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## Services Planned for Long-Time Bus Operator, Respected Wrestling Coach

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 3, 2008) Services are scheduled for long-time Metro bus operator and renowned wrestling coach Louie Madrigal, whose body was found in his home on Feb. 28.

Madrigal spent his career at Metro as a part-time bus operator, beginning in June 1983 with Division 2 Crossroads Depot. From October 1984 Madrigal worked in Division 9 San Gabriel Valley.

"He came [to Metro] for the insurance and he grew to love it," said Helen Perez, a Division 9 transit operations supervisor. Perez knew Madrigal for 17 years, not only as a co-worker but because her two sons trained with the coach. According to Perez, Madrigal used his commercial operator's license to drive his wrestling team in a school bus.

"When [I] went to a match, everyone knew him," Perez recalled.

Madrigal became wrestling coach at Rosemead High School in the late 1980s and, according to the *San Gabriel Valley Tribute*, built a highly recognized program in the [California Interscholastic Federation Southern Section](#). He lead the Rosemead teams to Southern Section individual team championships in 1988 and 2004 and a dual championship in 2002.

Perez said she will most remember Madrigal's dedication. "He was the kind of person who was quiet, did his job, stayed out of trouble. However, if you mentioned wrestling, he could talk for hours."

In a tribute to Madrigal's career at Rosemead High School, the school will hold a memorial service on the football field on Saturday, March 8 from noon to 2 p.m. The service will be held at 9063 East Mission Drive, Rosemead, 91770.

"He never understood how much he touched people's lives," Perez said, adding that her older son made Madrigal the subject of a college essay describing his most inspirational person.

A viewing will be held Friday, March 7, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Lambert, Tim-Pierce Brothers Simone Du Bois, located at 1136 E. Las Tunas Dr., San Gabriel, 91776.

Mass follow on Saturday, March 8 at 10 a.m. at Saint Anthony's Greek Orthodox Church, located at 1905 S. San Gabriel Blvd., San Gabriel, 91776.



Louie Madrigal spend his 24-year career at Metro as a part-time bus operator.



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## Little Things Remind Division 7 Maintainers They're Appreciated

- Judy Ochoa tracks 135 birthdays and anniversaries

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 3, 2008) Judy Ochoa, West Hollywood Division 7 general clerk, tracks the birthdays and anniversaries of 135 members of her Metro family.

Then, once or twice a month, she makes and mails birthday and anniversary cards to each Division 7 maintenance employee.

"It's just a little recognition of their hard work," Ochoa said. "Just a 'thank you' for being here and working with us, part of the family atmosphere we're trying to create around here."

Ochoa designs and personalizes each card, then asks Maintenance Manager David Palm – who ordered "Operation Birthday Card" into existence – to sign them.

"I just told Judy to do it and it got done," Palm said. "I love it when things work like that."

The cards are a segment of Palm's plan to change the way maintainers at Division 7 interact with management. Ochoa said Palm's prior experience in the Marines had him trained to expect a certain kind of relationship in the workplace. He's bringing it to Metro with gusto.

"We used to give out the monthly certificates of appreciation, sure, but that was a piece of paper," Ochoa said. "[Palm] wants the employees to know that there's some feeling behind it when we tell the employees that they're doing good work."

Ochoa was in the Army for three years, so she and Palm see eye-to-eye on things like employee recognition and validation.

## Making the employees feel welcome

Palm started giving restaurant gift certificates out with Employee of the Month accolades. He's also split the award into three awards, so each shift gets the recognition he thinks they deserve.

Ochoa said Division 7 maintenance now has a standing policy to



Photo: Jimmy Stroup

Judy Ochoa, the Division 7 maintenance general clerk, keeps track of maintenance workers' birthdays and anniversaries – 135 of them – so management can send cards to them on their special days. She makes the cards, too.

acknowledge work that's above and beyond the call of duty with personal recognition. Management takes the time to sit employees down and tell them, face-to-face, that they're an important component in Metro's machine.

"We're looking to institute things that will make the employees feel welcome and to let them know that the company management is aware that they work hard, that they're doing a good job," she said.

As a side benefit, making the cards gives Ochoa the chance to stretch her creative wings for a few hours on the agency's dime; she's currently working toward a bachelor's degree in creative design.

"It's fun. I find it relaxing, to be honest," she said. "It fits in with my interests, so making the cards gives me a chance to play while I'm at work."



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## Los Angeles SAFE Board Approves 511 Motorist Information System

- Almost half the nation uses a similar system

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 3, 2008) After several months of discussion, the Board of Los Angeles County Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (LA SAFE), Feb. 28, awarded a \$31 million contract to develop and deploy a multi-county Motorist Aid and Traveler Information System (MATIS).

MATIS is commonly referred to as a "511" system because travelers are able to dial 511 on their phones and receive detailed traffic information to aid their daily commutes.

The \$31 million, 10-year contract to create and put MATIS into action was awarded to the IBI Group, which will create a system to coordinate the existing freeway call box system, fleet monitoring for the Metro Freeway Service Patrol and the regional 511 Traveler Information System.

Metro CEO Roger Snoble told board members MATIS is common in other parts of the country, but that LA SAFE had to coordinate with four neighboring counties, meaning Los Angeles County's 511 system has taken a bit longer than anticipated.

"In our area, the 511 may grow to be region-wide and affect the counties around us, so we wanted to make sure that they had some input into the procurement of the technology," Snoble said. "We invited them to join into the procurement even though our contract is mainly for Los Angeles County."

Snoble said a side-benefit to waiting to implement MATIS has been reduced cost. Because other areas of the country have 511 systems, the development and deployment of MATIS will cost the county less than it might have a few years ago.

Though IBI Group will be paid for its work, the contract specifies that MATIS will be used as an advertising platform, generating an expected offset of more than \$8 million and lowering the price of the project considerably. The contractor will return 40 percent of any money earned through advertising above and beyond the \$8 million figure.

The Federal Communications Commission designated 511 as the national traveler information number in 2000. To see what the San Francisco Bay area has done with its MATIS-like system, go to [www.511.org](http://www.511.org).

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## No Cards or Flowers Required: Metro Turns 50 March 3

LAMTA, Metro's predecessor agency, was originally formed to study a monorail line from the San Fernando Valley to Long Beach.



By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 4, 2008) Although birthday candles and flowers are unnecessary, March 3 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Metro's predecessor, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority (LAMTA).

On March 3, 1958, LAMTA became the owner and operator of the Los Angeles transit system with a governing board of local officials, making this the 50th anniversary of the Metro Board of Directors. For the first time, the people of Los Angeles had control over the transit system.

With LAMTA's formation, fares and routes could now be set locally. Previously, the private companies operating transit services were required to win approval from the Public Utilities Commission in Sacramento, a time consuming process.

Financed with revenue bonds, LAMTA purchased the equipment, facilities, and routes of two privately run transit companies for approximately \$40 million:

- Metropolitan Coach Lines (formerly the Pacific Electric Railway and Asbury Rapid Transit Lines)
- Los Angeles Transit Lines (formerly Los Angeles Railway).

LAMTA, originally created in 1951 to study a monorail line from the San Fernando Valley to Long Beach along the Los Angeles River, had an annual budget of \$45 million dollars and a base fare of 17 cents. Because there were no transit grant funding partners then, LAMTA had no access to public subsidies.

The Federal Transit Administration and California Transportation Commission came later, as did local sales tax subsidies.

While continuing to plan a new mass transit system for Los Angeles, LAMTA shut down the last remaining rail and streetcar lines. It also purchased modern buses and implemented more Freeway Flyer services. The new agency ran into controversy over its monorail plans and local community demand for subway instead of monorail on Wilshire Boulevard.

In 1964 LAMTA became the Southern California Rapid Transit District and in 1993 became today's Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, with an annual budget of \$3.1 billion.





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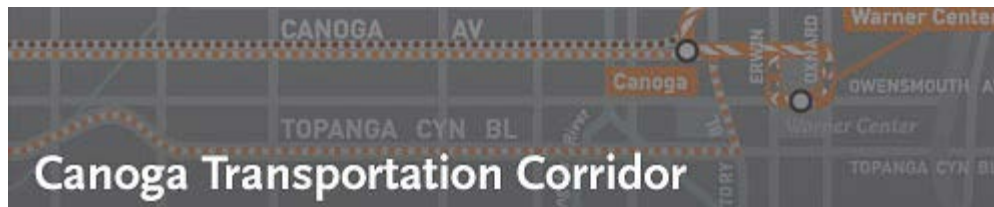
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## Metro Releases Draft Environmental Report for Canoga Corridor Project

- Public Meetings Scheduled for March 19, 26

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 5, 2008) In a sign of progress for the proposed northern extension of the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley, Metro has released its Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Canoga Transportation Corridor. Two meetings will be held in March to receive public comment.

A proposed four-mile extension of Metro Orange Line service, the project would connect the Canoga Park & Ride Lot to the Chatsworth Metrolink Station, allowing Metro to increase north-south mobility in the western area of the Valley.

Based on community input, Metro has narrowed the project alternatives to be studied as part of the environmental review process. One alternative would extend the existing Metro Orange Line along Metro's right-of-way. Another option would build a Canoga Avenue Busway that would operate on a bus-only lane along a widened Canoga Avenue.

Initial analysis indicates the right of way construction would be less expensive.

Either option would require land on the east side of Canoga Avenue; the great majority of that land, according to Walt Davis, transportation planning manager, is owned by Metro. Davis notes that Metro has already notified those leasing its land that it may build a transportation project.

"We did some modeling and modeling indicated that the ridership on [either option] would be very good," Davis said. "For a four-mile alignment it would attract about 10,000 new riders a day and attract new riders to the existing Orange Line."

Either option would also include a Class 1 bikeway and pedestrian way, as does the Orange Line. The four-mile extension would include four new stations and a 255-space parking lot at Sherman Way. Parking would also be available at the Orange Line Canoga station and the Chatsworth Metrolink station.

Davis estimated that once construction began, the Canoga Avenue Busway or the Metro Orange Line extension would take approximately 30 months

to build. If funding becomes available, either option could be opened by 2014.

Open Houses and public hearings will be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday, March 19, 2008, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. New Academy Canoga Park, Multi-Purpose Room, 21425 Cohasset Street, Canoga Park, CA
- Wednesday, March 26, 2008, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., Chatsworth High School, Chancellor Hall, 10027 Lurline Avenue, Chatsworth, CA

Comments gathered at the upcoming public hearings will be incorporated into the Metro's Final EIR and submitted for Board certification later this year.

The deadline for public comment is Wednesday, April 16, 2008. Comments can be made at the public hearing or submitted to: Walt Davis, Project Manager, Metro, One Gateway Plaza, MS 99-22-9, Los Angeles, CA 90012 or [daviswa@metro.net](mailto:daviswa@metro.net).


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### Metro Appoints New DEO in Operations Service Planning and Development

(March 5, 2008) Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers appointed Conan Cheung, March 4, to the position of Deputy Executive Officer, Operations Service Planning and Development.

Cheung comes to the agency by way of the Metropolitan Transit System in San Diego where he was Director of Planning and Scheduling, and Service Planning Manager.

Cheung is familiar with Los Angeles, having earned a BA from UCLA in Urban and Regional Planning and an MA from USC in Public Administration and Urban Planning. He's worked in transit for 11 years.

### Metro Partners with UCLA's Center for Neighborhood Knowledge

(March 5, 2008) In a web-based project called "Neighborhood Knowledge California," Metro and UCLA are working together to build knowledge about Los Angeles neighborhoods that only the residents who live there could know.

Using a custom geographic information system mapping program, Metro's Rufina Juarez, transportation planning manager, and UCLA's Neal Richman have taught neighborhood residents how to add their unique knowledge into an interactive database.

The program is meant to build an information center so planners and laypeople alike can make better informed decisions about how to develop urban areas. Juarez said the program gives residents an opportunity to make their specialized regional knowledge useful to all.

To see the project, visit: [www.NKCA.ucla.edu](http://www.NKCA.ucla.edu)

### 1st Street Bridge Over the Los Angeles River Re-Opened

(March 5, 2008) Metro re-opened the 1st Street Bridge to two-way traffic, Feb. 29, after a month of construction for the Gold Line Eastside Extension. Re-opening of one lane of traffic each direction will bring some normalcy back to a well-used thoroughfare in East Los Angeles.

Construction efforts on the bridge were quickened by the full bridge closure and allowed the agency to move faster – and impact the community less.

Train testing on the new track is scheduled to begin in October.



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## Metro.net Interactive Offers New Views of Los Angeles, Metro

- Check it out: [Metro Interactive](#)

(March 6, 2008) Metro.net has launched the first phase of its new Metro Interactive video wall – a collection of videos and photos offering a taste of Los Angeles County and the Metro System.

The pages already feature man-on-the-street snippets. The Transit Takes feature presents photos of Metro riders who were captured using Metro.

Also available are videos from the Go Metro campaign, as well as news and features reporting on events and ongoing projects and videos from the Rail Safety Education Program.

Metro Interactive is also home to Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor's live chats, PBS star Huell Howser's "Ten Great Reasons to Share the Ride" and Howser's "Tales from the Fast Lane" interviews with Metro customers.

In the future, Metro Interactive will include blogs, polls to collect customer opinion, streaming video of the agency's Metro Motion cable television show and tools to allow users to upload traffic photos and videos.

"We see Metro Interactive as a tool to help us reach out to our customers," said Marc Littman, Metro Deputy Executive Office of Public Relations. "It's another way for us to find out what the public needs and also to explore some of the great destinations Metro can help visitors reach."

Littman was especially thankful to Metro's webmasters and IT staff for making the project less an idea and more a reality. Littman said the page is only going to get better. --From Kim Upton



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Puppy Raisers from Guide Dogs of America line up at Metro Gold Line Del Mar Station for the train ride back to Union Station after adventurous outing to Pasadena. Metro's Agustin Moreno, second from right with guide dog Shadow, were role models for the impressionable and somewhat awe-struck canine companions and their very well-behaved trainers.



## Confidence 101

- **Guide Dogs of America 'Puppies in Training' take a ride on the Metro Gold Line to a day full of adventure, lessons and a whole bunch of fun.**

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(March 11, 2008) It was the start of a beautiful day for Agustin Moreno, his faithful guide dog Shadow by his side. Moreno, a scheduling systems project leader who is legally blind, and Shadow, his guide dog assistant for nearly four years, anticipated an adventure of perfect delight March 8 as they waited in lobby of historic Union Station. They would soon be in the company of Guide Dogs of America volunteer puppy raisers and their charges out for the annual trek on the Metro Gold Line to a sit-down lunch in Pasadena.

With Moreno leading the way, some 20 guide dogs in training boarded the Metro Gold Line, their perfectly behaved trainers in tow. The group, organized by district leader Glyn Judson, hailed from Sylmar, Mar Vista, the San Fernando Valley, Rancho Palos Verdes and all points west.

"We do this for fun, absolutely," said Judson, his Golden Lab companion Harry practically nodding in agreement. "But, the real purpose is to train the dogs to ride on the train and expose them to all sorts of situations where they will need to focus on



District leader Glyn Judson and Agustin Moreno give Harry and Shadow a water break in the

their job as a Guide Dog."

Judson had arranged for the trek with Chip Hazen, Metro's ADA Compliance Administrator, who supplied day passes and confirmed safety measures with rail operations and security. Three fare inspectors, assigned to the group by the Transit Security Bureau, ushered the troop into a dedicated car of the Metro Gold Line, keeping careful watch, and held their post until the return trip from the Metro Gold Line Del Mar Station some two hours later.

Puppy Raisers are volunteers who adopt the dogs at eight weeks old and provide basic training and socialization until they reach 18 months old and graduate to formal guide dog training at Guide Dogs of America facilities. During the puppy raising phase, the volunteers take the dogs everywhere to expose them to as many situations as possible -- construction sites, heavy traffic areas, animals, children, food courts, shopping malls.

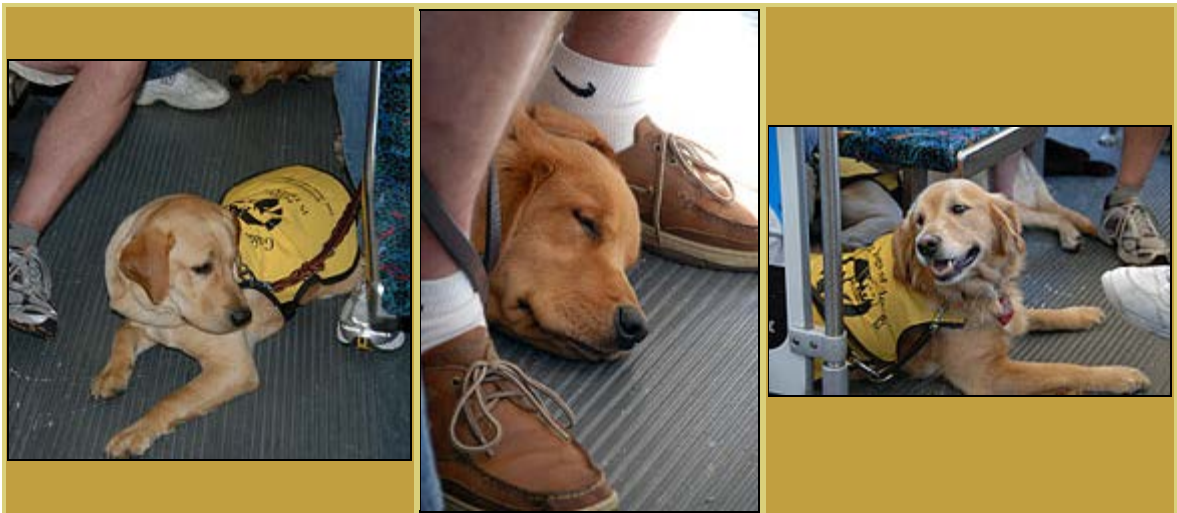
Constance Howell, a therapist who lives in Mar Vista with a 15-month old Black Labrador named Nisha, takes the dog shopping, to the movies, and even her dentist appointments. At first, Nisha took notice of the harsh whir of the drill until reassurance arrived from Constance and gained her approval. "Now, the dentist's office doesn't want to give me an appointment unless they're certain Nisha is coming along, too," she said. "They really look forward to seeing her."

Ditto for Don and Phyllis Genereux, Rancho Palos Verdes residents who have raised five dogs since they began the volunteer work in 1999. As their Golden Lab snoozed beneath the table unperturbed by the tempting aromas of French fries and club sandwiches overhead, Don reflected on the friendships and experiences with these able companions.

cool green grass of the Pasadena park. Below, Judson and Hancock Park resident Ann Benya chat over lunch while Shadow, Harry and Orion take a snooze.



• Photos by Gayle Anderson



Feet, feet, feet. All I see on the Metro Gold Line are feet. Can't I even look out the window?

"Yes, it's hard to give them up when it's time for them to take the next step in their career," he said. "But, knowing they will be well prepared for a life of service in a loving environment is very rewarding for us and for the dog as well."



Moreno and Shadow couldn't agree more. "I love meeting the people who have given us so much," said Moreno. "I thank them for the effort they do, for all the dedication they put into these puppies, for the confidence they instill in the dogs so that someone like me can have the freedom to live my life."



Glyn Judson and Harry, Agustin Moreno and Shadow, and Ann Benya with Orion lead the way across the street to the park. Below, even the aroma of the Cheesecake Factory and a convenient yellow hydrant do not faze the well-trained dogs lined up outside the trendy restaurant in Old Town Pasadena.





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Services Scheduled for Retiree Harvey R. Mendoza

- Transit Operations Supervisor retired in 2000

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 11, 2008) Services are scheduled today and tomorrow for Harvey R. Mendoza, who retired in 2000 after a 30-year career with Metro. Mendoza was 69 and died March 6 after a brief battle with cancer.

Mendoza began his career with RTD on June 20, 1970, as a bus operator. He retired July 27, 2000, as a transit operations supervisor in the Bus Operation Command Center, serving as a dispatcher.

Mendoza’s son, Donald Mendoza, a material supervisor in Inventory Management, recalls his father beginning his work day with “Good morning everybody, this is number 23 signing on.”

Donald Mendoza remembers his father’s stories of the good times he had with his co-workers and that Metro was a good organization to work for. Mendoza encouraged his sons to work at Metro. Three do: Donald, Mike and Steve.

Mendoza leaves behind his wife of 53 years, Sarah, as well as six sons, 20 grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren.

Services begin tonight with a viewing from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at White's Funeral Home, 404 E. Foothill Blvd., Azusa, California 91702, 626-334-2921.

Church services will be Wednesday, March 12 at 10 a.m. at Calvary Chapel Golden Springs, 22324 Golden Springs Drive, Diamond Bar, CA. 91765, 909-396-1884.

Internment will follow the church service at Oakdale Memorial Park, 1401 South Grand Avenue, Glendora, CA 91740.

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ADA Compliance Officer Chip Hazen is at the forefront of the entire agency's work to help Metro's customers with disabilities use the system as easily and effectively as possible. Here he holds the Metro Flash booklet displaying "901" as a customer with a vision impairment who wanted to ride the Orange Line would. *Photo by Jimmy Stroup*



## Booklets Allow Riders to Flash Info to Operators

- Booklets aid customers with vision impairments to navigate Metro system

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 11, 2008) Ten thousand hard plastic booklets arrived at Metro last week – a restocking for the last 10,000 the agency recently ran out of.

But the booklets aren't for reading in any conventional sense. Unless you can read Braille. Or unless you're a bus operator.

The purpose of the Metro Flash booklets is to help people with vision impairments get on the right buses by communicating line numbers to Metro's operators. The spiral-bound booklets also have a few pages of basic information for reference.

The booklets are one of the primary resources the agency provides for individuals with vision impairments to help them use Metro.

"It's simple to use, really," Chip Hazen, Metro's Americans with Disabilities Act compliance officer, said. "The person with a disability flips to the set of numbers that designate the line he or she wants to ride. Operators stop and help them on, or say, 'Not me, but your bus is the next bus.'"

The booklets have been used at Metro since 1995 in one form or another. The original books were made of a stiff paper but in the same design as the current booklets. Subsequent books have been a hard plastic and had

Braille lettering imbedded in the plastic.

### **Less than \$3 each**

This printing of 10,000 cost the agency less than \$3 a piece, said Jeff Ringsrud, senior marketing and communications officer, who worked with the online vendor Braille Superstore for the procurement.

This price tag was substantially less than the last batch from the late 1990s, which cost \$6.50 each, Hazen said. The cost isn't all that much, he said, when you consider how useful the patrons find Metro Flash.

"We have quite a few people who say they couldn't get around without it," Hazen said.

Operators in the field are very familiar with Metro Flash; Metro's Bus Operator Rule Book section 7.112 specifically lists the booklets and procedures to follow when the operator sees a patron using one.

Hazen said it was an operator who actually came up with the idea that became Metro Flash. The original idea was to have a set of numbers the blind could arrange onto a sign on a stick to hold up for high visibility.

### **Who Thought of It?**

"We can't really remember who came up with the idea, to be honest," Hazen said. "I'm hoping that the operator who thought it up will see this article and give me a call. It's been so successful – I'd like to see that person get some recognition."

Other transit agencies are constantly asking Hazen for a few of the booklets so they can provide them to their customers, too. Hazen said that so far, Metro is the only transit agency in California providing something like Metro Flash to its riders.

With estimates ranging up to as many as 10,000 blind riders on Metro's system, the Metro Flash booklets are likely to get picked up by new riders or existing customers whose booklets are worn out from 10 years of use.

Metro Flash booklets are readily available to those who need them through Metro's Customer Information.

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## Metro Employees' Feelings Mixed on Daylight Saving Time

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 12, 2008) Some like it. Some hate it. Some don't care either way. Whatever way you view Daylight Saving Time, it influences the lives of Metro employees agency-wide.

Originally a wartime effort to save power, Daylight Saving is longer than it used to be. In 2007, Congress adopted a measure to lengthen Daylight Saving by a month. The government tacked on three weeks by starting it earlier in March and ending it a week later on Nov. 2.

### Pros and Cons

**Jermani Martin**, service attendant leader, Venice Division 6: "I go with the flow. It gives me more time to walk around the Rose Bowl at night. It makes me feel like I get more out of my day."



**David Stidhum**, acting transportation operations supervisor, Venice Division 6: "I don't like it, to tell you the truth. You're used to staying up later at night and then have to get up earlier."

**Willie Davis**, left, bus operator, Arthur Winston Division 5: "Get rid of it, I say. It doesn't make any sense. You still live the same life, just by a different clock. It's a hassle."

**Shawn Robertson**, center, bus operator, Arthur Winston Division 5: "It makes the days go by faster, though. Seems to, anyway."

**Kenneth Santoyo**, right, bus operator, Arthur Winston Division 5: "And I've always noticed that the crime goes down right after it starts, too."



**Alex Cortez**, service attendant, Venice Division





6: "It's better; saves power, saves energy. And it's safer, too. We can see better when we're parking the buses at night. Until Daylight Saving, it's pretty dark when we're moving them around."

**Sonja Owens**, transportation manager, Central City Division 1: "It's sort of screwy to me. I'm still not on the right schedule and it's been a few days. The first couple of weeks are always touch-and-go. I go to bed early to make sure I get enough sleep to get up early. I love the other one, though. Can't wait until we "fall back."



**Alondra Shields**, bus operator, Central City Division 1: "I've always liked it. There's a little bit of sunlight left when I get off and that makes the rest of my night better, seeing that daylight after my shift."

**John Wallace**, bus operator, Central City Division 1: "I think you have enough daylight morning and night when it's Daylight Standard. They shouldn't even change it. It's harder to get to sleep at night, too."



**John Sheridan**, electronic communications technician leader, Gateway Cities Sector: "I love it, actually. You get that extra hour of sunlight. It's a sign that summer's on the way, and that's my favorite season."



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Services Scheduled for Retiree Caldwell Manley

(March 12, 2008) Services are scheduled Friday and Saturday for Caldwell “Carl” Manley, a retired mechanic, who died recently.

There will be a viewing on Friday, March 14, from 3 to 7 p.m. at Woods – Valentine Mortuary, 1455 N. Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena, 91103, 626.798.8941

Services will be held on Saturday, March 15, at 10 a.m. at Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church, 1180 Lincoln Ave, Pasadena, 91103, 626.798.9163. A repast at the church will follow the burial.

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Photo by Jimmy Stroup

Ramiro Moreno, right, took a winding path to get to Metro but wound up at the beginning of a career he thinks suits him to a tee. His uncle, Horacio, at left, has worked for Metro for five years and brought Ramiro to Metro.

found a job doing what he liked: working with and fixing machines.

"My parents weren't that happy, but I wanted to get my life started and college wasn't what I wanted to be doing," Moreno says.

Now 26, Ramiro Moreno says he's finally where he wants to be after a trying experience in college and struggling through some part-time work to make ends meet.

He was hired as a property maintainer "C" a few months ago and began training, working with his uncle Horacio Moreno, a facilities systems technician, who has been with Metro for five years.

### 'I really like the work'

"I like the environment here, the people, the benefits are good, the pay is good," Ramiro says. "But I really like the work. There's always something to fix. Always something that needs to be looked at."

With all the equipment that goes with keeping the 270 plus buses at Division 9 in serviceable condition, uncle and nephew are never lacking for work. Ramiro says he likes the variety: "It's never the same thing. There's

## UCLA Math Student Found His Calling as Property Maintainer

by JIMMY STROUP

(March 12, 2008) When Ramiro Moreno graduated from Ruben Ayala High School in Chino, he went to college. That's what he thought he ought to do.

His older brother had gone. His parents thought it was a good idea. He'd been accepted to UCLA, a tough school to get into. So he went.

Problem was, Ramiro wasn't engaged by college. He changed his major several times – a classic response when students aren't being engaged – and was plugging through a math degree that he didn't really want. He'd entertained being a teacher, but that was "only something to do."

What he did enjoy was fixing things. He liked to work with his hands. After some soul-searching, Ramiro stopped registering for classes and



always some new problem to figure out."

The bus washing system at San Gabriel Division 9 is the current project of the Morenos, though they've recently been grappling with the chassis washer.

"We've had to work on this chassis washer a few times in the last few weeks," Ramiro says. "I don't know why it's acting up. But we'll figure out why it's not working – trust me."

And now that Ramiro is working in a field that engages him professionally, he's considered returning to school to study the subjects that interest him: electronics and mechanics.

"There's a test to move up to the [facilities systems technician position], so I have to start getting ready for that," Ramiro says. "They have some classes at Rio Hondo [Community College] I can take that would really help me get ready for that."

Uncle Horacio is quietly encouraging Ramiro's return to college, but is glad to see his nephew engaged at work and enjoying his duties at Metro.

"It's neat to see him at work every day," Horacio says. "I watched him grow up. It's a little weird to see him here, working with me, but I'm enjoying that. He's picking it up fast."

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This construction zone will soon be the new operator window and transit operations supervisor area. Venice Division 6's 107-year-old building is receiving a facelift.

*Photo by Jimmy Stroup*



### Elderly Venice Division 6 Building Receiving New Life

- Multi-phase construction to make space more functional

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 13, 2008) When you're 107 years old, you probably won't look as good as the olive green transportation and maintenance building at Venice Division 6.

Metro believes, however, the building can look better and has begun a massive overhaul. The operation is meant to breathe functionality and life into the old building's bones.

"They've needed to make some changes here for more than 30 years, but there has always been the idea that our location would move," Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco said. "Since that doesn't look like that's going to happen after all, they've decided to redo it."

Well, not all of the building is pre-dates World War I. The transportation portion of the building – the two story part – only dates back to 1951, said Metro Historian Jim Walker. But the whole division, 57 or 107 years old, is getting some attention.

The building will be upgraded in phases. The present phase will gut and replace all the ceiling tiling, lighting, air conditioning and flooring in the management area.

The operator training room has been enlarged, and the window and transportation operations supervisor area have been redesigned to function better in its small space. The steno area is also being redone, as is the manager's office.

Space is limited at the division, so the work can't be done simultaneously. Construction personnel work mostly after hours so the bus operations are disrupted as little as possible.

**Break room and locker room next**

Next to be improved are the bus operator break room and the locker rooms. The women's locker room is getting a complete redesign to give women a real space to change into their uniforms – something they have little of now. Those areas will get the full treatment, too: new flooring, lighting, air conditioning and even plumbing.

The plans also include using a small part of the break room to put in a proper kitchen so the operators and maintainers have a place to cook.

"It's amazing how motivating it is with this progress," Carrasco said. "The morale has improved markedly with people at the division seeing that the agency is working to improve their conditions."

And in keeping with Metro's push for sustainability and environmentally conscious practices, the lighting will all be energy saving. They're even reusing furniture where that's feasible.

"Only in spaces where it can't fit with the new layout are we replacing the furniture," she said.

Construction is on schedule and Carrasco said the work is supposed to be finished by summer.


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Walkers, start your pedometers! Vilma Hernandez, foreground, and the Lunch Walkers. From left, Maria Puentes, Liliana Solorio-Vela, Dalila Valles, Kirsten Bell, Milagritos Acosta, Gail Harvey, Fanny Ortiz, Tatiana Martinez, Lou Bendijo-Wong, Debbie Coddington, Carmen Barocio, Marie Tervalon, Milca Elorriaga, and Alicia Carnero. Not pictured: Nellie Quevedo, Bertha Bruner, and Casaundra Mangan. Men are allowed, though none have applied. Yet.



## This club was made for walking

- The Metro Lunch Walkers are taking positive steps to improve their health and their waistline by conducting urban treks within walking distance of Metro Headquarters.



By GAYLE ANDERSON

(March 13, 2008) Vilma Hernandez is leading a revolution.

The diminutive, sweet-tempered customer relations representative, whose cool, calm demeanor assures sometimes frantic customers that you can *indeed* get there from here on Metro, has parlayed lunch time walking into a bonafide employee club that is whittling inches from waistlines, infusing the workplace with bursts of energy and has the capacity to change mood rings from a somber gray and high-anxiety amber to cool-as-a-cucumber blue.

Hernandez, and fellow customer relations agents Milca Elorriaga and Dalila Valles, franchised their lunch hour walks into an official Metro Employee Club in January. The club status enabled the fitness proponents to purchase pedometers, which the members use to calculate their miles, steps and calories burned.



Vilma Hernandez, foreground, keeps track of her fitness on the pedometer. Nellie Quevedo, background, walks on her 30-minute lunch break.

Open to everyone who wants to participate, new members are issued a pedometer and an exercise log to keep track of progress. The only requirement for membership is a willingness to incorporate walking into the lunch hour and a commitment to do so at least three times a week.

The walking regime is not limited to a certain time or group. Just grab a buddy and go at a time when it's convenient for you, says Hernandez.

"Walking with friends and co-workers during lunch to manage and regain our health — one step at a time — is the main objective of this program," said Hernandez. "Our goal is to exercise at least three times during the week and motivate each other to remain committed.

"Walking reduces cholesterol, lowers blood pressure, helps you lose weight, recharges your energy, reduces stress and it's just plain fun!" says Hernandez, who can tick off benefits faster than you can say "cheeseburger" at a fast food drive-up window.

Time was when Nellie Quevedo, OD&T Training Coordinator, enjoyed a nice sit-down lunch in the cafeteria at noontime. But that was way before she hooked up with Vilma Hernandez and the Lunch Walkers. Now, come lunchtime, she laces up her running shoes, grabs a bottle of water, sets her pedometer and takes off from the Gateway Plaza area for a 30-minute two-footed spin around Union Station with a dedicated team of walkers.

Another member, Customer Service Agent Fanny Ortiz, has been walking to work since November, a 2.5 mile distance that she sometimes treks with her children on the weekends. She's switched to preparing lower-calorie, higher nutrition meals at home for the benefit of her family. And, she's swapped early afternoon sugar lows for a burst of very productive energy.

Joining the Lunch Walkers kicked her already impressive program up a notch. "I've lost a whole pant size," says Fanny, and, if you can catch up with her at lunchtime, she'll tell you all about it.



From left, Dalila Valles, Kirsten Bell and Vilma Hernandez end the Union Station loop on the East Portal stairs. Valles and Bell, both vigorous exercisers, are the pace-setters for the 11:30 walk.

• Photos by Gayle Anderson

A typical Metro Lunch Walker can log in 2.5 miles in a 45-minute walkabout. That's about 6,000 steps and a 300-calorie burn. Fitness levels range from a marathoner who can ski slaloms backwards (that would be Kirsten Bell) to a self-professed former cubicle, er, couch potato (that would be an unnamed but nevertheless inspired reporter, me.)

Charter members include club organizers Hernandez, Milca Elorriaga and Dalila Valles and foot soldiers Bertha Bruner, Maria Puentes, Tatiana Martinez, Fanny Ortiz, Carmen Barocio, Milagritos Acosta, Kirsten Bell, Casaundra Mangan, Alicia Carnero, Lou Bendijo-Wong, Nellie Quevedo, Debbie Coddington, Liliana Solorio-Vela and Marie Tervalon.

For more information and to sign up, contact Vilma Hernandez, Milca Elorriaga or Dalila Valles.

And, put your running shoes on. The group plans to register for the 5k Revlon Run/Walk for Breast Cancer on May 10. You can go, too.



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The 22-Story Solair Building at Wilshire/Western Metro Purple Line Station takes mid-Wilshire skyline to new heights. Topping-off ceremony was held March 3.



Photos by Gary Leonard

Joint Development High Rise Reaches Tall Milestone

- Mid-Wilshire project at Wilshire/Western Purple Line station



Los Angeles City Councilman Herb Wesson, foreground center, Metro Board Member Yvonne Burke, center in blue suit, and, behind her, Metro Property Management Chief Roger Moliere, join Koar Development Group officials in topping off ceremony where construction crews hoisted a potted tree onto the 22-story high roof

(March 13, 2008) In a 22-story symbol of its commitment to transit-oriented development, Metro joined with the KOAR Development Group, March 10, to celebrate a major construction milestone for the Solair joint development at the Wilshire/Western Metro Purple Line Station.

The event celebrated the highest structural element of the Mid-Wilshire high-rise being swung into place. The glass-wrapped tower will offer 186 cosmopolitan residences and penthouses, accompanied by a resort-style pool deck and many resident amenities.

At street level, Solair will create a new destination on Wilshire with a



40,000 square-foot specialty retail plaza. Spanning Wilshire and Western, the two-story plaza will provide a high-end shopping and dining experience, including space for restaurants, boutiques, cafés and services.

All of this is integrated with the Wilshire and Western Metro Purple Line station, providing direct access to the underground subway system for convenient Metro Rail transportation throughout the county.

Solair is one of the latest developments within Metro's joint development program, which seeks to provide the most appropriate private and/or public sector development on Metro-owned property at, and adjacent to, transit stations and corridors.

The program, which also seeks to help reduce auto use and congestion by encouraging transit-linked development, has involved more than \$1.4 billion in joint development projects throughout Los Angeles County.

Solair is expected to complete construction at the end of 2008.

*--From Dave Sotero*





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Carson Division 18 is dedicated to helping the participants lose weight in every way, even teaching them what a healthy meal looks like. From left: Ben Cooper, Demetrius Jones, Richelle Rayford, Laretta Meadows and Shannon Holley put together healthy salads and sandwiches for those interested in weight loss. Bernard Warren managed to sneak into the picture, in the back... *Photos by Jimmy Stroup*



### Division 18 Looking for the Biggest "Loser"

- Weight loss competition has more than 50 participants

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 18, 2008) Carson Division 18 wants more healthy losers. So more than 50 division employees have come together to lose weight and improve overall health in the first UTU Carson Division 18 Fitness Challenge.

Split into three groups, each is led by a transportation assistant manager: Cheryl Brown, Patsy Goens and Demetrius Jones. The operators signed a contract and agreed to bi-monthly weigh-ins to measure their progress through the spring.

"The group that comes out with the greatest reduction in body fat will get a healthy lunch on the management," Brown said.

But a free lunch is not the only incentive. The UTU has agreed to fund prizes for the top three individuals whose body fat is lowered the most.



Operator Victor Andrews is one of the leaders of the UTU Carson Division 18 Fitness Challenge. The weight loss competition involves a weigh-in every two weeks on this medical-grade scale, as well as a measurement on a device that calculates body fat. Division Steno Mayra Cortez is also participating in the team competition.

The third-place prize is a \$50 gift card to McCormick and Schmick's seafood restaurant. The second-place winner receives a \$150 gift card to a day spa. And the first-place prize is an American Express gift card the winner can use to pamper herself or himself.

"We got the union involved on this one because they care about the health of the operators as much as we do," Brown said.

"If this works out as well as I'm hoping, maybe we can get some other divisions involved in a similar program.

### **Another in a group of fitness opportunities**

The challenge was suggested by operators Victor Andrews and Mike Booher. Andrews already runs the weekend aerobics class the division has for its employees.

The Division 18 Fitness Challenge was modeled on the NBC television show "The Biggest Loser," a reality program that presents people competing to lose the most weight in a certain period.

The division's program measures a reduction in body fat, which may not be as thrilling but does give a better indication of the actual benefits to overall health, Brown said.

The separation of participants into management-led groups is a normal thing at Division 18, which routinely works with team-building exercises. Assistant Transportation Manager Patsy Goens said that breeding a little healthy competition into an event is a good way to increase the participation.

"I'm really proud of the people around here," Goens said. "We're really working hard at improving the health of our people. The operators are participating in this whole-heartedly. I'm excited to see who will end up winning."

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## Metro Looks to Future with Release of Draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan

- Seven Community Meetings Planned in March and April

(March 18, 2008) Metro wants to hear your thoughts on Los Angeles County's transportation future and the Draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan that suggests a path to that future.



Metro released the draft on March 12, beginning a 45-day public review period which includes seven community meetings in March and April. The plan offers a 25-year blueprint for transportation planning in Los Angeles County through the Year 2030.

"This draft plan is both a vision and a call to action," said Metro CEO Roger Snoble.

Check it out: [metro.net](#) The draft plan charts what transportation improvements are necessary to keep Los Angeles County moving to the year 2030 and once adopted by Metro's Board of Directors later this year, will establish priorities for funding a balanced transportation system.

The plan addresses transportation needs throughout the County, such as closing gaps in the freeway carpool lane network, expanding Metro Rail and bus service, improving major street capacity and speeds, bicycle and pedestrian improvements and rideshare opportunities.

The draft 2008 Long Range Transportation Plan would further those gains but Snoble noted that funding for most of the new highway and public transportation projects is lacking.

"With Sacramento and Washington caught in a budget squeeze, we have to come up with new revenue on the local level if we are to implement this critical plan," Snoble said.

Metro employees can request copies of the draft plan and request additional information by calling the Long Range Transportation Plan Hotline at (213) 922-2833 or visit [www.metro.net/longrangeplan](#). Copies also are available in the Records Management office on the plaza level; that office is open on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If you are unable to attend the community meetings, you can e-mail your comments to [metroplan@metro.net](#) or send your written comments to Countywide Planning & Development, One Gateway Plaza, Mail Stop 99-23-2, Los Angeles, CA, 90012, Attn: Robert Cáliz. All comments need to be postmarked and submitted by April 25.

Following the public comment period, the Metro Board will consider

adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan in June.

The following community meetings will be held during the 45-day public review period:

- **March 26, 2008:** 6:30 p.m., Westside Cities, Plummer Park, 7377 Santa Monica Bl., West Hollywood, CA 90046
- **March 27, 2008:** 6:30 p.m. Central Los Angeles, Metro Headquarters, One Gateway Plaza, Board Room – 3rd Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90012
- **April 3, 2008:** 6 p.m., South Bay Cities, Carson Community Center, Room 107, 801 East Carson Street Carson, CA 90745
- **April 8, 2008:** 6 p.m., San Gabriel Valley, Potrero Heights Elementary School, 8026 East Hill Dr., Rosemead, CA 91770,
- **April 10, 2008:** 6 p.m., Gateway Cities, Progress Park Plaza West, 15500 Downey Av., Paramount, CA 90723,
- **April 22, 2008:** 6:30 p.m., North Los Angeles County, Larry Chimbole Cultural Center, Lilac Room – 1st Floor, 38350 Sierra Highway, Palmdale, CA 93550,
- **April 23, 2008:** 6 p.m., San Fernando Valley, Marvin Braude Constituent Service Center, Room 1B, 6262 Van Nuys Bl., Van Nuys, CA 91401

*--From Rick Jager*

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(March 18, 2008) Where is that Petty Cash Count Form? Have I lost the Network Access Request? What to do?

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Just before 12:28 p.m. on March 12, Tim Elam entered the "Halt System" command to shut down the Harris SCADA system after 19 years of service. The Harris SCADA system computers weighed about 5,500 pounds. At right, Phyllis Arispe, Rail Transit operations supervisor, works against a background of the new AIM SCADA system.



Photos by Ned Racine

## Nineteen-Year Metro Employee Retiree Turned Off at Farewell Celebration

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 19, 2008) A bittersweet celebration on March 12 at the Rail Operation Control facility marked the retirement of a conscientious 19-year Metro employee. Two things made this celebration unique. First, the retiree ate no cake. Second, the retiree was turned off. Permanently.

The Harris SCADA system, which provided the remote supervision and control required for moving up to 80,000 Metro light rail passengers each day, was replaced by a newer system. The Harris SCADA's first day on the job, July 14, 1990, was the day the Metro Blue Line opened.

On Harris SCADA's (Light Rail Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) last day on the job, there was no shortage of admiring tributes to the reliable system.

"It was a rock steady system," said Ray Schuck, a systems maintenance supervisor and one of the original Metro engineers responsible for maintaining the Harris SCADA system (Harris was the name of the manufacturer). "It was built like a military tank." Schuck traveled to Florida for four months to learn the system.

Turning off Harris SCADA was Tim Elam, who worked for Harris and spent 24 months onsite at Metro designing and implementing the system. "It was

a little hard to turn it off," Elam said. "After all that blood, sweat and tears, it was hard to come back and see it's obsolete."

The new AIM SCADA system has enhanced graphics, advanced train-tracking features and the ability to meet future rail expansion.

Elam noted that none of the systems created today have the same longevity—technology is moving too fast. As an example, each Harris SCADA mainframe had 10 megabytes of memory and 700 megabytes of disk space, a miniscule amount when eraser-sized flash drives have 4 gigabytes of disk space.

Making the system's success even more incredible, it was Metro's first SCADA system and the only transit system Harris ever developed. Elam and his team built the SCADA capability into a system typically used to monitor hydroelectric systems.

"It's a real pioneering job he did here," Shuck said of Elam, noting that Elam moved to Southern California to bring the Harris SCADA system to life.

"Every man loves an electric train and this is a full-size electric train," Elam said. "We had a blast."

Those attending the farewell who created the system and who worked with it praised its ease of use and its ability to work seven days a week and 24 hours a day.

Chuck Weissman, a supervising engineer in Transit Systems Engineering, said "I considered it an honor to work on a project like this."



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1st Class of '08: New train operators, standing, from left, are Dayman Medearis, TOS Ricardo Perez (instructor), Miguel de la Cruz, Monzur Chowdhury, Paul Andrews, Ken Collins, James Green, Cesar Hernandez Almanza, Norman Woods, Naik Hassan and Peter Rosendale. Instructors, seated, from left, are Hector Gutierrez, Luis Canal, Arnold "A.J." Johnson, Cristobal Medina, Esther Pippins, Gerald Harper and Will Johnson.



Photos: Gayle Anderson

## Metro Rail Graduates 10 New Train Operators

- "Metro moves the world, with a smile," says Rail GM Mike Cannell.

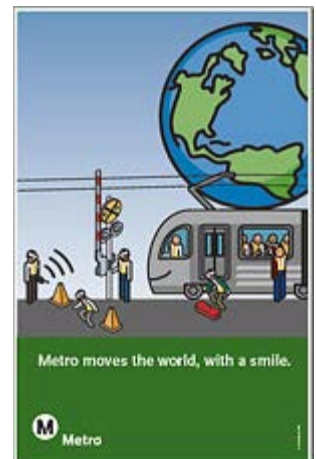
By GAYLE ANDERSON

(March 19, 2008) When Metro Rail GM Mike Cannell took the podium March 14 to welcome the new graduating class of Metro Train Operators, he opened with a smile, telling the 10 new graduates about the time he happened to board a Metro Gold Line train when "Running Wolf" was at the controls.

Metro Rail Operator Ruben "Running Wolf" Hernandez likes to welcome passengers with impromptu safety presentations with a comedic flair on his Metro Gold Line runs.

Cannell looked around and noticed the diversity on board could very well represent the whole world. And, because of Running Wolf's camaraderie, they were all smiling.

So, along with a framed graduation certificate, Cannell handed out a poster of a campaign inspired by Running Wolf: an illustration of a smiling Metro train carrying a globe of the world and smiling passengers on board framed by the slogan "Metro moves the



Rail GM handed out posters to graduates.

world, with a smile."

Director of Transportation Duane Martin talked about the seven-week intensive course: "This training is a lot of hard work and requires a commitment to each other and time away from your families. So, keep those certificates. They're a badge of honor."



A family affair: Accepting congratulations from Rail GM Mike Cannell is 8-month-old Sadiq Hassan, with dad Naik. At right, Michelle Rosendale, 3, accepts diploma for dad Peter.



The training consists of an overview of the rail system and concentrated instruction on rules and procedures followed by hands-on yard operation, mainline operation and procedures specific to operation of each rail line, said Linda Leone, rail instruction manager.

The graduates, all currently assigned to bus divisions, now enter a new phase of their careers. In making the transition from bus to train, they will be responsible for handling vehicles with more weight, with much faster speeds and many times more passengers.



Graduate Ken Collins with Rail GM Mike Cannell. Naik Hassan looks on. Below, Graduate James Green takes the podium.

The instructors encouraged the students to work as a team, helping each other learn standard operating procedures, rail safety, mainline and yard operation and vehicle troubleshooting.

All heaped equal helpings of praise and gratitude upon their instructors. Said James Green: "To turn the corner to be a rail operator, our instructors told us we would have to learn a new language. I guess that's because it's a new side of the world. The instructors are amazing mentors. They inspired me to do my best."

Directed by Leone, the class was conducted at various times by rail training instructors Arnold Johnson, Willard Johnson, Gerald Harper, Cristobal Medina, Luis Canal, Hector Gutierrez, Frank Hooks, Esther Pippins, Ricardo Perez and Karl Williams.

"This really *is* America's Best!" said the newly graduated Ken Collins. "I thought it was a dream. I had electric train sets when I was little and wanted to be a train operator when I grew up!"



The new operators will continue at the bus divisions until they rotate into rail operations. The new operators are Cesar Hernandez Almanza, Peter Rosendale, Dayman Medearis, Norman Woods, Hassan Naik, Miguel de la Cruz, Paul Andrews Jr., Kenneth Collins, James Green and Monzur Chowdhury.

Five operators are destined for the Metro Gold Line. Five more will take up posts on the Metro Blue Line.

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Operators from each division are the "ambassadors" of the UTU/Metro Wellness Program, an agency-wide push to assess and improve the health of employees.



Photo by Jimmy Stroup

## "Wellness Wednesdays" Coming to a Division Near You

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 19, 2008) The best ideas for improving the health of Metro employees from multiple divisions have been consolidated into a new United Transportation Union/Metro Wellness Program, coming soon to a division near you.

Metro Corporate Safety and the United Transportation Union (UTU) have joined forces to implement and instruct a core group of employees in the ways of wellness.

These employees, the program's "ambassadors," were trained to give a health risk assessment, how to suggest improvements in eating habits and eventually to lead employees in exercise regimens.

"This has never been done before," said Lisa Arredondo, UTU Local 1607 chairperson, who is heading up the program on the union side. "It's Metro and the UTU coming together for this common cause, using medical vendors and information in the best way possible."

The program will begin with the ambassadors assessing each employee at his or her



Metro Corporate Safety and the United Transportation Union (UTU) have joined forces to implement and instruct a core group of employees in the ways of wellness.

division. Then, on “Wellness Wednesdays,” the ambassadors and managers will promote exercise, beginning with a coordinated group walk and moving to more rigorous exercise as people shape up.

“The ambassadors’ job is to carry the flag – they’re the cheerleaders,” said Eddie Boghossian, systems safety manager in Corporate Safety. “They’ll keep up with all things wellness. They’ll keep people involved and working toward the ultimate goal of improving the health of our employees.”

The next step for the UTU/Metro Wellness Program is a health fair at Division 18 on April 2 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. All Metro employees are welcome.

**Working from the best health information**

The new program has coordinated with Blue Cross of California, Kaiser Permanente and PacifiCare, as well as the American Heart Association, to ensure that it’s working from the best health information.

“They’ve been extremely successful at Carson Division 18 with walking programs and wellness activities,” Boghossian said. “And as time rolls on, we’re going to ramp up the activity – first walks, then group exercise, then who knows?”

Metro Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers has been sold on the program since its proposal, as has UTU General Chairman James Williams. When asked about the program, Williams simply said, “Got health?”

The “Got Health?” slogan is one the program is using to promote involvement. In the same vein, the division ambassadors were each issued a distinct yellow polo shirt that they’ll wear when performing wellness activities.

The March 19 meeting at the Services Support Center offered an overview for managers at each division, as well as the initial training for the ambassadors.



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California State Assemblymember Cameron Smyth named Metro's Ann Kerman the 38<sup>th</sup> District's 2008 Woman of the Year. *Photo by Bob Kerman*

## Woman of the Year Overwhelmed by Sacramento Honors

Metro's Ann Kerman selected by Assemblymember Smyth

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 20, 2008) When California State Assemblymember Cameron Smyth (R-Santa Clarita) named Ann Kerman, a Metro constituent program manager in Regional Communications, as his district's 2008 Woman of the Year, he began a series of tributes Kerman initially did not grasp.

The highlight for Kerman was a March 10 trip to Sacramento with her

husband and two daughters and their seeing her in Smyth's seat on the Assembly floor. Son Brad could not attend.

"They were all given gallery passes, so they were able to watch Mom on the Assembly floor sitting in Cameron's seat," she recalled with a laugh. Smyth also presented Kerman with a plaque that noted her outstanding service and dedication to the people of the State of California.

"I hadn't really taken the honor that seriously until I was sitting on the Assembly floor and there was a keynote speaker who was the executive director of the California Department on the Status of Women," Kerman admitted. "There were 120 women who were recognized that day . . . She started summarizing the qualities of each of the women who had been selected. One thing that seemed pretty clear was that each of us—in some way—had made a difference in our community. It was pretty stunning."

"Then one of Cameron's aides said to me, 'Do you understand what a big deal this is?' And I said, 'Not really.' The aide said 'Cameron's gets to choose six women during his term as Assemblymember and you're one of them.'"

"I don't know why me. But I do feel very honored to be considered among the women who were recognized on the tenth of March."

"I had worked very closely with [the Assemblymember] as a community

member, and he had been very involved in several of the programs that I had developed in the Santa Clarita Valley when I was executive director of the Santa Clarita Valley School and Business Alliance,” Kerman said.

The Santa Clarita Valley School and Business Alliance offered students experience in the working world, in part by having them “shadow” business people and arranging internships. Kerman, a Valencia resident, served as the alliance’s executive director for eight years. She describes the alliance as an organization that “connects students with their future.”

In his announcement of her selection, Smyth stated Kerman’s “commitment to the students of our community is unmatched.” He also cited the more than 2,000 school and business partnerships the alliance had created during Kerman’s term.

She has also served as Chair of the Santa Clarita Valley Nonprofit Leaders Council and Chair of the Santa Clarita Career Technical Education Consortium.

Youngest is a freshman; 18 and 24, Lisa and Ruth. Son Brad could not attend. All Kermans. “My husband Bob was beaming. He was happy to be the trophy husband, he said. He said all he had to do was show up and look pretty.”



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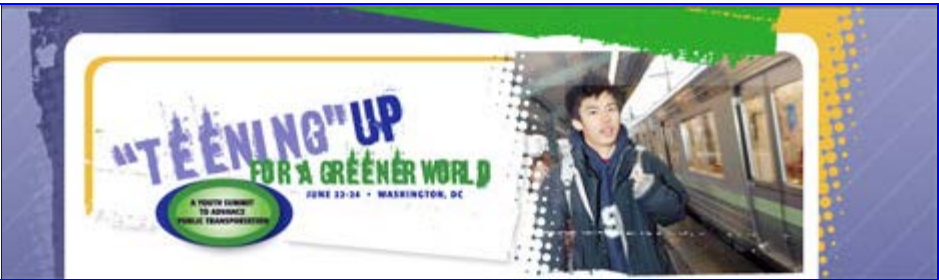
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The American Public Transportation Association is sponsoring a youth summit based around environmental activism, hoping to inspire the next generation to work "for a greener world."



Check it out: [www.apta.com/youthsummit](http://www.apta.com/youthsummit)

**APTA Gives Environmentally-minded Teens the Chance to Learn How Transit is Working toward a Cleaner World**

(March 20, 2008) Fifty teens will be treated to an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington D.C., courtesy of the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) teen summit this summer.

Held June 22 through 24, the summit, titled *"Teening" Up for a Greener World*, is meant to educate high school juniors and seniors about the environmental concerns surrounding transit – and what national agencies are doing to help.

"The summit is meant to bring together a diverse group of high school students to help them better understand the connection between transit and the environment," said Jack Gonzalez, the APTA director in charge of the project.

Transportation, housing and conference charges are paid for by APTA, so eligible teens receive the trip, the stay and the weekend free. Summit information can be found at [www.apta.com/youthsummit](http://www.apta.com/youthsummit).


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## Services Scheduled for Division 2 Transportation Manager Thom Pelk

- **UPDATE** A memorial service on Thursday, March 27, will be held at 1 p.m. at Dilday Brothers Funeral Directors, 17911 Beach Blvd., Huntington Beach, CA 92647. Information: (714) 842-7771.
- Crossroads Depot employee lost battle with leukemia

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 20, 2008) Thom Pelk, Division 2 Crossroads Depot transportation manager, who joined Metro in January 2003, lost his battle with leukemia on March 17.

Pelk is survived by his wife Lynette, son Jakob, daughter Megen and two grandchildren.

"The Metro Gateway Cities Sector and the agency lost a great manager and better person on Monday when Division 2 Transportation Manager Thom Pelk passed away," said Alex Clifford, Gateway Cities Sector general manager. "Thom was hired to manage Division 2's transportation division in 2003, and was a respected and admired manager."



Thom Pelk

According to Clifford, Pelk was diagnosed with leukemia a couple of years ago, received chemotherapy treatment and, after his illness went into remission, returned to Division 2. A few months later the leukemia returned. "He was also a battler," Clifford said of Pelk, "and fought the disease with all he had, including two bone marrow treatments."

Pelk was born in Berlin, Germany in February 1951. He began his Metro career as an assistant transportation manager at Division 2 and was promoted to transportation manager in July 2003.

"Thom was an extremely incredible person," said Tammy Rice, a safety specialist for the Gateway Cities Sector. "He enjoyed life, loved to make people smile and always brightened a room when he entered. He took such great pride in his division and the meaningful relationships he had developed with the division employees."

"Thom really enjoyed talking with people," said Diane Frazier, Division 2 assistant manager, transportation. "He was a great listener and always had interesting stories to share. He had a free-spiritedness about him that was contagious. He had the ability to make you see and appreciate the simple pleasures of life."





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## Metro Board Chair's Fourth Live Chat Addresses Funding Issues

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 20, 2008) Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor opened her latest live chat to commentary about the budget crisis Metro is facing in the face of dwindling state and federal funding.

She argued that traffic problems aren't going to solve themselves and that county residents need to come up with inventive ways to mitigate the problems – both individually and structurally.

"Even if all of us left our cars at home one day a week – something that might just happen if gas reaches \$4 a gallon, as projections suggest – we will still need more buses and trains and better highways to carry us where we want to go," O'Connor said.

Questions touched on a variety of subjects, but all addressed how to figure out how to use and build the system to its full potential.

One rider was concerned that the newly-approved fare gates (soon to be installed on the Red and Purple lines and on some Gold Line stations) would be a boondoggle. O'Connor assured the rider that the system was projected to pay for itself within five years by recouping some of the \$5.5 million lost annually due to fare evasion.

## Environmental concerns

Another was interested in Metro's long-term plans to stay environmentally-friendly. O'Connor pointed to the recently opened LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) compliant building at San Gabriel Division 9 as a starting point.

She also discussed the installation of numerous solar panel arrays – something Metro plans to continue – and the fleet of clean burning CNG buses. O'Connor said the recent passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act in Sacramento has California agencies thinking green and that Metro won't be one to let the environment down.

At the end of the chat, a rider suggested Metro build a "regional connector" between the Gold Line Eastside Extension, the Expo Line and the Blue Line. He argued a light rail line west of downtown such as this would make going out of the way on the Red Line a thing of the past.

O'Connor agreed, but was only able to plead inadequate funding as the reason such a worthy project wasn't already in the works.

"Having a regional connector through downtown LA is a project that ranks high on Metro's Long Range Transportation Plan," she said.

"Planning studies on possible routes through downtown are underway, but right now there isn't money to build it! As a county we need to figure out ways to pay for this and other important projects."

The full text of the chat is available at the [Metro Interactive Chat](#) archives on metro.net. O'Connor's next chat will be in April.

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**House Speaker Nancy Pelosi Supports National Infrastructure Bank**

(March 20, 2008) House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) announced her support, March 12, for legislation that would create a national infrastructure bank meant, in part, to ensure federal funding for badly needed public transportation.

The National Infrastructure Bank Act of 2007 was given the stamp of approval from the Metro Board of Directors last year. The act would create a Bank with five board members elected by the President and confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

The Bank would have the authority to assist projects with a potential federal investment of at least \$75 million; local agencies such as Metro would approach the Bank with an idea and the board would determine if the project receives funding and federal assistance.

The board will rate projects on a sliding scale of importance in the areas the Bank would be responsible for, including publicly-owned transit projects, housing properties, roads, bridges, drinking water systems and wastewater systems.

Speaker Pelosi equated the potential passage of the National Infrastructure Bank Act to the massive highway spending under the Eisenhower administration in the 1950s.

-- Reports from CQ.com contributed to this brief.


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## 2007 Public Transportation Ridership Highest in 50 Years

- Ridership rises 2.1 percent over 2006

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 25, 2008) In a March report the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced that Americans took 10.3 billion trips on public transportation in 2007, the highest level in 50 years. This equates to a 2.1 increase over 2006.

In releasing the report, APTA noted that public transportation use has grown 32 percent since 1995, an increase double the growth rate of the population (15 percent). The use of public transportation has grown faster than the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled on United States highways (24 percent) for that same period.

Light rail—including modern streetcars, trolleys and heritage trolleys—had the highest percentage of ridership increase among all transportation modes: a 6.1 percent increase in 2007.

Some light rail systems showed double digit percent increases, and these systems were spread throughout the U.S.: New Orleans (128.6); Denver (66.2); Saint Louis (27.0); Philadelphia (26.2); Kenosha (18.5); the state of New Jersey (14.7) and Memphis (11.3).

With an increase of 5.5 percent, commuter rail posted the second largest ridership increase. The five commuter rail systems with double digit percent ridership growth rate in 2007 were Nashville (257.9); Santa Fe (96.6); Harrisburg (41.3); Seattle (27.4); Oakland (14.2); Dallas/Fort Worth (12.1); Stockton (11.9); Portland, ME (11.8), and Pompano Beach, FL (10.3).

Heavy rail (subways) ridership increased by 3.1 percent. The heavy rail systems with double digit percent increases in ridership for 2007 were San Juan (13.2) and Atlanta (10.1).

Trailing the other transportation modes was bus service, which increased 1.0 percent. In communities with a population of less than 100,000, however, APTA reported that bus services saw an increase of 6.4 percent in 2007. Major percentage increases for large bus agencies occurred in Seattle (7.5), Denver (7.0) and Minneapolis (5.4).

The APTA report can be seen at [www.apta.com](http://www.apta.com).



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## Services Scheduled for Bret Hawthorne, 17-Year Metro Employee

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 25, 2008) Services have been scheduled this Friday for Bret Hawthorne, a stock clerk for Division 18 Carson, who lost a battle with stomach cancer yesterday.

A service will be held Friday, March 28, at 3:00 p.m. at Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 41 East Market St., Long Beach, Calif., 90805.

Hawthorne, who was born in August 1955 in Freeport, Ill., joined Metro as an information clerk in October 1990. At the time of his medical leave in July 2007, Hawthorne was a stock clerk.



Bret Hawthorne

John Autry, a Division 18 Maintenance storekeeper, who worked on and off with Hawthorne for 15 years, remembered how Hawthorne revered his family. "His family was gold to him."

"Everyone who has come in contact with Bret knew they had met a special person," said Michael Winston, TCU vice president. "[He] always had a smile. He looked like he was in his 20s, but he was in his 50s. The guy looked like he was the [poster] for youth."

Hawthorne, who was 53, is survived by his wife Swarna and daughters Charel and Lauren.

Autry was struck by Hawthorne's concern for others. "He was an unselfish person. There was nothing he wouldn't do for people."

Winston said Hawthorne kept vague the reason for his medical leave. "He kept it private when he went out because he wanted everyone to feel that he was OK."

"You couldn't turn around without seeing him smile," Winston said. "His personality lit the room."



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## National Graphic Design Magazine Gives Metro Creative Services High Marks

How Magazine, a national publication, has awarded five *In-HOWse Design Awards* to Metro Creative Services. The design competition reviews the achievements of organizations with in-house designers.

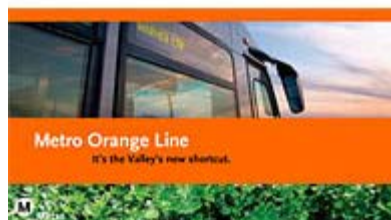
The magazine reviewed over 4,000 entries and recognized Metro Creative Services with a Merit award for the Metro Orange Line opening materials and four Honorable Mention awards in the Government category for the Metro Bus fleet design, Metro's series of popular proprietary icons, Metro's fare media series and the Metro Works Postcard series.

The winning entries were featured in the February issue of the magazine.

Metro Creative Services has won more than 60 significant art and design awards in the past five years. —G.A.



Merit



Government





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## Lamplighter illuminates Metro's lofty chandeliers



Photo by Ned Racine

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 27, 2008) Jeff Hoel, facilities system technician, rises to new heights to replace lamps in one of the Gateway Building's chandeliers. According to Bob Skarseth, Facilities Maintenance supervisor, Hoel's work is part of a campaign to replace a few hundred lamps throughout the Plaza level of the building.

In addition to replacing each chandelier's 30 lamps, Hoel also checks the ballasts, the electric devices that ignite the lamps, while he works approximately 40 feet above the ground. Skarseth said Facilities Maintenance changes out the lamps every two to three years.

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## Metro Embraces New – Certifiably Safer – Safety Vests

By JIMMY STROUP

(March 27, 2008) The newly-designed Metro safety vests have appeared at the divisions and are now available to keep the wearer highly visible. And very yellow.

The new vests have been created in two designs and two materials: sleeveless and sleeved, fabric and mesh. The “general duty” vests are the more common, sleeveless model that fit like the old design and are to be worn by the bus and rail operators, mechanics and service attendants.



New and old safety vests are set here against a Metro Local bus. The new vest (sported by Anne Karna, senior marketing and communications officer) stands out against the coach. The older model vest provides less contrast against the orange of the bus.

Photos and composition by Jimmy Stroup

The “high hazard” model is sleeved (resembling a T-shirt) and is meant to be worn by tow truck drivers, field technicians, signals crews, the Freeway Service Patrol and accident investigators who are working at off-property sites.

The mesh model is meant to be lighter-weight and cooler for the hotter areas in Metro’s system (such as East Valley Division 15 or San Gabriel Valley Division 9 on summer days).

The road to the new vests began in 2003 when the contract for the old vests expired. Pat Chism, senior safety specialist, headed up the new contract bidding project and said they received a surprise.

## Not your father’s safety vest

“We did some investigation and found out that the Feds, for the first time, were regulating safety vests,” he said. “It had never been a regulated item before, like shoes, hardhats or goggles. Because of a rash of fatalities at the time with roadside workers, the government decided it needed to be regulated.”

The government adopted the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) guidelines on vests, and gave manufacturers until 2006 to comply. And though complying with Federal regulation wasn't very challenging, working around Metro's specific challenges was.

"The vests needed to change from orange to yellow when [Metro] changed the bus colors," Chism said. "The criteria we adopted said the vests had to 'highly contrast' with your most prominent hazard.

"The idea is that when you're using it on the street, the vest is supposed to present a highly contrastable visibility with whatever you're standing next to, and usually that's a bus," he continued. "And now that a lot of the buses are orange or red, the old vest becomes a problem."

**Designed to fit the whole agency**

Corporate Safety worked with Operations and Maintenance to incorporate improvements they'd like to see made in the vest. The new vest – with its multiple pockets, Velcro pocket seals, pen slots and Metro badge/business card see-through holder – are all reflections of the input.

"We queried everyone in Rail, Construction and Bus Operations and asked them, 'What do you want in a vest?'" Chism said. "The old vest had inside pockets, but mechanics hated that because they'd reach in with a greasy hand and get everything dirty. A pretty universal request was pockets on the outside."

This redesign also standardizes vests within the agency. The Metro Rail vests, for example, have traditionally differed from the Metro Bus vests.

The standardization will also cut costs for the production of the vests. The older vests cost up to \$34 each. The new vests, ordered in bulk, are only \$26 each for the fabric version and \$28 each for the mesh, about a 25 percent reduction.

Since going to the new model, Metro has purchased 14,713 vests at a total expense of just under \$400,000.

Except for jobs requiring the "high hazard" vest, the old vests are to be swapped for the new when the original is no longer serviceable. If your vest is worn or damaged, you can have it replaced with a new model vest. "High hazard" vest wearers have already been issued the replacement vests.





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[ Hot off the Web ]



- [Check it out:](#) The Imagine website asks visitors to imagine their transportation future.

(March 28, 2008) When Metro began its Imagine campaign this month, it asked Los Angeles County residents to share what they imagine for the county's transportation future. Better connections? More green lights? A faster commute?

Dozens have shared their vision on the Imagine blog at [imagine.blogspot.com](#).

And almost 10,000 visitors to metro.net have viewed the Imagine and Long Range Transportation Plan pages at [www.metro.net/imagine](#) and [www.metro.net/longrangeplan](#).

With billboards, other websites and Metro vehicles soon carrying the Imagine message, more voices will be heard.

Imagine that.




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Sheriff's deputies found considerable evidence that served as cause to find probationers in violation, as well as some that allowed new charges to be brought. The drug paraphernalia, weapons, burglary equipment, tagging and vandalism tools shown were only the most salacious evidence collected in the 54-location search.



Photos by Jimmy Stroup

## Sheriff's Stage a Massive Probation Compliance Inspection

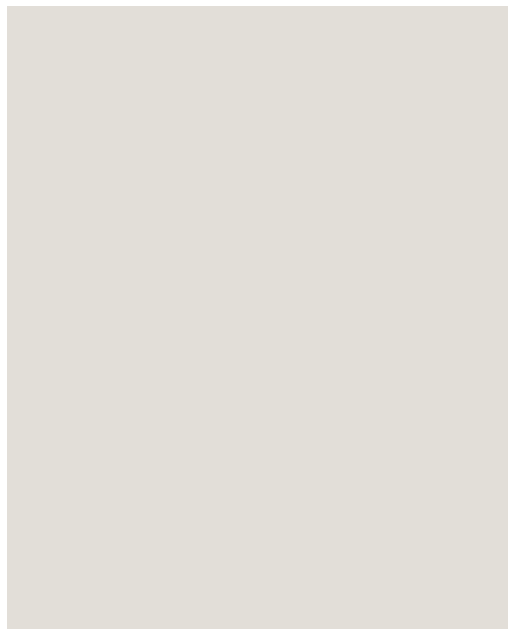
By JIMMY STROUP

(March 27, 2008) In a multi-agency effort to check on vandals released on probation, the Transit Services Bureau (TSB) led a probation compliance inspection, March 26, to 56 locations in the San Gabriel Valley. Nineteen offenders were arrested violating their probation or for an outstanding arrest warrant.

Most had tagged on the Metro system. Though the TSB had already arrested these offenders on previous offenses, the deputies said that probation searches are an important element in reducing vandalism.

"It's good for us because it lets them know that the TSB is out there, checking up on them," TSB Detective Frank Richter said. "A lot of them are crewed up and this also lets their crews know that we're out here, actively working to keep vandalism down. That has a deterring effect."

The deputies combined with local police departments in El Monte, Azusa, Baldwin and West Covina for the massive sweep. An agent from the Department of Children and Family Services rode with each team, as well a Los Angeles County Probation officer.





TSB Detectives Mike Shaw and Frank Richter (holding box) were part of a team that went to six locations in the San Gabriel Valley to perform probation inspections. The suspect at this location was found in violation of his probation for vandalism and burglary.

The group of police and enforcement officers was split into nine teams and given five or six locations to serve probation searches on.

**Up early to catch people at home**

The action started at 5 a.m., and most teams had finished the searches by noon.

At the end of the day, eight location searches found materials in violation of offenders' probation and resulted in arrests. Six probationers were found with other illegal materials, such as drugs or guns and were arrested under new charges.

Six suspects were also arrested for outstanding warrants. Some of these were other household residents who weren't the targets of the searches.

"Our goal is to check up on the offender – we don't want to destroy their house," said Richter. "The other residents haven't done anything and we don't mean to disrespect them or their property. Well, normally they haven't done anything...."



TSB Detective Frank Richter holds several Metro fare cards found during a search, indicating that the offender may still vandalize the system. Deputies plan to cross-reference any examples of tagging found at search locations with unsolved cases.

The search teams came up empty when probationers didn't live at the address they'd given probation officers. Those on probation are required under the terms of their conditional release to keep the County informed of their whereabouts.

"Half the time, they don't even live where they say they live," Richter said. "They'll give you their parent's address and even show up to meet their probation officer on scheduled visits. But they actually live with their girlfriend in some other city. This kind of event flushes them out."

**'Safety's First' is common a theme**

Before each location was searched, the teams would assemble down the street to go over strategy. Each house was given a specific plan of entry and the deputy who was in charge of the team stressed the importance of "keeping sharp" and "staying safe."

"We've got to stay safe out there," TSB Sgt. David Wessol said before one of the searches. "That's number one. We stay safe and move at the speed we need to get this done right."



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Procurement's Raul Gonzalez, senior departmental systems analyst (standing), and Theresa Chow, departmental systems analyst (standing), help two small business owners register in Metro's vendor database. Gonzalez estimated that 50 vendors registered in the database during the Vendor Fair, compared to the usual three to five per day.



Photos by Josh Southwick

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Vendor Fair Targets Small Businesses

- Metro helps vendors understand procurement processes

By NED RACINE, Editor

(March 28, 2008) The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair, held March 25 at the Los Angeles Convention Center, drew thousands of attendees interested in contracting with Metro and other Los Angeles County agencies.

"Last year we estimated about 1,500 [attendees] but it was well over that amount this year," said Nicole Starks-Murray, administrative supervisor for Procurement Client Vendor Services. "What was unusual this year was that we had an influx of attendees wanting to participate. Usually it is the other way around, meaning lots of exhibitors."

Metro joined the City and County of Los Angeles, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California in hosting the day-long event, designed to provide information businesses need to compete for





Metro joined with the City and County of Los Angeles, and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to host the Greater Los Angeles Vendor Fair.

hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts.

The fair also included a trade show presenting vendors that provide specialized products and services for businesses working with public agencies.

"I also got feedback from attendees and exhibitors about our One-On-One Networking event we had in the afternoon," Starks-Murray said. "The procurement teams from all the host agencies saw over 160 people in that setting. It put a great end to the day for our participants and was one of the key factors in their wanting to attend our next event."

Metro's Procurement & Material Management department works closely with vendors interested in meeting Metro's requirements. The Diversity & Economic Opportunity

department specifically helps small, disadvantaged women, and minority-owned businesses participate in Metro's contracts by certifying eligible small firms, ensuring their prompt payments, and providing workshops describing Metro's procurement process.

Sherman Gay, small business outreach officer for the Diversity & Economic Opportunity department, has attended multiple vendor fairs and finds them a great opportunity to reach vendors across the country.

"They get a chance to display all their product lines and it gives other companies the chance to find out . . . what product lines that Metro has."

"Small businesses are really the hub of the local economy," he explained. "[The fair] gives them the chance to participate in [the] large public sector. They can also give us better prices "Gay noted that small businesses take tax dollars and recycle them back into the community. "It's a win-win on both sides."

"Most people you see in small businesses have an entrepreneur spirit," Gay said. "They know it's a hard road. They already know these are steps [they] have to go through."

Commuter Ride Share, Ethics, Facility Maintenance, Information Technology Services, Investment Recovery Sales and Vehicle Technology and Support also participated in the Vendor Fair.