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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.