program, although other employees have inquired and requested forms to record their mileage. Rodriguez expects more staff members to participate as more people walk and earn prizes.

Rodriguez, an administrative intern, encourages CMS employees to participate and introduces the benefits of daily exercise, noting that walking promotes weight loss, reduces stress and the risk of heart disease, while increasing stamina throughout the day.

Assisting Rodriguez with starting the program were Gary Eller and John Freeman, equipment maintenance supervisors. Eller and Freeman have a personal state in the program: both have been diagnosed with Type II diabetes.

"The walking program seemed like a great way to follow the doctor's

orders," Freeman said. "Each time that I walk at lunch I am getting fresh air, a break from the demands of work and the opportunity to catch-up with co-workers who also walk."

Henry Ho, senior safety specialist, had the original Walking Program idea. Because of her strong interest in health and wellness, Rodriquez volunteered to coordinate the program.

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The solar array cost \$4.18 million to install but should pay for itself by 2018. It consists of 1,600 panels and represents the largest solar project attempted thus far by Metro.



Photos: Juan Ocampo

## Carson Division 18 Unveils \$4.18 Million Solar Panel Array

- 1,600 panels will pay for themselves by 2018.

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 20, 2007) A slight drizzle and cloudy skies couldn't dampen the spirits of Metro staff who attended the unveiling of Carson Division 18's new solar panel array, Wednesday – a 1,600 panel installation that will save more than \$200,000 in annual energy costs.

Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor spoke first at the ceremony, hailing the "green" project as another of the agency's active measures to consider the environment when deciding and working on projects.





The “green” ribbon cutting ceremony at the unveiling of Carson Division 18’s solar panel array was meant to symbolize the energy efficiency the technology will provide. From left: Hal Snyder, Gas Company vice president; Pam O’Connor, Metro Board chair; Carolyn Flowers, Metro chief operations officer; Dana Coffey, South Bay Sector general manager; and John Mahoney, Chevron Energy Solutions vice president.

“Metro’s now committed to constructing all new facilities and projects – including new transit corridors – using energy efficiency and conservation strategies,” O’Connor said.

“As someone who’s personally concerned about the environment, I think it’s really exciting and a significant contribution of this solar array to the facility here and to the region.”

Metro Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers lauded the project as being financially savvy. Part of the money to pay for the \$4.18-million project was generated through rebates earned with other solar panel projects in the San Fernando Valley at Divisions 8 and 15.

The energy savings could represent a 20 percent reduction in the amount of energy Metro has to purchase to keep Division 18 running each year. It’s projected to save the agency \$17,000 in energy costs monthly.



Rebates from solar projects at West Valley Division 8 and East Valley Division 15 helped augment the cost of this installation. Any rebates that are earned from this project will be reinvested into future solar and energy-efficient projects, said Carolyn Flowers, Chief Operations Officer.



**Partnering with local utilities**

Flowers said the agency is hoping to generate another \$1.2 million in rebates to finance more environmentally-friendly projects.

"We are currently investing in a three-year plan to install solar panels at all feasible transit facilities that we own and operate," she said. "Partnerships with local utilities – like the Gas Company – will be important to our plan."

Rebates for the project were earned from the Gas Company, and Metro partnered with Chevron's Energy Solution's division for the construction of the solar array.

The building portion of the project completed a full month early, which Chevron's John Mahoney pointed out was an extra month of energy savings.

"The global demand for energy is outpacing global supply. The world literally needs every molecule of energy it can get to meet the demand," he said. "This solar project will help supply electricity in the L.A. Basin in a way that minimizes the impact on the environment."

**Power on a cloudy day**

But even on a cloudy day, the panels will be generating power. The array was producing 30 kilowatts per hour during the ribbon-cutting ceremony, despite the rainy weather.

"Our goal here is clear. Metro seeks not to just operate the best transportation system in the country," Flowers said. "We've committed to being a leader among transit agencies nationwide in implementing energy efficiency and sustainable projects."



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SGV Division 9 Maintenance Throws Holiday Party



Hppy Holidays from San Gabriel Valley Division 9

SGV Division 9 Maintenance Spreads the Holiday Spirit

(Dec. 20, 2009) San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Maintenance hosted a holiday party for its employees, Wednesday, in honor of Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanzaa and every other celebratory festival for the season.

Food included turkey, chicken, ham, mashed potatoes, corn and cake – in true holiday fashion – and a raffle. Division Transportation Manager John McBryan thanked the maintainers for their solid work and dedication from over the past year.

Each attendees received a stocking – a “Safety Sock” – that wished each employee a safe, happy holiday and included Hershey’s Kisses and other holiday goodies.

-- from Jimmy Stroup

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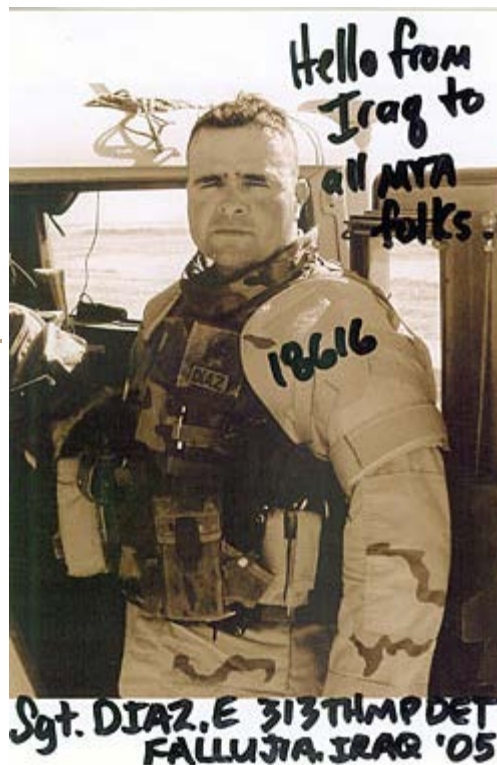
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## Metro Employees Deployed with the Military Remembered, Too

>Metro Train Operator Erick Diaz is one of 18 employees currently deployed to military operations. Diaz, 42, joined Metro in June 1991 as a bus operator. In September, 2004, he was called to active duty with a military police unit, assigned to serve in Fallujah, Iraq, a town located about 40 miles northwest of Baghdad. He returned to Metro at the end of his two-year deployment in October 2006. He was re-deployed in April 2007.



(Dec. 20, 2007) In this season of family and festivities, Metro remembers its employees who have been called by their reserve or guard units to serve in the U.S. military.

The following soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are spending their holiday season abroad or away from their families. Metro is grateful for their sacrifice and wishes them a Happy Holidays.

- **Martin Abeyta**, 47, Senior Airman, Air Force, Metro Mechanic "A"
- **James Arend**, 53, Staff Sergeant, Army, Metro Train Operator
- **Rufus Cayetano**, 43, Lieutenant, Navy, Metro Transportation Planning Manager
- **Guillermo Celaya**, 43, Seaman Apprentice, Navy, Metro Bus Operator
- **Erick Diaz**, 42, Sergeant, Army, Metro Train Operator
- **Jeffrey Joseph**, 45, Sergeant, Army, Metro Bus Operator
- **Philip Kelly**, 25, Sergeant, Army, Metro Service Attendant
- **Donald Lee**, 57, Staff Sergeant, Army, Metro Bus Operator
- **Lorenzo Nathaniel**, 42, Sergeant First Class, Army, Metro Train Operator

- **Bartolome Paez**, 48, Sergeant, Army, Metro CCTV Observer
- **Rosendo Reyes**, 48, First Sergeant, Army, Metro Train Operator
- **Miguel Rivera**, 43, Storekeeper Second Class, Navy, Metro Bus Operator
- **Thomas Salazar**, 46, Staff Sergeant, Army, Metro Senior Service Attendant
- **Marco Salgado**, 42, Sergeant, Army, Metro Bus Operator
- **Kevin Smith**, 34, Sergeant First Class, Army, Metro Service Attendant
- **Curtis Shelby**, 39, Sergeant First Class, Army, Metro Bus Operator
- **James Sherman**, 42, Major, Army, Metro Bus Operator
- **Leroy Willie**, 31, Senior Airman, Air Force, Metro Bus Operator

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## Holiday Spirit Breaks Out at Metro



Doncosta Seawell, senior contract administrator, directs the Metro Choir in a presentation of holiday music beneath the Plaza Level Christmas tree.



Bobby Hupp, looking tropical in a floral shirt, and Vance Gilles, facilities maintenance supervisor, are ready to consume their Gateway Employee Holiday Breakfasts. Below, King St. Julian, son of Customer Information Agent Angelic Shaw, has a special seat in Metro Café.



- Santa and Metro Choir join the festivities

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 21, 2007) Traditional Metro events filled the Metro Café and the Plaza Level of the Gateway Building.

In addition to the annual Gateway Employee Holiday Breakfast, which flooded Metro Café with Holiday smiles, the Metro Choir sang under the Plaza Level Christmas tree.

Bathed in Los Angeles sunlight, Santa sat eager to pose for photos with his special Metro friends. Santa's older fans seemed particularly eager to pose with him.

- Photos by Ned Racine





Jovito Baldovino, administrative analyst, and his wife Tess seem more interested in a photo with Santa than do sons Vinii and Vito.

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## Division 10 Program Uses Football Team Concepts to Reduce Accidents

- Year-long program began Dec. 19

By NED RACINE

(Dec. 27, 2007). The Denver Broncos and Philadelphia Eagles are out of the National Football League playoff race, but their Metro versions will be competing to reduce injuries and chargeable accidents.

Introduced Dec. 19 at the Gateway Division 10, the *"In the Zone"* program offers rewards each 90 days for bus operators who meet criteria designed to reduce avoidable accidents and Workers' Compensation claims.

Mark Maloney, General Manager, Westside/Central Sector, joined Karl Downs, Division 10 transportation manager, and Margo Ross, assistant transportation manager, to introduce the program. The kickoff included an entertainment program and catered lunch.

As part of the kickoff, gifts were given to operators whose names were pulled. During the program prizes rise in value as it proceeds, with later prizes including movie passes, gift cards and T-shirts.

To make the reduction of accidents and injuries a group effort, operators complete for prizes not only as individuals but also as team members. Teams score points for reductions in injuries and accidents.

Operators are either members of the Denver Broncos or Philadelphia Eagles; although at the kickoff, Downs and Ross displayed considerable loyalty to the professional football team in Dallas, Texas.

The Metro versions of the Broncos or Eagles will earn celebrations, also rising in value, ending with a breakfast in the third quarter of 2008, to be prepared by Division 10 management. There will also be surprise awards.

Ross and the Division 10 Communications Committee developed the goals, parameters and rewards of the *In the Zone* program. "I believe at [Metro] we have a lot of programs come and go; we have a program; you hear about it for 30 days, and then it's gone," Ross said. "And



Margo Ross, Division 10 assistant transportation manager, explains the goals of *In the Zone* at the program's kickoff.

everyone gets hyped up about it; and we don't know what the parameters are or what the rewards are."

Photos by Ned Racine



Lisa Arrendondo, UTU vice local chairperson, channels Tina Turner during the entertainment section of the *In the Zone* kickoff at Division 10.

Also supporting *In the Zone* are Lisa Arrendondo, Gilbert Camacho and Ernie Martinez and of the United Transportation Union.

Ross believes *In the Zone* will succeed because of its philosophy. "I think it's different from other programs in the fact that we're rewarding our people for doing good things, which we don't have a history of doing."

Ross counts on the coaching and peer pressure from team members to increase some operators' investment in reducing accidents and injuries. Each team includes a transit operations supervisor.

Ross believes the division has some success to build on. "We've had over 400 [of 462] operators in the last 90 days who were not involved in chargeable accidents," she stressed. "For our hub miles, I think that is quite an accomplishment."

She also points to the number of stops, road conditions and traffic the Division 10 operators work with. "We carry a tremendous people load," she said. "We have a lot riding on our operators."

Ross said she will know if the program is successful if the number of chargeable accidents and Workers' Compensation claims drop.

The *In the Zone* program idea grew from the ideas of several members of the division's Communications Committee. Ross is its chair. "I always had it in the back of my mind that we should reward the good," she said.

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At 29,029 feet high, Mt. Everest is the tallest mountain on earth. Trekker Jay Fuhrman captured this shot while on his trip to Kalapatthar, which is the base camp that most travelers use on their way to the summit.



Photographs courtesy of Jay Fuhrman

## Transportation Planning Manager Travels Far From Home

By JIMMY STROUP

(Dec. 27, 2007) Jay Fuhrman's cubicle on the Gateway Building's 23rd floor sits near a window that faces north toward the San Gabriel Mountains.

Two months ago, when he looked north, Fuhrman saw Mt. Everest in Nepal, deep in heart of the Himalayas.

Fuhrman has worked at Metro for 17 years. As a child, his father gave him a book on the Himalayas, and the peaks of the 800-mile range – which routinely top 25,000 feet – fascinated him. He developed a love for hiking and climbing and has traveled extensively, usually incorporating a visit to a mountain wherever he goes.

But until recently, he'd never been to the peak of peaks – the "Roof of the World." The majestic Himalayas are the Holy Grail of mountaineering; the one place where none are disappointed – or so Fuhrman hoped before he left to go see them.

He was not disappointed.

"The mountains in the Sierras are great mountains, but they aren't the tallest or the most spectacular," said the transportation planning manager. "And after seeing them, I wanted to see the biggest mountains in the world."





Fuhrman, seen here relaxing in his tent before a day of hiking, traveled to Nepal to see the "Roof of the World." His fascination with mountains has been something he's cultivated since childhood.

### A long-standing quest

The desire to see Everest was one that had brewed inside Fuhrman since his exposure to mountains as a child. He'd hiked mountains all across the United States, in Ecuador, Mexico and Canada, but he'd never topped 14,000 feet. His quest to see Everest was also a quest to scale a higher elevation.

After some soul-searching and his family's approval, Fuhrman decided to book a spot on what's known as a "camping trek" to a place called Kalapatthar, near the base of Mt. Everest. Kalapatthar sits at 18,000 feet – a full 4,000 feet higher than he'd ever been before.

"There were traveler's warnings from the State Department that said to be wary of Nepal, and that was enough to put me off," he said. "Some people I knew said, 'I just went there and it was fabulous,' and some other people I knew said it was a funky place that's sort of messed up

and that I shouldn't go alone. So I was uncertain."

Nepal has been involved in a minor civil war for the last 10 years: traditional kingdom government supporters versus a Maoist insurrection. The possible danger had chilled Fuhrman's inclination to go, but his desire won out in the end.

"Eventually, I just said, 'to hell with it,' and made my mind up to go and put down a deposit, which really locked me in to going."

Fuhrman got his shots, got an OK from the doctor, did a few hikes to prepare and found himself winging his way to Nepal. The journey was a full 24 hours of flying, first to Bangkok and then to Katmandu, where he met up with his traveling group – which was mostly comprised of British citizens.

"There were 16 customers plus two guides, plus a whole support crew. A sidar – who's sort of the head sherpa, businessman who keeps everything going – four sherpa boys and a head cook," he said. "Then there were about nine kitchen staff who prepared all the food. Finally there were four or five yak herders."

### Soaking it in

Fuhrman's signed 14-day trek included food and lodging all the way to Kalapatthar. Yaks carried all the equipment, the sherpas set up the tents, and the cooks prepared all the food – leaving the traveler to enjoy the sights without distraction.

It also reduces the likelihood of sickness, since the cooks bring along their own food, carefully preparing





The travel company Fuhrman used on his trip to Mt. Everest included laborers to carry gear, cook food and set up camp when they stopped each evening. Everything the group needed was carried by man or by yak; there are no cars on the trail to Mt. Everest.

fresh food for the guests. All in all, the ratio of travelers to support staff was about one-to-one, which Fuhrman found comforting.

"I never got sick. It was wonderful. I felt good the whole time. Never once had altitude issues," he said. "I never even got a headache."

The flight from Katmandu to the low-lying areas surrounding Everest is one that Fuhrman called "an experience." After 24 straight hours on an airliner, the group took a 16-seat plane to a little airfield cut out of a Himalayan mountain.

"It's a very short runway," he said. "If you come in too low, you hit the mountain and if you're too high...you die."

"When you're leaving, you have to bank very sharply because there's this big mountain in front of you and

if you don't, you die," he said.

### **Only a 'walk'**

Still, the flights in and out were the only treacherous parts of Fuhrman's trip. The group took nine days to hike to their destination – which Fuhrman called a "walk."

"It was challenging because it was at 15,000 feet, but we took it slow and it was no big deal," he said.

The weather was another barrier Fuhrman shrugged off. Fall is the most common trekking season at Everest, with temperatures ranging from the upper 50s in the lower areas to the 20s at night in higher elevations.

"It was cold at night, sure, but it wasn't that bad. I'm a fair-weather Californian, but I had my North Face down jacket and a terrific sleeping bag," he said. "I wasn't cold."

Conditions in the villages on the climb up surprised him, though. Tourism in the area has created a higher standard of living in the Everest trek areas than in other parts of Nepal. So though the country is third world and poverty-stricken, there were Internet connections and televisions and restaurants and bakeries.

"There's more infrastructure than you'd think," Fuhrman explained. "It's just that there aren't any motorized vehicles and roads because of the topography."

### **No disappointment**

Everest and Nepal were all Fuhrman hoped they would be. He said the

rumors of Nepal being dangerous were completely overstated.

"Immediately when I go there, I realized that whatever I'd heard about insurrection and Maoists was just bunk," he said. "The people there were generally Hindu and Buddhist and very peaceful, generous, humble and unassuming. We might look at them as simple, but that's their way of life. They're very connected to the land and the animals."

He did notice that there were few Americans. Fuhrman chalked it up to a combination of the extremely long journey just to get to Nepal, and a little bit of Sept. 11 worry over leaving the U.S. for countries very near Afghanistan, Pakistan and the like.

"I have no regrets. It was everything I expected it to be. It was a great trip. I feel more ambitious now. I'd be willing to do more next time because of this trip."

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## Metro Celebrates the Holidays All Over

(Dec. 27, 2007) Metro employees celebrated the season in all sorts of ways this year. These are photos from the Fred Jordan Mission toy drive give away, Dec. 16, and the West Hollywood Division 7 holiday party, Dec. 14.



**Fred Jordan Mission 64th Annual Christmas Party on Skid Row>** The big event of the day was a Disney show featuring Mickey and Minnie Mouse. Disney helped sponsor the event and put on three shows that day for the kids and their families. Fred Jordan volunteers said donations were a little shallow nearing the give-away day, but that last-minute assistance made the day a success.





Metro employees showed up early, Dec. 16, to help give away toys to needy kids for the holiday season. The agency also used the opportunity to give away Metro goodies and keep up promotion of rail and bus safety. Everyone who got a Metro treat got a transit message such as, "Go Metro and use Metro Bus and Metro Rail," or "Don't run after the bus or train."



Toys were divided up into individual gift bags. Each child got one toy, plus a bag of food that contained a frozen chicken, some rice and beans, some canned goods and a juice box. Metro volunteers worked both the toy give-away lines and the agency goody table.



**West Hollywood Division 7** threw a holiday party for employees and family, complete with a huge, multi-course dinner, gifts for children and a visit from Santa – who cruised in on his articulated 60-foot sleigh, er, bus. At left, Bus Operator Leonard Santos sits in the traditional position for requesting gifts from Santa at Division 7. It just goes to show that no one is too old to ask Santa for a special present. Hopefully, Santos was good this year....



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Postcard from L.A.: Go Metro to 2008 Tournament of Roses® Festivities



Photos by Juan Ocampo

## Metro Gold Line's Big Day

### Special Commemorative 'Rose' Train Leads the Way to the 119th Tournament of Roses Parade and 94th Rose Bowl Game

By DAVE SOTERO

The Tournament of Roses Queen and Court joined Metro officials Dec. 21 at Union Station to dedicate a special Metro Gold Line train as the 2008 "Tournament Train."

The commemorative train features colorful exterior artwork spanning two entire rail cars. Looking like a giant bouquet of roses as it travels between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena, the Tournament Train is promoting Metro Gold Line service to tens of thousands of L.A. residents during its 10-day run leading up to New Year's Day.



Photographer Peter Watkinson captures the Tournament Train as it glides through South Pasadena at the Mission Station. Designed by the Metro Design Studio, the exterior ads that line both sides of the Tournament Train measure 35" tall. The longer panels are 180"; the shorter panels are 115" wide.

"The Tournament of Roses parade and game is the biggest venue for Metro Gold Line service all year, with upwards of 60,000 train boardings on a single day," said Board Chair Pam O'Connor. "Metro is meeting that demand this year with quality, all-night train service and free rides from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. that day to ensure the public enjoys these wonderful New Year's festivities."

Metro provides easy transport into Pasadena via the Metro Gold Line, which, along with all Metro Rail lines, will operate all night long to transport parade goers. As an added incentive, Metro will be offering free train rides from 9 p.m. on New Year's Eve to 2 a.m. the following morning. Patrons attending parade festivities after 2 a.m. will need to purchase fare.

"The Metro Gold Line is now in its fifth official year of Parade service, and we're quite proud to now be an important part of the Tournament tradition," said CEO Roger Snoble.

The 119th Rose Parade will take place Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2008, beginning at 8 a.m. Train lines will operate all night Monday at 20 minute headways to facilitate travel throughout L.A. County.

To accommodate a greater number of Metro Gold Line riders to and from Pasadena, Metro will run additional trains on the Metro Gold Line beginning at 5 a.m. until approximately 9 p.m.

Parade goers can access any of four Pasadena train stations: Memorial Park and Del Mar stations are about two blocks from the Parade route; the Lake and Allen stations are approximately four blocks from the Parade route.

"Unless you are fortunate enough to ride on a float, Metro is definitely the preferred method of transportation for getting to the Rose Parade."

--2008 Rose Queen Dusty Gibbs



Royal Court for the 2008 Tournament of Roses joins Metro officials at Union Station to dedicate the special 'Tournament Train' of the Metro Gold Line.

Parking is available at several Metro Gold Line Stations, including Sierra Madre Villa (950 free spaces), Del Mar (600 paid spaces), Fillmore (131 free spaces), Mission (122 spaces), Heritage Square/Arroyo (145 free spaces), Lincoln Heights/Cypress Park (91 free spaces) and Union Station (2,000+ paid spaces).

The public may view the floats after the Parade at Post Parade: A Showcase of Floats via Metro Rail. Shuttles will be provided from the Sierra Madre Villa Metro Gold Line Station on January 1 to the Post Parade venue beginning at 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Shuttle service from the Post Parade venue back to the Sierra Madre Villa Station will continue to 5:30pm. On January 2 shuttle service from the station to the Post Parade venue begins at 7 a.m. for seniors and disabled, 9 a.m. for general public and ends at 3 p.m. Service from the Post Parade venue to Sierra Madre Villa Station will continue until 5:30 p.m. Shuttle buses will pick up passengers every five to ten minutes from the station during these times. The cost to ride is a regular fare plus a transfer.

The 94th Rose Bowl Game between the University of Illinois Fighting Illini and the University of Southern California Trojans will kick off at 2:10 p.m. Sports fans attending this game can also utilize the Metro Gold Line and exit at Memorial Park Station. They can then walk a short distance down Holly Street to the Parsons parking lot at 100 West Walnut Street to catch a free game shuttle starting at 10 a.m.


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## CEO UpDate

### Clear Successes in 2007; Outlook for Project Funding from State Grows Dark



CEO Roger Snoble

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE

I would like to begin my column by thanking Bill Heard for his 15 years at Metro and, specifically, for his help in creating my monthly column. Bill was a driving force behind the 35 uninterrupted columns we did together, and I would like to wish him a happy retirement. I'll miss working with him.

I would like to look back and look forward in this last column of the year, beginning with some of our successes in 2007. I'm very proud that ridership has held together well, even with the fare changes. It appears ridership was less affected by our new fares as some predicted. Rail ridership particularly has been doing extremely well.

I'm also proud of our efforts to continue improving the quality of our bus and rail services, and I believe this improvement is one reason our ridership remained strong. Although we did not have any big openings this year, we continued to improve our facilities. We added a lot more of the big articulated buses, and we have them running on Rapid and local service.

We're working away on the Eastside Extension and that's going very well. It has about another 18 months before completion. The project's safety record has been absolutely outstanding. I'm proud of all the people working on it, including our contractors.

Also, for the first time since I've been CEO, we had a pretty decent budget year. We have enough money and most everything in the budget is positive. We are starting to see some softening of the sales tax. That's certainly out there. Still, for meeting our budget projections we'll be in good shape. We won't have the usual spillover funds from the sales tax, but we're in a little better shape than other local governments going into the 2008 budget year.

Another thing that went well this year was the Call for Projects, especially considering we had to postpone the last two. The Call for Projects involves Metro providing a lot of money going to a lot of places—primarily money for cities and county projects. A lot of those projects allow us to have the Rapid buses and the bus transponders. These smaller projects, such as adding turning lanes and synchronizing lights, can make a big change in the ability of traffic to move. And, of



course, the better the traffic moves the better the buses move.

It's not always easy handing out money. It starts fights at times. So the fact that our people really know how to manage the Call for Projects will improve things a lot.

Next year will present challenges in state funding. What's really a shame about that is the state came up with the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) seven or eight years ago to jump start transit projects in urban areas. And we've used that money very well. We've used it on the Orange Line, on the Gold Line Eastside Extension, on the Rapid lines and part of the Expo Line. If you look back at our big successes, that money had a lot to do with those projects. The problem now is those funds are no longer around, and other state funding has evaporated too, given shape of the state budget.

In fact, we'll be lucky to have any money at all from the state in 2008. They're going to do everything they can do to take transportation money and divert it to the state deficit. Sacramento did it this budget year; it's going to be worse for them next year, so I don't think there is hope for us getting anything out of the state—even though they were supposed to make changes last time. How many times have we voted to protect those moneys and the state still finds ways to go get those moneys?

Basically, if we don't find a new revenue source, we're not going to be build any more projects, after what we have going now; that even includes the extension of Expo. Or if we do get any of those built, they are going to be way out in the future because we have to wait for the money to accumulate. So it's critical for us to find some new way to fund these projects. They are needed. The situation's not going to get better by itself.

There was one good thing that happened in this budget year. Speaker Nunez got a better split of the State Transportation Improvement Program money we do get. Certainly over the long haul that will help us.

So we'll have challenges next year, but we've shown we can meet challenges.

I wish all of you a happy and successful 2008.

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December 28, 2007