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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



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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