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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.

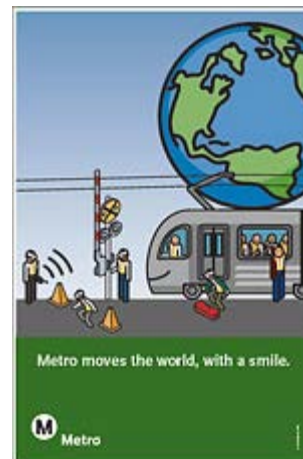
By GAYLE ANDERSON

(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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