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## Metro to Increase Employee Subsidy for Monthly Transit Passes

(Jan. 3, 2008) Beginning January 1, some Metro employees will pay \$5 less toward the cost of the monthly transit passes they use to commute to work each day.

That's because the agency will increase its contributions to the transit subsidy program from \$110 to \$115 per participating employee. More than 1,300 Metro employees currently participate in the agency's transit subsidy program.

For those whose transit passes cost more than \$115, the amount deducted from their paychecks will drop by \$5, effective with the Dec. 21 paychecks. An employee who purchases a \$150 Metrolink pass for example, will have \$35 deducted from his or her paycheck, while Metro will pay \$115.

The payroll adjustment will take effect automatically, without the need to submit a change form. Employees whose transit passes cost less than \$115 will not be affected by the adjustment in the subsidy.

Metro recently rewrote its policies to automatically link the transit subsidy to the maximum allowed under the federal IRS code, according to Stefan Chasnov, deputy executive officer of Human Resources.

Of the 1,315 employees enrolled in the Metro Rideshare Program, more than half – 53 percent – ride Metrolink, 328 vanpool, 116 use a Metrocard, while others ride municipal transit buses, purchase the EZ Pass or have a city subsidy.

Employees can enroll in Metro's Rideshare Program by calling the Rideshare Hotline at 922-4863 or by completing the Transportation Subsidy Application found on myMetro.net under Human Resources forms.

Enrollments must be completed by the fifth weekday of a month to be effective the following month, says Employee Transportation Coordinator Terree Holman. "We try to make it user-friendly."



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## ‘Greeting’ the New Year: Customer Information Tests the New ‘Metro Greeters’ Program Over the Holiday Season

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 3, 2008) The Metro Customer Information Department used the busy holiday season to test a pilot program that had Customer Service agents at Union Station pointing passengers in the right direction: “Metro Greeters.”

For almost three weeks, five “Metro Greeters” were placed at Union Station and the 7th/Metro subway station – during peak hours – answering questions and directing customers to their destinations.

“The idea initially was to assist passengers with their questions,” said Alonzo Williams, Customer Relations Communications manager. “We wanted to be proactive, though. We didn’t want the greeters just waiting for people to approach them. We wanted to direct people.”

The greeters, who usually answer questions on the phones in the Call Center, answered the same questions in person.

“The goal is to, hopefully, help more people who are still disoriented,” Williams said. “People are out there traveling and asking as they go. Yes, we would like to reduce the number of calls coming into the Call Center, but really it’s to provide hands-on customer service to people in the field, who might not call.”

Williams said the greeters helped more than 5,000 customers during the three weeks, and hopes the program can continue to help people in the future – if it can get funded.

The holidays are the “slow season” in the Call Center, so the Customer Information Department was able to spare the agents to work as “Metro Greeters.” Williams indicated that if the program were to continue, he’d like to see more stations with the greeters, such as the LAX Transit Center, the Hollywood/Highland station and the Wilshire/Vermont station.

He also said that in the future, the greeters could be used in conjunction with other types of customer information programs, for example, the Metro Kiosks.

“The idea would be to bring new people in, put them on the phones, get them trained, and put our most experienced people in the field,” he said. “That would be ideal.”

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^ Rail GM Mike Cannell, at far right, surveys smooth-running operations as parade-goers line up for the eastbound Metro Gold Line train to Sierra Madre Villa Station.

### Metro Puts "A" Team on the Line as New Year's Day Boardings More than Double to Nearly 60,000

By GAYLE ANDERSON  
Photos by Gayle Anderson

< Rail Division Transportation Manager Bruce Shelburne and Bus Operations Control Manager Steve Rank confer at Memorial Park Station on New Year's Day.

(January 4, 2008) With Metro service more in demand than ever, the 119th Tournament of Roses Parade and 94th Rose Bowl Game scored another spectacular New Year's Day triumph under the trademark California sunny skies and balmy 70 degree weather.

As Metro suited up the "A" team that began 24-hour operations on New Year's Eve and progressed to full-steam-ahead service on New Year's Day, one thing was not so certain: How could revelers ever do it without us?

Approximately 100 additional Rail Operations personnel from Transportation, Wayside, Facilities Maintenance, and Rail Fleet Services were in the field on Tuesday, said Bruce Sheburne, Rail Division Transportation Manager.

Metro Bus operations held the line with some 50 extra personnel on duty from both transportation and maintenance divisions, backed by Customer Service agents on line control, and fare collectors who set up shop at





Metro Bus Operator Carlon Humphries awaits returning parade crowd at Memorial Park Station.

busy stations and outpaced the TVMs.

And clean? Everybody was talking about how clean the sparkling system was as busy custodians and quietly efficient service attendants were filling up 40-cubic-foot trash bins and cleaning up food spills nonstop.

The three trash bins - one at Heritage Square Station and two at Sierra Madre Villa Station - were emptied of New Year's Eve trash in anticipation of the New Year's Day accumulation, reported Steve Mendoza, Custodial Services Manager. The 150 cardboard trash containers placed at all Gold Line stations were well used. "We basically stayed ahead of the game," he said.

All took place under the watchful eyes of the LASD Transit Services Bureau and Metro Transit Security Officers, who patrolled every line, station, bus, and train, offering directions, information and plain old hospitality.



Metro Transit Security Officers, from left, Regino Atienza, George de Leon, Anthony Hoang and Alberto Escarda arrive for second shift at Memorial Park Station. The security effort focused on crowd control and revenue collection from TVM machines and ticket booths operated by Customer Service agents, said TSO Belford Gaines, who worked the day's first shift that began with a briefing at 5 a.m.

"It was a real team effort," said Steve Rank, Bus Operations Control assistant manager. "New Year's is one of the most important times when the rail and bus sides really coordinate into a big combined effort."

As for the point after, Rank even heard of late-comers and lost Illini fans piling into Sheriff's cars and Metro vehicles for a ride home or to their accommodations.



Criss-crossing crowds at Memorial Park Station coming to the game and going back home after the parade pack the street as buses stand ready to transport the overflow crowd.



Metro Bus Operations assigned 20 buses to the effort, positioning 12 at Memorial Park Station, eight at Del Mar Station and five at Lake Station. By special arrangement with the Pasadena Police Department, Metro buses moved through the immovable traffic, sailing across the closed-to-traffic Colorado Blvd and onto the Arroyo Parkway, practically coasting into Union Station.

"We filled up every single bus," said Rank. "Once the parade broke and the lines for the train grew to a 20-minute wait, we could pull people out and onto the waiting buses."





Fighting Illini, from left, Enrico Bove, Erica Wilke, Dawn Febrowski and Scott Gahlbeck, took the Gold Line to the end of the line to catch the parade then hopped back on the train to return to Memorial Park Station for the game when the parade ended.

Shelburne estimated the Gold Line ridership for New Year's Day to be between 55,000 and 60,000, more than twice as many boardings than the year before. The ridership tally includes the boardings on 20 supplemental buses used for express service to Union Station following the parade, as well as the 12 supplemental buses used to transport crowds returning from the Rose Bowl game.

The day began with lines of parade-goers stretching from the Gold Line entrance at the concourse on the Union Station end, wrapping back to the east nearly all the way to the East Portal lobby, said Shelburne. At the peak, passengers took about 25 minutes, or a four-train wait, to get on board. Trains departing Sierra Madre Villa Station were leaving with full loads.



Team players include, clockwise from top left, RTOS Frank Hooks at Sierra Madre Villa Station, RTOS Fausto Gonzalez and RTOS Abraham Miranda at Memorial Park Station, and Customer Information Agent Marie Tervalon, Government Relations Manager Art Henry and Customer Information Agent Jackie Exeart at Union Station. Said 36-year veteran Tervalon, who worked line control at Memorial Park for the second year, "Very well-mannered, very nice crowd... definitely more people this year."





Lines were heaviest following the parade, when the four Pasadena stations closest to the parade route had queues that filled corridors and sidewalks by 10:30 a.m. "At approximately 12:30 p.m., all queues were accommodated," said Shelburne, who noted the significance of the steadfast Metro buses. "Without the buses, he said, "the wait time would extend at least an additional 30 minutes for all people at Del Mar and Memorial Park."



It was mostly shirt-sleeve weather for the blizzard-prone Illini but USC fans tended to bundle up in sweatshirts.

Football traffic started shortly after 9 a.m. from Union Station and continued until 2 p.m. at Memorial Park. The incredible number of visitors from Illinois may have accounted for the increase in ridership, said Shelburne. Could it be the weather and the good Metro service that kept the Illinois smiles from fading even though their team was trampled by the unrelenting USC Trojans?

Football fans filled up the buses and trains for the ride home, but Shelburne said that was the easiest part of the day. Rose Bowl fans arrived in orderly fashion after the game, deposited at Memorial Park Station by giant tour buses doubling as shuttles. The rush was over at 7:45 p.m., and Metro tucked away the assembly-line Rose Bowl service in record time.



While the Rose Parade floats get ready for their close-up at Victory Park, Metro Gold Line Train Operator Jorge Solano and Metro Gold Line Transportation Manager Doug Jackson await surge of float viewers headed for the shuttles at Sierra Madre Villa Station.

But Metro's work was not over, as nearly 2,000 more boarded Metro buses at Sierra Madre Villa Station to shuttle to the parade float display at Victory Park. The shuttle carried some 1,300 visitors on parade day and more than 850 on Jan. 2, reported Rank.

The plan for next year and the year after are already beginning to form in Shelburne's mind. "Next year will be a Thursday event," he mused. And then, the unthinkable: "In 2010, we will have two football games. The parade and Rose Bowl on Friday and the National Championship Game the next week."

Where did you say the line starts?



The engine that could: The constant stream of Metro Gold Line trains made the trip to Pasadena easy for the thousands that packed Union Station for the ride to the Roses.

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## Blue Line Adds Automated Station Stop Announcements

By RUSSELL HOMAN

(Jan. 8, 2008) For 16 years, the Blue Line relied on train operators to announce stops. Now after six months of testing a new automated announcement system will do the work.

The Blue Line had used two incompatible public address (PA) systems installed in its cars, which limited which cars could be coupled. Moreover, the old systems had poor quality sound and used headset microphones that picked up background noise in the train's cab.

To solve these problems, a completely new PA system was designed and built by Blue Line employees. The first prototype system was designed by Eric Czintos, maintenance specialist, and Russell Homan, senior instructor for Rail Fleet Services. It was tested over six months to determine reliability and to get input from the operators, passengers and maintenance crews.



Incompatible PA systems and wiring harnesses, at left, were removed from all 69 light rail trains that run on the Blue Line. At right, the new automated announcement center has a sleek, no-nonsense look. The machine uses prerecorded MP3 files to notify passengers of stops and relevant safety information. The train's two-way radio is mounted atop the new PA system. Photos courtesy of Blue Line Maintenance

The final version now uses a standard, off-the-shelf MP3 player to make the actual station announcements. Announcements were professionally recorded and then converted to MP3 files.

The MP3 player is controlled by a microprocessor that reads a sensor on the wheels and together they count the distance between the stations. Halfway between the stations, the system announces what the next station will be, and just before entering the station, it announces the station name.

When the operators are ready to leave the station, they press a new button on the side of the dash to make an announcement that the doors are about to close. All standard safety announcements are automatically played between stations.

## Versatile and clear

Train operators can still make manual PA announcements on the improved system for unexpected circumstances, but these messages will also be clearer and more understandable for passengers.

Czintos designed most of the electronics and wrote the microprocessor program code. The handmade prototype PA design was converted to an electronic drawing by Wayne Cheng, associate engineer, and then sent out to be cut, drilled, engraved and anodized black.

The schematic and printed circuit board (PCB) layout were both computer designed by Homan and then sent out to be fabricated. Components were installed and then soldered into 160 PCBs by Ronnie Burt, maintenance specialist.

New wiring harnesses for inside the train and inside the new PA equipment were fabricated by Steve Parker, maintenance specialist. The removal of the old PA equipment and installation of the new PA in 69 light rail vehicles was a joint effort by many Blue Line maintenance specialists.

The result of all this work is station announcements that are always clear and crisp, intercom transmissions that are understandable, and a fleet of trains that are now interchangeable.

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## Former Employee Pleads Guilty to Workers Compensation Fraud

(Jan. 9, 2008) A former employee pled guilty on January 7, 2008 in Los Angeles Superior Court to one count of felony workers' compensation insurance fraud. Eloise Catalano accepted workers' compensation benefits while simultaneously operating a catering business.



Eloise Catalano

Catalano, a programmer analyst in the ITS department when she was terminated in November 2005, did not report her business earnings to Metro, as required by law.

The judge accepted her plea and sentenced her to one year in county jail, which was eventually suspended. Catalano was also sentenced to five years of formal felony probation. She will be required to perform 200 hours of community service, pay court fees and pay \$20,000 in restitution to Metro.

Catalano began working for Metro in May 2000.

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Assistant Maintenance Manager Sal Llamas works full time at Metro by day and moonlights as a full-time college student.



Photo by Jimmy Stroup

## Full Time Isn't Full Enough for Assistant Maintenance Manager

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 9, 2008) Sal Llamas is the newly-promoted assistant maintenance manager at San Gabriel Valley Division 9. He works the early shift, rising at 4:20 a.m. each day to help keep more than 200 coaches maintained and running.

That's not enough to keep the self-described "adrenaline junkie" fully engaged. So he decided that he'd go into an accelerated business program to earn his college degree.

And Llamas is also father to 8-year-old Izabel and 6-year-old Melenie and husband to his wife, Silvia.

"I like to be active," Llamas says. "I'm not complacent about what I have or what I'm doing. I always want to be doing more or improving things."

Llamas has been with Metro for more than seven years, beginning as a supervisor after leaving the Marine Corps, where he had been a staff sergeant assigned to the motor pool. Llamas served eight years on active duty.

### Out and back in again

No longer a Marine, Llamas focused on his new wife, baby, and career at Metro. But after Sept. 11, Llamas' sense of national responsibility was rekindled and he re-enlisted into the Marine Corps Reserves.

"I figured something was going on," he says. "I had lots of friends in the unit, guys who were still in, and I kept in contact with my friends. I knew eventually they were going to end up getting deployed and I wanted to get back in and help."

In Jan. 2003 Llamas found himself deployed to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

His duties took him across Iraq during the initial invasion, but in April 2003 he was sent home because of a family emergency. When home, his daughter Izabel – only 4 then – pleaded with him not to leave. Llamas returned to Iraq, but not without personal turmoil.

"That was the hardest thing I've ever experiences in my life," he says. "That was harder than combat, looking into my daughter's eyes and telling her than I had to go because it was my job."



Melenie, 6 (in front), and Izabel, 8, are the main reasons why Llamas decided to forego a career in the Marine Corps Reserves and instead focus on his work at Metro. The girls routinely do their homework alongside their parents.

Llamas planned to remain in the Marine Corps Reserves because he would only need 12 years of reserve duty to qualify for all the benefits of a military retirement.

"But to me, that was selfish," he explains. "I'm out there, in combat, exposing myself and risking leaving my wife as a young widow with two young daughters. I swore that if I made it back alive, I'd leave the military for good and focus my attention on my family and on my career here at Metro."

### **'We managed to pull through'**

Llamas says the silent support of Silvia in accepting whatever decision he made was the glue that kept him together through the rough times of separation and combat.

"I know I put her through a lot. She had to be [home] by herself, taking care of the kids and seeing everything on the news unfolding," he says. "That was a really tough year for us, 2003. But we managed to pull through."

Upon his return, Llamas turned his attention to an old goal – college. He and Silvia both decided to attend an accelerated night program that would enable them to retain their jobs and maintain their time with their daughters.

"My wife and I have always wanted to set an example for our children – that's the main reason why we're doing this," he says.

Llamas' weekdays are filled with work and school now. Sundays are generally homework days – kids alongside adults. Saturdays are reserved for family activities and fun; a respite from the busy week.

### **The edge of 'too busy'**

He says the demanding schedule keeps him focused and that being on the edge of "too busy" keeps him sharp and able to perform at his peak.

"The first two months of school were really difficult, but that was because we didn't have our time management laid out yet," he says. "After the second month we figured it out and now it's routine."

The new assistant manager has big plans for Metro, too, anticipating that new technologies the agency uses will come with new processes and hurdles for Metro to overcome, he says.

One area that Llamas and his division are working on is a standard process of operation for each division's maintenance shop. That's the Marine in Llamas peeking through....

"I don't see too much of a difference here, to be honest, between [Metro] and the Marine Corps," he says. "It's not as regimented, sure, but a lot of the same skills I used in the motor pool are directly applicable to Metro."

"If we don't get everything in order here in maintenance, then the bus doesn't go out, the public doesn't have a ride and it all goes downhill from there. It's a tremendous amount of pressure for both the leaders and the employees," he says. "But we do it. And we'll keep it up, too."

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Photo: National Alliance for the Advancement of Prevention Initiatives

### Cell Phone Distractions May Contribute to Increased Traffic Congestion

(Jan. 10, 2008) A new study from the University of Utah concludes that cell phone use – even hands-free models – contributes to a slowing of traffic, causing a general malaise to traffic conditions and an increase in commute times.

The university's Traffic Lab and a team of researchers devised a study involving 36 university students. Each student drove through six 9.2-mile-long freeway scenarios in low- to high-density traffic at speeds that resembled driving on an interstate highway.

The drivers used a hands-free phone during half their trips and no phone in the other half. They were told to obey posted speed limits and use turn signals but the rest of the driving decisions were up to them.

What researchers found is that when the drivers were distracted by a phone conversation, they made fewer lane changes, drove slower and took longer to get where they are going.

The study found that in medium- and high-density traffic drivers:

- were about 20 percent less likely to change lanes;
- spent about 25 to 50 seconds longer following slow-moving vehicles before changing to an open lane;
- drove about 2 mph slower than the undistracted drivers, and
- took 15 to 19 seconds longer to complete the 9.2 mile trip.

**As many as 10 percent at a time**

Those delays can add up, especially in light of studies that suggest as many as 10 percent of U.S. drivers are using a cell phone at any one time.

The study's scientists assert that the general reaction time of cell phone users is less attuned to traffic congestion than those drivers who don't use phones while driving.

The California Highway Patrol has found that cell phones were among the more prominent distractions in accidents caused by inattentive drivers.

Starting July 1, it will be illegal in California to operate a cell phone while driving unless the device is hands-free. The University of Utah study suggests that the new law won't reduce the distraction caused by using cell phones while operating a car.

Any driver caught using a cell phone without a hands-free adapter will be fined \$20 for the first offense and \$50 for subsequent infractions. Minors under 18 will be restricted from using cell phones at all while driving.

– *From reports in Reuters and the San Diego Union-Tribune.*

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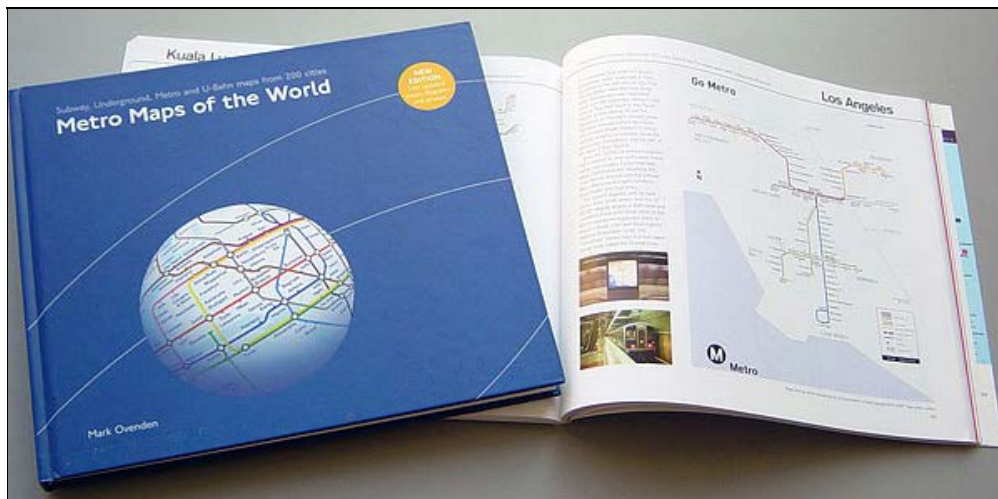
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The book to the left was the second edition of *Transit Maps of the World* and included Metro's rail system map. The book to the right is the latest edition and features the current Metro Rail map created by the Metro Design Studio. Photo: Jimmy Stroup



## Form and Function

### Metro's Rail Map Makes it into a Coffee Table Art Book about Rail Maps of the World

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 10, 2008) Because we see it everyday, it's easy to miss how striking the Metro Rail system map is; how it subtly combines an angular form while remaining informative in directing riders to their destinations.

Author Mark Ovenden didn't miss those qualities, though, when he chose to include Metro's rail system map in his latest edition of *Transit Maps of the World*. The heavily-illustrated book describes the history of rail maps all across the world and even mentions the beginnings of rail transit in Los Angeles.

Metro's rail system map was featured in the last edition, too, but as the system changes, so does the map. Maya Emsden, Creative Services Deputy Executive Officer, said that the map was created to make the system easy to use for riders – that its also attractive is really a side benefit.

"You don't even have to be into transit," she said. "[The book is] just beautiful on its own and very popular as a coffee table-type book. It's a great honor to be included in there."

Book critics didn't miss the beauty inherent in transit maps such as Metro produces, either: the book received universally good reviews from major newspapers coast to coast, including the *Los Angeles Times*, which called the book "fantastic," and the *The New York Times*, which described it as "pure catnip."

### 'Quality of the design'

"We dramatically updated our map in 2003 and made some significant design changes, really improving the overall design of the map," Emsden said. "It's because of the quality of that design, I think, that we were asked to be included in the second edition in 2005 and now this most recent edition, too."

Emsden has been familiar with Ovenden's book since its first printing in 2003 and refers to it frequently when discussing the creation of Metro's many maps with anyone from designers to Metro Board members.

The Metro Rail system map will be getting a minor face-lift in the coming months when it's adjusted to reflect the growing number of parking areas near Metro's rail lines.

The map will be altered more substantially when the Gold Line Eastside Expansion and the Expo lines are completed in the coming years.

The Metro Rail system map appears midway through *Transit Maps of the World*, next to Kuala Lumpur's rail design, as the cities featured in the book are listed alphabetically.



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Matt Gallagher, assistant resident engineer, poses with Chelsea Clinton, daughter of presidential candidate Hillary Clinton. Gallagher followed his curiosity and became part of a campaign stop. Photo by Joe O'Donnell



## Curiosity Gives Employees' a Close View of Presidential Campaign

By Ned Racine, Editor

(Jan. 15, 2008) Joe O'Donnell, senior contract administrator, and Matt Gallagher, assistant resident engineer, were curious on Jan. 11. What was the commotion around the restaurant at Cesar Chavez Ave. and Soto Street?

The two took a brief walk from the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension office at 1st Street and Soto and discovered a slice of the United States election process: Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton was making a campaign stop.

"We went over to see what was going on and to take part in the democratic process," Gallagher said.

"There was Secret Service all over the place," said O'Donnell. "Her [Clinton's] staff was everywhere."

Gallagher came away with a photo of Chelsea Clinton and him. How did he manage to get the former first child to pose with him? He asked her. "She was very accessible," he noted.

"There was a lot of people there," Gallagher said of the afternoon event, although he thought it was well organized. "It was pretty neat to see a

presidential candidate.”

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Heavy Rescue Firefighter Robert Stover opens the battery compartment on the exterior of a Gold Line rail car under the direction of RTOS Ricardo Perez. More than 100 firefighters took the Metro training to familiarize themselves with Gold Line equipment.

## Metro Rail Instructs Firefighters on Gold Line Safety

• Training grew from September collisions

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 15, 2008) In response to the two recent accidents on the Gold Line, Metro Rail instructed 100 firefighters at Metro Gold Line Division 21, last week, in agency procedures and equipment related to train operation.

John Quintanar, a former firefighter and Metro corporate safety consultant, was contacted by firefighters stationed near the Gold Line who asked for information about the trains and normal operation along the line, such as street crossings and electrical concerns.

Giving the firefighters more than they asked for, Quintanar set up a training session – given by Ricardo Perez, a rail transit operations

supervisor who works in instruction.

"It's important that they be aware of rail safety, aware of the facilities here that can help them and the equipment they could be working with that can harm them," Perez said. "When they respond to an incident, we want them to be aware of those situations so they can come to a quick and safe resolution."

More than 100 firefighters came to six sessions held from Jan. 9 to Jan. 11. The safety briefings involved an hour-long classroom discussion where Perez lectured and explained, followed by another hour of hands-on training on trains in the yard.

The classroom discussion focused on the electrical hazards that accompany a light rail system. Perez said there are "no second chances" if emergency personnel make mistakes with 17,000 volts of alternating current powered at as much as 2,000 amps.

Firefighters whose stations could be called to respond to Gold Line emergencies participated in a Metro Rail safety program designed to teach law enforcement the ins and outs of Metro Rail equipment. From left: Ricardo Perez,

rail transit operations supervisor; John Quintanar, firefighter and Metro corporate safety consultant; Mike Cannell, Rail General Manager, and (standing) Doug Jackson, Metro Gold Line Transportation Manager.

Photos: Jimmy Stroup



### **'It's the amperage than kills you'**

"Remember that the Tasers police use can hit you with 50,000 volts – which is higher than the system uses, but with only 2 milliamps – and it's the amperage that kills you," Perez said.

The 2,000 amps that power the Gold Line system are 10,000 times more powerful than the 2 milliamps a Taser uses to incapacitate humans.

"For the first responders at an incident involving the Gold Line, we want them to know the electrical considerations," Perez said. "I try to explain to them the electrical distribution, how much power there is, where it comes from and how to safely remove the power so that they can do what they do best under safe conditions."

After the classroom session, Perez and Quintanar led the firefighters to the Gold Line yard to show them how to access the trains without destroying the doors or windows, how to power the cars down and how to disconnect the train's onboard batteries.

"We can prevent the fire department from destroying part of the train to enter and do their job by arming them with a little knowledge about the way our trains work," Quintanar said. "Most times, its going to be faster to get in by using the methods we teach them than it would be for them to hack in."

"It's Metro's responsibility to ensure that these outside agencies can work well with us during an incident so that we all understand their protocols and procedures and they understand ours," Perez said."

"The fire departments and the police departments take this training very seriously and I appreciate their interest – that they take the time to get involved and learn Metro's facilities," he said.



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## New Pay Card Program Makes Good Cents for Employees

- Employees without checking accounts can save check cashing fees

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Jan. 15, 2007) In a win-win scenario for Metro and its employees, the agency will soon offer a more secure way for employees without checking accounts to receive their salary.

Dave Wakeling, accounting manager for Payroll, hopes the pay card will reduce the fees employees without checking accounts incur when converting their paycheck to cash. He estimates 1,500 Metro employees currently receive paper paychecks.

"Some employees take their paychecks to a check cashing service and pay a fee there, then they buy money orders to pay their bills, paying a fee there," he said. "With the pay card they have their money immediately."

Each payday the value of the employee's pay check is deposited into the pay card, which looks and acts like a debit card. Pay cards are accepted wherever debit cards are accepted. Account information and customer service for the pay card are available through the internet or telephone.

Wakeling is quick to point out that the pay card is not a credit card, so employees who sign up for the pay card program do not face an approval process or credit check. Every Metro employee who applies for a pay card receives a pay card.

An insert in the Jan. 18 pay check will explain the pay card program, as will two presentations in the Metro Board Room on Tuesday, Jan. 22.

Wakeling sees an advantage for Metro Payroll in that fewer pay checks will be lost or stolen, meaning Payroll will need to stop payment on fewer checks. Here the pay card will offer another advantage for employees. Stopping payment on a pay check and reissuing the check requires several days—days when the employee would not have access to his or her money.

Over 75 percent of Metro employees have their pay checks deposited directly into their banking accounts.

For information on the new card, call 213.922.6824 or 213.922.6843.



Employees enrolling in the pay card program receive a card resembling a debit card. Each payday, the amount of the employee's paycheck would be paid into their pay card account, offering immediate access to those funds.

See: [U.S. Bank brochure](#) (PDF)



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Metro Chair Pam O'Connor addressed the Los Angeles County Transportation Funding Collaborative conference on January 10. The conference explored funding alternatives for Los Angeles County's transportation needs. Photo by Dave Sotero.

## Funding Collaborative Explores Alternative Funding for LA County Transportation

By Jody Feerst Litvak

(Jan. 16, 2008) Over 300 people attended a January 10 conference in Los Angeles to explore funding alternatives and develop an action plan to increase funding for Los Angeles County's transportation needs.

The "It's Time to Move LA!" conference was organized by the newly formed Los Angeles County Transportation Funding Collaborative (LACTFC). Metro was a partner in the conference, which also included business, labor, health, environmental, academic and community groups.

Denny Zane, LACTFC Executive Director, kicked-off the day

pointing out that only \$4 billion in uncommitted transportation funds have been identified over the next 25 years, yet Los Angeles needs an additional \$60 billion in capital and operating funds to meet its transportation needs. "We cannot have a first class economy and community and a third class transportation system," Zane said.

Following the conference, Metro staff members released a Board report stating that the \$4 billion in uncommitted transportation funds is no longer available, due to decreased funding and increased costs.

Metro Chair Pam O'Connor addressed the conference, stressing the need for integrated planning. Other Metro Board members who participated in conference sessions included Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Los Angeles County Supervisors Yvonne Brathwaite Burke and Zev Yaroslavsky, Duarte Councilman John Fasana, and Directors David Fleming and Richard Katz. Metro Director and Long Beach Councilwoman Bonnie Lowenthal also attended.

Maria Elena Durazo, Executive Secretary Treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, also addressed the group. She spoke about the importance of transportation for labor, noting the jobs created for those who build, operate and maintain transportation systems. She also noted the role transportation plays in the quality of life for all workers in Los Angeles. Representatives from numerous labor unions attended the event, including each of the unions that represent Metro employees.

Some of the discussion focused on funding from Sacramento and Washington, D.C., but most speakers acknowledged the need to generate funds locally. Several speakers stated that the state budget crisis makes it unlikely that Sacramento will provide much funding in the near future, and short-term solutions from the federal government are also unlikely. Consequently, most of the discussion focused on new revenue sources that can be generated, retained and used locally.

Metro CEO Roger Snoble did not address the conference but was recognized for bolstering public confidence in Metro. Mr. Zane said that Metro's credibility is a critical component of any effort to secure new transportation funding for Los Angeles. Metro was a partner in the conference.

The concepts discussed at the conference are being evaluated for the amount of money each would generate, the amount of time each would take to implement, administrative changes required, and political obstacles. LACTFC organizers will likely be moving forward with a variety of proposals in the near future.

These include a half-cent sales tax increase, congestion reduction pricing, carbon fees, infrastructure financing districts, vehicle license fees, benefit assessment districts and more. At the direction of the Metro Board, staff members are working to identify new opportunities to generate revenue and reduce cost.

Zane indicated that a primary goal of the conference was to stimulate the formation of transportation working groups within key constituencies -- such as business, labor and environmental groups -- and to facilitate dialogue between them.



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Facilities Maintenance Manager Pete Serdienis and Stops & Zones Leader Ronny Terrazas at installation site of 101st I-Stop® Illuminated Transit Stop.



Photos by Gayle Anderson

## Solar-powered I-Stops Illuminate Bus Stops Formerly Left in the Dark

- Metro's Stops & Zones begin installing an additional 145 solar-powered lighting systems at dimly lit sites throughout Los Angeles County. Besides increasing security and customer comfort levels, I-Stops mean far fewer passenger pass-ups.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

Like the flick of a switch that suddenly illuminates a dark hallway, Metro's new solar-powered I-Stop light fixtures and signals are shedding light on shadowy bus stops where undetected passengers are sometimes left in the dark.

With 100 I-Stop® Illuminated Transit Stops installed in the initial phase of a successful pilot program, an additional 145 units will be installed in FY08.

Metro Stops & Zones staff installed the first 100 I-Stops throughout Los Angeles County at locations where there is inadequate street lighting, said Pete Serdienis, Facilities Maintenance Manager.

Along with customer security and increased comfort levels, the new I-Stops are stopping passenger pass-ups in their tracks.



Metro's new solar-powered I-Stop light fixtures and signals, such as the newly-installed I-Stop on Temple St, are shedding light on shadowy bus stops.

Recommendations for location of I-Stops installations continue to be solicited from operators, customer service agents, employees and the general public. "We're looking at potential sites where there's a visibility issue in order to increase lighting and reduce passenger pass-ups. Stops with pass-up complaints reported by Customer Service get the highest consideration," he

said.

The I-Stop Illuminated Transit Stop is a high-intensity LED light fixture mounted on top of a ten-foot-tall bus stop pole. In addition to the LED light, which can illuminate up to a six-foot diameter area, the I-Stop Illuminated Transit Stop features a white flashing beacon at the top to notify bus operators of waiting passengers. At night, these solar powered fixtures emanate a downward illumination, which is helpful at locations without adequate street lighting.

The area lights provide extra security for transit patrons, while the flashing beacons help ensure that bus operators stop for waiting passengers. The solar-powered LED (light emitting diodes) lights are rated for 100,000 hours and need only two hours of sun exposure to provide light.

Approximately 700 more units, to be funded by a transit enhancement



The I-Stop Illuminated Transit Stop features a white flashing beacon at the top to notify bus operators of waiting passengers.

grant from the Bus Operator’s Subcommittee (BOS), are planned for installation in FY09.

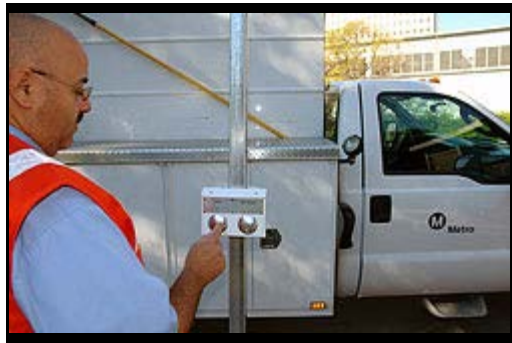
**Let there be light:**  
**Solar-powered I-Stops light up**  
**when the sun goes down.**

It looks easy, but the resemblance stops here. A complicated internal wire and frame system takes about an hour to assemble off site. On site, the pole system that houses the solar-powered unit must be positioned to accommodate a variety of bus stop information displays, from which different route signage systems are attached at the top of the pole. Additionally, all push button panels must be positioned to be compliant with accessibility standards.

At right, Stops & Zones crew Ronny Terrazas and Roger Diaz, on ladder, install new I-Stop solar-powered bus stop system at Temple Street intersection in Little Tokyo.

Below, Roger Diaz tests push-button panel that activates a high-intensity LED light fixture that casts a light six feet in diameter upon darkened bus stops. A second button activates a bright, white flashing light at the top of the pole that can be seen by approaching bus operators.

At bottom right, Diaz secures the I-Stop with a tamper-resistant bolt that makes it difficult for thieves to dislodge the fixture.





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West Hollywood Division 7 Maintenance went 555 days without a lost-time accident before a broken ankle ended their streak in December. Shown here is the Division 7 Maintenance 1st Shift. Photo by Ned Racine.



### Division 7 Works a Year and a Half without a Lost-Time Accident

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 17, 2008) A Metro division maintenance shop is a place where safety is a foremost concern. There are flammable materials, slick and greasy areas, heavy equipment and mechanical tools that whirl at incredible speeds.

So going through a single day without an injury that takes an employee off the floor is an accomplishment. West Hollywood Division 7 went 555 days without a lost-time injury.

"It was purely employee involvement," Mike Harnish, assistant maintenance manager at Division 7 said. "We got all the supervisors involved in it and they got all the employees involved and it just happened. Every day they kept it safe and our record grew."

Its streak ended when a mechanic broke his ankle in mid-December.

The division recently hit 30 days without a lost-time injury following the December incident. But the managers and employees at West Hollywood figured that this time they should reach for a goal that's a little tougher to make.

"We decided that if we could go 555 days without a lost-time accident, we



ought be able to go a whole year at least without any accidents at all," Harnish said. "We're challenging everyone to go accident free for 2008."

The goal requires 146 maintainers and service attendants to maintain their safest behavior every time they're in the shop. Every 100 days they remain accident-free will earn the employees a barbeque, courtesy of the sector coffers.

Harnish said the goal is challenging, but that the employees he manages are capable of meeting it. Their old record demonstrates a pattern of safety that Division 7 can be proud of, he said.

"The employees have been super and we've done really well," he said. "Of course, when I say 'we,' I mean 'they' because I didn't do anything but ask them to be careful. The employees are the ones who really deserve the credit for it."

Below is a list of maintainers and service attendants who work at Division 7 and helped make it 555 days without a lost-time incident:

Pablo Aguilera, Jason Almanza, Allen Anderson, Mauricio Arias, Luis Arrenquin, Manuel Banuelos, Caleb Bassey, Juan Bautista, Gail Blane, Oscar Blane, Thomas Blatz, Chuck Blight, Terrance Bourland, Glenn Buakong, Larry Busch, Daniel Carapia, Alvin Castle, Alan Chan, Chester Clark, Eric Collins, Paul Cruz, Craig Daniel, Clarence Deese, Pedro Delgado, Bruce Do, Richard Donelan, Ulysses Dunlap, Broderick Echols, Toby Elsner, Felix Figueroa, Jason Gallardo, Tezera Gebreweld, Edwin Gomez, Baldemar Gonzalez, Julio Gonzalez, Paul Grunitzky, Victor Guerrero, Rudik Hadjinian, Ronald Haliburton, Jose Hernandez, Erik Hudson, Dana Hurd, Honrado Islao, Walter John, Edward Kaiban, Robert Ky, Hoai Son Duc Lac, Carlos Leohr, Reginald Levels, Alfredo Lopez, Luis Lopez, Tom Lovasco, Ted Loyo, Henry Mardikian, Anthony Meeks, Alex Mendez, Fernando Mera, Ira Moore, Edgar Morales, Hector Morales, Honein Mouakkad, Chris Mynatt, Vladimir Nekrasov, Ralph Oliver, Andrew Ortega, Robert Ortiz, Erika Perez, Florentino Poncardas, Candis Porter, Vance Pozon, Tracy Presley, Raymond Quach, Enrique Ramirez, Armando Reyes, John Rice, Victor Rojas, Victor Romero, Rosalio Rubio, Oscar Sagastume, Guillermo Sainz, Javier Salazar, Henry Sampson, Glenn Shimamoto, Cesar Solano, Julio Soto, Maurice Strong, Jose Tacaraya, Kenneth Taylor, William Terrazas, Raymond Thompson, Clemente Torres, Jerry Valdez, Mauro Varela, Jose Vazquez, Hector Villalobos, Tom Walter, Juliann Watson, Desmond Williams, Kenneth Williams, LaNeasha Woods, LaToshia Woods, Jeff Yamane and Larry Young.

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## Uncle Metro Wants You! Metro Volunteers Looking to Recruit

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 17, 2008) Metro Volunteers are seeking a few good employees to help them staff their transit information booths and spread the word about Metro and the services the agency provides.

"Volunteers will be able to work in their own cities of residence, which makes it convenient for their schedules," said Rich Morallo, community relations manager. "Also, Volunteers can work in short shifts, so work assignments are not a burden."

Volunteers are asked to answer questions and disperse Metro informational materials at public venues in the cities where they live. Volunteers sign up in two-hour increments and choose the events they staff.

"My job becomes more fun when I get to talk to the public about my job," said Jes Godinez, equipment maintenance assistant manager. "I get the chance to answer questions about all sorts of Metro-related stuff."

During the lunch hours on Jan. 22, the Volunteers will be looking to bolster their ranks by promoting their services in the Metro Cafeteria lobby.

Instead of answering questions about the system, the Volunteers will answer questions about what *they* do, hoping to get a few more Volunteers to help keep Metro as public as possible. Metro Volunteers help publicly promote the agency and its core values at mostly weekend events.

"I like to share the opportunity for the public to be heard and not just by us volunteers," said Godinez. "We've got the governance councils and the board meetings. I encourage riders to attend and make their voices heard. We're just telling them how to do it."

For more information on the Metro Volunteers program, visit them on Jan. 22 in the cafeteria at Gateway, or go to the [Metro Volunteers](#) page on myMetro.net.

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The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Transit Services Bureau received this California Counties 2007 Challenge Award for vandalism reduction on the Metro system. Deputies Dianne Moreno and Kyle Ynclan have been involved in more than 20 graffiti and vandalism operations together.

Photo by Ned Racine

## Nice to be Noticed: Sheriffs TSB Awarded for Work Reducing Vandalism and Graffiti on the Metro System

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 17, 2008) The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) recently awarded the Los Angeles County Sheriffs Department its California Counties 2007 Challenge Award for the TSBs work in reducing and fighting vandalism and graffiti on the Metro system.

Since 2000, graffiti has been a priority for TSB deputies and in 2006 the department arrested more than 150 taggers and solved nearly 800 cases of vandalism.

"Of the guys we arrested, some of the taggers have been assessed restitution and damages in excess of \$25,000," TSB Sgt. Augie Pando said. "One guy is paying \$87,000. That alone is worth at least \$1 million in aggregate damages."

The attention of deputies has reduced the overall cost of graffiti removal and has increased the customer safety index among Metro patrons.

"This has resulted in the savings about \$7 million for clean-up and repair on the bus rail systems each year," he said. "That's money saved because they don't have to clean it up."

CSAC is an organization dedicated to returning more governing power to individual counties. The Challenge Awards are an annual prize that recognizes responsible self-governing on the county level in innovative and effective ways.

Pando and others from the LASD TSB Special Problems Unit can be heard on a special five-part news report about tagging in Los Angeles by KFWB News AM 980 online at [www.kfwb.com/Tagging/1490220](http://www.kfwb.com/Tagging/1490220).







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Largest Clean-Air Fleet in the Nation

Metro puts 2,500th CNG-fueled bus into service



Photo by Juan Ocampo

Metro reaches a major milestone at Central City Division 1 Jan. 18 when the 2,500th Metro Bus burning compressed natural gas rolled into service after a quick pit stop at the natural gas pumps. On hand for the debut were CEO Roger Snoble, Division 1 Maintenance Manager Hector Rojas, Board Chair Pam O'Connor and Metro South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey, along with a host of Metro officials and media representatives. A clear leader in the field, Metro was the first to adapt the technology for use in transit vehicles following the adoption by the board of the alternative fuel policy in 1993. Reaching a major milestone that indicates 95 percent of the Metro fleet burns clean compressed natural gas continues to demonstrate that CNG is the best, most effective and clearly efficient clean fuel option available, said CEO Snoble. The fleet conversion is definitely not a turnkey operation, he noted, but rather a solid agency-wide effort that involves more than 100 employees and thousands of work hours getting the buses ready for operations. "An entire crew of personnel from fleet management to contracts to accounts payable to division maintenance deserve the credit for this milestone achievement," said Snoble. -- from Gayle Anderson

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Elizabeth Porras (left), Human Resources assistant, serves as Metro's liaison with the Gateway Child Development Center. She and Esme Ortiz, the center's director, praised General Services' help in earning the prestigious NAEYC accreditation. *Photo by Ned Racine*



## Gateway Child Development Center Earns Prestigious Accreditation

By Ned Racine, Editor

(January 22, 2008) The Gateway Child Development Center (GCDC) is one of the nation's first child development centers to earn accreditation based on tougher criteria from a leading organization of early childhood professionals.

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) granted the five-year accreditation on December 31, 2007. Although the GCDC had received other NAEYC accreditation, this was the first under the tougher standards.

"A center that is NAEYC-accredited stands above and beyond just the basic standards for a center," said Esme Ortiz, the GCDC director. "It actually means that people from the outside came to check the quality of the center, the interaction between teachers and the education the teachers have."

Ortiz described the NAEYC standards as much stricter than state standards. She explained that during the assessor's unannounced visit, she examined 10 areas of child development, amounting to hundreds of questions.

These include physical facilities, classroom setups, parent participation, outdoor play space and outdoor activities, as well as the safety and supervision of the children. "One of the biggest areas to them is child assessment: Are we keeping proper records of the way the children are

developing in our classrooms?" Ortiz added.

"Knowing that only about five percent of childcare centers nationwide are accredited, it is a big highlight when you do find a center that is accredited through NAEYC," Ortiz said. The NAEYC has been issuing its accreditation since 1985.

Elizabeth Porras, Human Resources assistant, serves as Metro's liaison with the GCDC, which is run by a private company under contract to Metro. Porras makes her own unannounced inspections of the GCDC several times a month.

"When she sees me walking through with my little clipboard, [Esme] knows what I'm here for," Porras said. "I go through every aspect, every single room of this facility."

Perhaps that is why Porras remembers the day the assessor visited the GCDC as no different from any other day. "It was just consistency and uniformity," Porras said. "This is a smooth operation."

Both Ortiz and Porras single out General Services for its commitment to maintaining the GCDC facilities.

"General Services is actually very involved year-round on a daily basis," Porras said. "There are times when we have to seek them out and say, 'We need this right now.' Prior to Esme knowing that she had a visit—she just didn't know when—General Services really, really pulled through for us with a last-minute request."

Porras singles out Jose Aguilar, General Services supervisor; John Flores, general clerk II; Phyllis Meng, General Services supervisor; Bob Skarseth, facilities maintenance supervisor, and Brian Soto, DEO, General Services.

"I'm very proud of Esme and her team," Porras said.

"To me it's a really nice accomplishment," Esme said, noting how hard her staff worked during the past year preparing for the unannounced visit. For herself, her reaction was "I did good."


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## Customer Code of Conduct Available for Public Comment

- Code on Metro.net until Feb. 7

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 22, 2008) The Metro Board recently approved a new Customer Code of Conduct for public review. The code represents a consolidation of current agency policies for public behavior on the system.

A hefty portion of the proposed Metro Customer Code is mandated by the state Vehicle and Penal codes. Though the infractions are already listed in the state codes, the Metro Customer Code will be a publicly accessible catch-all that lists the infractions and rules in one spot.

Some of the rules have been adopted to create the most pleasant atmosphere possible for Metro's riders and employees.

"The purpose of the Customer Code of Conduct project is to coordinate information into one location for our customers to more easily find what they want to know and to update the information to current law and best practices," said Metro's Karen Gorman, chief ethics officer.

Most of the rules are self-evident, such as explaining the process of boarding at a bus stop or stating that riders must pay fares to ride on Metro buses or trains.

Interesting prohibitions in the Customer Code of Conduct include:

- Gambling to win money or anything of value
- Expectorating (spitting)
- Placing feet or shoes on seats or furnishings
- Hanging from, swinging from, or attaching anything to hand rails

Section 6-05-160 of the code, for example, prohibits people from remaining in a Metro facility with an "unavoidable grossly repulsive odor so extreme it causes a nuisance."

The Metro Customer Code of Conduct will be available for view and public comment at [www.metro.net/about\\_us/ethics/codes.htm](http://www.metro.net/about_us/ethics/codes.htm) until Feb. 7, after which the code will be revised to a final form with the public commentary in mind.

The final version of the code should go before the Metro Board for approval in early spring.





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Balloon artist Nugget leads kids in a dance during the lunch break at last year's annual Metro Family Day held at Knott's Berry Farm.



### Berry, Berry Reasonable Ticket Prices for Metro Family Day at Knott's

- Tickets for the April 12 event go on sale tomorrow

By DANIELLE BOUTIER

(Jan. 23, 2008) Kids? Check. Comfortable shoes? Check. Sunscreen? Check. Wallet full of money? You won't need that for Metro Family Day at Knott's Berry Farm on Saturday, April 12.

Tickets for Metro Family Day at the popular theme park will be only \$18 for adult tickets and \$10 for child tickets (children under 2 are free).

Metro employees will have a private picnic area from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. to enjoy games, entertainment and more. An all-you-can-eat buffet will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. The ticket price includes all this plus admission to the theme park, open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. (hours are subject to change).

New at Knott's for 2008 is the "Pony Express" ride, a horseback relay ride launching riders at a speed of 0-38 mph in less than three seconds. Experience an exhilarating runaway adventure at speeds never imagined in the Old West!

Metro Family Day in 2007 attracted 1,500 employees and family members. For this year's event, 3,000 tickets are available.

Tickets go on sale at the Metro Store on Friday, February 1. Employees are limited to five tickets each and must show their employee ID to

purchase tickets. A limited number of tickets are available through April 4 or until Metro Family Day is sold out. No tickets will be available on the day of the event.

Staying late at the park? Hotel rooms are available for \$99 plus tax at the Knott's Berry Farm Resort Hotel. Call 866.752.2444 and mention "Metro." A limited number of rooms are available before March 12.

Special allotments of tickets will be sold at each of the following divisions (transportation break room) while supplies last:

- **Division 5:** February 5 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 7:** February 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 6:** February 12 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 9:** February 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 4:** February 19 from 10 a.m. to Noon
- **Division 3:** February 21 from 10 a.m. to Noon
- **Division 20:** February 21 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 15:** February 26 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 10:** February 28 from 10 a.m. to Noon
- **Division 21:** February 28 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 8:** March 4 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 22:** March 6 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 1:** March 11 from 10 a.m. to Noon
- **Division 2:** March 11 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 18:** March 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Division 11:** March 18 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.


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## Jessie Moore, a Seven-Year Metro Employee Has Died

(Jan. 23, 2008) Jessie Moore, a former Carson Division 18 bus operator has died.

Moore, who died on Jan. 9, had been on long-term disability, following a non-work-related automobile accident eight months ago. He was 68. Moore, a Compton resident, had been a Metro employee since May 2000.



Jessie Moore

"When I came over to Division 18 – which is where Jessie was – there wasn't a day he didn't come up to me, give me a hug and ask about my family," said Kenya Allison, Division 18 bus operator, who knew Moore since 1997, when they worked at First Transit.

"He was a happy-go-lucky guy, friendly, and he was a loving person," said Allison, who described Moore as her best friend. "Anytime he could help you, he would. If you had a problem or needed something, he was the kind of person who would go above and beyond to help you."

"He took a lot of pride in driving and being out there with his passengers," Allison said.

Services were held at the New Prospect Baptist Church in Los Angeles on Jan. 15.

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## TSB Captures Graffiti Offender Who Defaced Metro Property Across the System



Tagger "Ardo" used various forms of vandalism to leave his mark on Metro vehicles across the system. This "scratch" tag was left in 2004. Last week TSB deputies arrested "Ardo," who admitted to damaging Metro equipment.

Markers, at right, were taken as evidence when TSB deputies served arrest and search warrants on "Ardo." The pens are used to deface property quickly and permanently. Vandalism clean-up costs Metro more than \$12 million each year.

--TSB photos



(Jan. 23, 2008) Transit Services Bureau deputies successfully served search and arrest warrants, Jan. 17, to find and capture a prolific tagger named "Ardo," who made Metro his favorite target.

The suspect admitted to the damage caused by "Ardo" (sometimes "Ardoh"); that particular tag is responsible for about \$63,000 in damage to Crossroads Depot Division 2, West Hollywood Division 7 and Carson Division 18.

When deputies arrested "Ardo," they found him with several Metro bus passes, markers commonly used for tagging, two school books he'd turned into "piece books" – practice sketches of tags – and a photo album of his tagging.

"Ardo" refused to identify other members of his tagging crews. His tag is associated with US (Urban Squad), AGH (Always Getting High) and UPN (Ur Property Next or Under Pigs Noses) crews.

The suspect was on probation for robbery, so Los Angeles County Probation Officer Robby Robinson assisted in the arrest.



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[ Hot off the Web ]

(Jan. 23, 2008) Who are the current Employees of the Quarter? How would you nominate someone to be an EOQ? The [Employee Recognition](#) page on *myMetro.net* answers these questions and features recent Services Awards.

Retirement Roundup, offering a list of Metro employees who have retired within the last 12 months, is here as well. You can also learn about A Night of Stars, an awards program for Metro’s “best of the best” operations and maintenance personnel.





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## On the Run: Board Member Bonnie Lowenthal Travels Green to Metro



Jan. 24, 2008 -- Board member Bonnie Lowenthal, Vice Mayor of the City of Long Beach, drove a biodiesel-fueled Volkswagen Beetle to the monthly Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee Meeting at Metro Headquarters on Wednesday. The alternative fuel proponent is urging the City of Long Beach to consider using biodiesel blends in lieu of petrodiesel in the city's fleet of diesel vehicles. While 95 percent of the Metro fleet of buses burn compressed natural gas, 150 buses have diesel engines. These operate out of Venice Division 6, which cannot accommodate a CNG facility. -- from Gayle Anderson

### It's a FAQ:

Biodiesel is the name of a clean burning alternative fuel, produced from domestic, renewable resources. Biodiesel contains no petroleum, but it can be blended at any level with petroleum diesel to create a biodiesel blend. It can be used in compression-ignition (diesel) engines with little or no modifications.

Biodiesel is simple to use, biodegradable, nontoxic, and essentially free of sulfur and aromatics.



Photos: Gayle Anderson


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The new \$5 bill features the same security features that are now seen on the \$10 and \$20 bills. The redesigned bill will circulate beginning March 13. Image courtesy of the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing

## New to Your Wallet: Security-Laden \$5 Bill

- Bill will feature the same security measures as the \$10 and \$20 bills have for several years.

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 24, 2008) Metro is preparing to accommodate the newly redesigned \$5 bill, which is scheduled to go into circulation on March 13.

The introduction of the new bill will demand Metro adjust its bill readers across the system. It will also require employees who handle cash to familiarize themselves with the unique design and security features the new \$5 uses.

The change represents a large upgrade to all of the Metro fare boxes and ticket vending machines (TVMs).

"Our contract with the equipment providers covers upgrades for changes with the Treasury," said Terry Matsumoto, chief financial services officer. "It's no small undertaking. 2,700 boxes need to be upgraded. And the buses can't be moving when this happens, so it's a challenge."

Similar to the designs of the newer \$10 and \$20 bills, the \$5 will feature watermarks on both sides on Lincoln's portrait – a line of "5s" on the left and a larger "5" to the right. The larger watermarked "5" replaces the old watermark, which was a portrait of Lincoln.

The bill's security thread has been moved from the left to the right side of Lincoln. The thread glows blue under an ultraviolet light. The U.S Treasury Department has also elected to print a Great Seal of the U.S. in the background to the right of Lincoln.

An arc of purple stars now surrounds the 16th president's head, replacing the oval border and shaded area that are on the current \$5.

## Protecting your hard-earned money

"Since 2003, the United States government has been issuing newly designed bank notes in an effort to stay ahead of currency counterfeiting and protect the economy and your hard-earned money," said Kathleen Coyne at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

"Because U.S. currency is so widely used outside the U.S., we want to

make sure that business and financial communities, foreign exchange companies, law-enforcement groups, banking officials, other cash handlers and, ultimately, the general public around the world know about the new bill designs and features," she said.

The equipment contractors Metro deals with are responsible for installation of the upgraded equipment the fare boxes and TVMs will need to read the new \$5, Matsumoto said. After the installation, Metro will maintain the fare boxes. TVMs are maintained by contractors.

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## Board Chair Pam O'Connor's Third Chat Proves Short But Sweet

- Computer outage ends chat after 20 minutes

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Jan. 24, 2008) Continuing her digital Town Hall meetings, Metro Chair Pam O'Connor held her third hour-long chat yesterday at noon. More questions were received for this chat than any other. If only that computer hadn't blown out.

Limited to 20 minutes by the loss of a server at an offsite location, the chat still discussed congestion reduction pricing, funding shortfalls and the possibility of tracking buses through the internet. O'Connor asked chat members to "dream about ways we can create a better future."

Noting that many of the questions submitted explored ideas for paying for new transit projects, O'Connor asked participants to submit their ideas on a half-cent sales tax, public/private partnerships, toll roads and parking fees.

"Like other transit agencies around the country, Metro anticipates a massive funding shortfall," O'Conner wrote in her introduction to the chat. "The State is also operating in the red."

Congestion reduction pricing generated several questions. O'Connor explained that not all highways were being considered for congestion reduction pricing. She also explained that one of the idea's goals would be "to make the carpool/vanpool lanes run faster so that it's actually worth it to use one."

Other participants asked for more transportation options free of fossil fuels, an expanded park-and-ride facility in the San Gabriel Valley and a "motorcycle only" lane on highways to reduce congestion.

The questions O'Connor answered are available at the [Metro Interactive Chat](#) archives on metro.net.

In February O'Connor will answer questions she could not answer in the abbreviated chat yesterday. The next chat will be held in March.


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## In Memorium

### Remembering Those in the Metro Family Who Died During 2007

(Jan. 29, 2008) Metro employees paid their respects to a number of co-workers and family members who died during 2007.

MyMetro.net posted obituaries for 32 employees, retirees and several children of employees. Here, in memoriam, are the names of those we lost in 2007:

- Retired Transportation Operations Supervisor **Dallas Evans** died, Dec. 29, 2006, of an apparent heart attack.
- Metro Bus Operator **Aubrey Turner** died, Dec. 31, 2006, following a lengthy bout with cancer.
- Metro Bus Operator **Steve Cook** died, Jan. 4, following an accident in Willowbrook in which the Central City Division 1 bus he was driving struck a tree.
- Marine Lance Cpl. **Ryan Mayhan** died, Dec. 21, during combat operations in Iraq. He is the son of Metro Custodian Kim Hearn, who is assigned to the South Bay Service Sector.
- James W. Cragin**, a former member of the Metro Board, died, Jan. 13, after a long battle with Parkinson's disease and cancer. He was 82.
- Doris Williams**, a CCTV observer at the Rail Operations Center, died at home Feb. 7. She was recuperating from two heart attacks at the time of her death.
- Gateway Division 10 Bus Operator **Alejandro Aldrete** died, Feb. 9, at County-USC Medical Center of complications from an accident at home.
- Rita Vance**, a general clerk in the Procurement and Material Management Department, died in the early morning Feb. 20.
- Retired Metro Bus Operator **Norman Garner** died, March 31, following a long battle with lung cancer.
- Army Medic **Gabriel J. Figueroa**, 20, son of Metro Rail Transportation Operations Supervisor Javier Figueroa, was killed while on patrol in Baghdad April 3.
- Retired Metro Bus Operator **Lonnie Anders** died, April 17, following a lengthy illness.

- **Danny R. Horn, III** died June 25. He is the son of Danny Horn, a cash clerk and relief vault truck driver in Metro Revenue Collections.
- Retired Mail Carrier **Ed Edwards** died suddenly, July 10, following an illness.
- **Virgilio Malonzo**, an assistant administrative analyst died after suffering a heart attack on July 14. He was 60.
- Metro Bus Operator **Gregory Bradley** died in a traffic accident July 26.
- West Hollywood Division 7 Bus Operator **Derick Bradford** died of a heart attack July 29.
- **Charles Walker**, a Rail Operations assistant manager and 30-year Metro veteran, died in his home, Aug. 13, after suffering a heart attack on Saturday. He was 67.
- Central City Division 1 Bus Operator **Juan Zapata** died, Aug. 10, at Beverly Hospital in Montebello.
- Carson Division 18 Equipment Maintenance Supervisor **Dennis Dearing** died after suffering a heart attack Sept. 8.
- Metro Bus Operator **Jimmy Coulter** died, Sept. 11, following a long bout with cancer.
- Metro Blue Line Operator **Anthony Cuadra** died, Sept. 14, following a short illness.
- Metro Bus Operator **Ruben Salazar** died suddenly Sept. 18.
- Longtime SCRTD general counsel and interim general manager **Richard T. Powers** died, Sept. 24, in Fullerton. He was 83.
- Retired Metro Service Attendant **Debra Cannon** died, Sept. 27, following a lengthy illness.
- Retired Equipment Records Specialist **Marcia Scuka** died at home in West Covina, Oct. 17, following a lengthy bout with cancer.
- Retired Mechanic "A" **Rodrigo Tovar** died at a hospice, Oct. 24, following an 18-month battle with cancer.
- Metro Bus Operator **Linda K. Hammond** died of cancer Oct. 10. She was 58.
- Metro Bus Operator **Sergio Meza-Nunez** died, Oct. 30, following a lengthy illness. He was 43.
- **Joel Woodhull**, who retired from LACMTA in 1995 after a 22-year career in bus operations planning, died of a major cerebral hemorrhage, Oct. 24, in Santa Rosa. He was 70.
- **Ron Dupuis**, director of Contract Administration, died, Nov. 5, during convalescence following a heart attack last May.

- Equipment Maintenance Supervisor **Rosendo Jauregui** of Crossroads Depot Division 2 died, Nov. 10, in a motorcycle accident.
- Retired Metro Bus Operator **Joyce M. Foreman** died, Nov. 14, following an illness.

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## Board Approves 62 as Qualifying Age for Discounted Senior Cash Fares, Passes

- Board OKs Draft of 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan for Public Comment

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- [Gating Metro Rail Stations](#)
- [Circulation of Draft Long Range Plan](#)

(Jan. 29, 2008) During its Jan. 24 meeting, the Metro Board standardized the age for discounted senior fares, approved a draft of the 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan for public comment and voted for an energy conservation project at the Metro Support Services Center (MSSC).

The Board continued for further analysis a decision on awarding a contract for gating Metro Rail stations and adopting a proposed fare policy.

### Item 16, Qualifying Age for Senior Discounts

The Board approved a motion to standardize 62 as the qualifying age for all discounted senior cash fares and passes. In some cases 65 had been used as the age for senior fares.

The Board carried over adoption of a proposed fare policy.

### Item 30, Gating Metro Rail Stations

The Board carried over for additional analysis the recommendation by the Executive Management and Audit Committee and the Operations Committee that the CEO execute agreements with Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc. to design and build station modifications for gating some Metro Rail stations.

The proposed agreements would have relocated existing stand-alone validators and included associated civil engineering work and maintenance for the gating systems.

### Item 50, Solar Energy Generation at Metro Support Services Center

The Board approved an 11-year public/private partnership agreement with Chevron Energy Solutions to design, build and provide maintenance oversight of an energy conservation project at the Metro Support Services Center.

The life-of-project budget would be slightly more than \$21 million. Chevron would construct a photovoltaic solar panel roof system and



install more energy efficient equipment.

This would include new lighting equipment, state-of-the-art lighting controls and energy management systems. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning would be replaced and compressed air systems would be optimized.

The Board also approved a staff recommendation to add one facilities support technician for maintenance and operation of the future solar panels and energy conservation equipment at the MSSC, as well as the solar panel systems previously installed at Divisions 8, 15 and 18.

Staff estimated the generation and conservation elements of the contract would reduce the MSSC's electricity bills from \$1,093,839 to approximately \$550,000 per year.

The Board also directed County Counsel to review the contract with Chevron Energy Solutions and report back.

**Item 54, Approved Circulation of Draft Long Range Transportation Plan**

The Board approved a staff recommendation that the Draft Long Range Transportation Plan be approved for circulation for comment. The Board deferred adoption of the final plan until June 2008.

Beginning Mar. 12, the draft plan will be released for a 45-day public review.

Looking to future public/private partnerships, the Board approved a motion to instruct Metro staff to develop standards for acceptable public/private partnership funding commitments and bring this back to the full Board in 60 days.

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### Instant Landmark: Metro San Gabriel Valley opens eco-friendly headquarters

(Jan. 29, 2008) A rainy day kept the guests of Metro San Gabriel Valley's eco-headquarters grand opening inside, but that didn't stop the cascade of certificates, awards, congratulations, media and official praise that accompanied the ribbon and cake cutting festivities Jan. 25. The \$13-million, three-story, 45,500-square-foot building was built to meet LEED Silver Certified environmental standards. The facility surpasses the state's standards for energy use and water consumption and consumes 33 percent less electricity than a conventional structure.

*Photos by Juan Ocampo*



From left, El Monte Mayor Ernie Gutierrez, Board member John Fasana, Board Chair Pam O'Connor, Metro San Gabriel Valley General Manager Jack Gabig and CEO Roger Snoble cut the official cake.



Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers accepts the congressional recognition certificate awarded to the project by U.S. Congresswoman Hilda Solis.



It's easy being green: Tim Lindholm, director of capital projects facilities operations, and project manager John Jaramillo lead team effort to take Metro green.



Framed in natural light, guests enter lobby, above. At right, Board Chair Pam O'Connor with artist Raoul De la Sota, at installation site of de la Sota's work, *Forward to the Past*, a 20-foot tall acrylic painting. Below, officials make the opening official at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



From left, Carolyn Flowers, Mayor Ernie Gutierrez, John Fasana, San Gabriel Governance Council Chairwoman Rosie Vasquez, Pam O'Connor, Jack Gabig, U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer representative Gina Semenza and CEO Roger Snoble.

--from Gayle Anderson

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Division 18 recently invested some federal grant money in new lights to illuminate its bus yard. Maintenance Manager Ken Matsuno said the lights were needed to make the yard safer for the night crews. *Photos by Jimmy Stroup*



## Division 18 Brightens Its Outlook on Life

By JIMMY STROUP

(Jan. 31, 2008) The industrial area of Carson is filled with large businesses that are seldom open after 5 p.m. Dark and empty streets are the norm in the evening hours.

Not so at Division 18, which now glows brightly out of the nighttime scene—think Las Vegas surrounded by the black Nevada desert—thanks to new lighting in the bus yard.

"We got a federal grant, which gave us some money to add some lighting to the yard," said Ken Matsuno, maintenance manager. "It was so dark before."

By "some lighting" Matsuno refers to more than 10 35-foot poles lining the perimeter of the yard, surrounding two gigantic 80-foot poles in the middle.

The shorter poles have three light heads on them. The two mammoth, stadium-style poles in the yard's center have 10 heads each, pouring a brilliant amber glow over the entire area.

Matsuno said the maintainers and operators who worked at night routinely carried a flashlight to read the designation numbers on each





The two stadium-style poles in the yard's center have 10 heads each, pouring a brilliant amber glow over the entire area.

were installed without a hitch to operations, and the 80-foot giants were installed using plenty of ingenuity.

"They bored a shaft under the yard from the power source to where they were going to put the poles and ran the cables through them," Matsuno said. "Then they drilled the holes they needed to mount the pole and put it up. That was it. We only had one bus lane out of commission for the whole thing."

The lights in the center poles are easily replaced, in part because each pole features a built-in winch. The winch lowers the crown of the fixture to ground level for easy access. Matsuno said he didn't want to go eight stories above the ground to replace a burned-out bulb anyway.

"Do you want to go 80 feet into the air?" he asked. "I don't. I'm not afraid of heights, but that's a little too high for my taste," he said.

bus. The new lighting poles mean a lot of flashlights now languish, unused, in lockers at Carson.

#### **'This is much safer'**

"Before we had 30-foot poles all over and they didn't do much to light the area," he said. "It wasn't dangerous, but we did have some close calls where drivers wouldn't be able to see people in the yard. This is much safer for everyone."

Installation of the lights was convenient for the division, unlike some upgrades. The perimeter poles





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## Metro's Intranet Brought Down Yesterday by Invading Software

- *myMetro.net* brought back online this morning

By NED RACINE, Editor  
(Jan. 31, 2008) A nasty piece of invading software brought down Metro's intranet yesterday, highlighting the constant threats to the agency's computer servers.

The intranet1 site was taken offline by ITS late Wednesday morning and brought back up Thursday morning.

According to Elizabeth Bennett, Metro's chief information officer, a piece of "malware" attacked Metro's system and re-routed the links on Metro's intranet site, directing all the links to a single website.

Malware is a general term for software built to infiltrate or damage a computer system without the owner's knowledge. Like "spam," a term for unsolicited or unwanted emails, malware are usually sent in bulk and may have a destructive program attached.

Bennett estimates that 75 percent of the emails received by Metro's email servers are spam.

"All Metro employees need to be aware of the potential dangers of Internet sites, one reason they should be accessing only sites necessary for them to conduct Metro business," Bennett said.

"We do a good job blocking spam before it reaches our employees, but with threats constantly evolving, we need employees' help to keep Metro's communication network safe," Bennett said. "Safeguarding Metro's network is every employee's responsibility.

Bennett asks employees to notify the ITS Help Desk at 2-HELP (2-4357) if they encounter any unfamiliar or suspicious actions occurring on their workstations and to comply with all ITS network broadcast messages.