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Tap, Tap, Tap into Metro

- Distribution of new TAP badges for full-time and part-time employees begins May 1. New employee TAP badges will go into effect May 17.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(May 1, 2008) The badges are coming! The badges are coming!

Coming soon to a cost center near you, the first bundles of raspberry-colored TAP badges left Human Resources May 1 en route to all full-time and part-time employees.

Those who don't receive the new TAP badges by May 13 are urged to call the Human Resources Employment Office at 922-7155, or go directly to the Employment Office, located on the Patsaouras Plaza at Metro Headquarters.

Branded with the Metro logo and Transit Access Pass TAP insignia, the new TAP badges provide access through security gates and transit fare.

Employees will need to TAP the new card for transit fare and entrance after May 17. That's when the original chip in the soon-to-be invalid employee badge are programmed to lose their 'tap' and access functions, said Human Resources DEO Stefan Chasnov.

Echoing CEO Roger Snoble's directive to successfully implement the Universal Fare System (UFS), Chasnov reminds employees to "tap" the card for transit fare.

"Let the new card serve as a reminder to tap, tap, tap," said Chasnov. "The cards provide a crucial statistic for ridership analysis and, most importantly, the cards are proof of fare for fare inspectors."

More do's and don'ts:

- Do wear your badge.
- Don't punch holes in your new badge or use pins. The badge comes outfitted in a vinyl sleeve attached to a handy clip.
- Do tap at all times when using transit, whether it's a Metro Rail or



Human Resources DEO Stefan Chasnov: Tap, tap, tap. Your new badge is proof of fare and required for access.

Metro Orange Line stand-alone validator, or a fare box aboard a Metro Bus. Tap, tap, tap.

Big incentive for taking care

If you lose or damage the new TAP badge, Human Resources Employment Office will replace it for a fee of \$15. Lose it again in the same year, and the replacement will cost you \$50.

Employees are reminded that if a new TAP badge is lost, it is extremely important to call HR immediately, said Jane Matsumoto of TAP Operations. HR works in coordination with TAP Operations to ensure that the TAP badge is “hot listed” to prevent fraudulent use for transit access other than the badge owner.

“In the future, this Metro TAP employee badge will be capable of carrying a separate cash purse or another transit product, and it is vital that staff starts to treat their badges no differently than they would their personal credit cards,” said Matsumoto.

Photos: Gayle Anderson



TAP Team: Employment Processing Specialists, from left, Imelda Castro, Leticia Felix Sanchez, Cinthya Lupian, Julie Flores, Lorraine Hernandez, Liza Alexander, and, foreground, Esmeralda Ledezma, hit the 10,000th mark in less than two weeks.

A hard-working team of Employment Processing Specialists initialized, printed, organized and packaged some 10,000 badges in less than two weeks, reported Janet Chu-Hooker, HR supervisor.

“It is a huge undertaking and a genuine team effort,” said Chasnov. The new cards came down the Human Resources chute in a coordinated effort with TAP Operations, ITS, General Services and Creative Services.

Metro Transportation Division management also has been integral to this TAP process, said Matsumoto. Bus operators are required to log on to their fare boxes on board their vehicles each day to begin their scheduled service. Each Transportation desk at all Metro operating divisions are capable of testing each operator’s badges on site to ensure that all operators have valid, working employee TAP badges.

“In all, it has been a large agency-wide effort to ensure that this technology is being utilized to promote efficiencies and conveniences for staff,” she said.

Call the TAP Hotline

A special internal TAP Hotline at (213) 922-4024 has been set up to respond to questions regarding the new TAP badges. And, HR and TAP Operations staff remain available to assist with any questions related to the new TAP card and how it works at Metro.



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[Metro News Briefs]

Los Angeles is Second-Highest CO2 Emitting County in U.S.

(May 1, 2008) Los Angeles County is rated the second highest polluter of carbon dioxide emissions, according to a Purdue University study that evaluated counties nationwide. Only Harris County in Houston, Texas beat out the City of Angels in terms of sheer pollution.

The study focused on information from 2002 and found that L.A. County spews 18.5 million tons of carbon dioxide into the environment, because of the millions of car commuters in the area.

"It's interesting that the top county, Harris, Texas, is on the list because of industrial emissions, but the second highest CO2 emitting county, Los Angeles, Calif., is on the list because of automobile emissions," said Kevin Gurney, assistant professor of earth and atmospheric science at Purdue, who conducted the study.

"So it's not just cars, and it's not just factories that are emitting the carbon dioxide, but a combination of different things," Gurney said.

Unfortunately, Los Angeles only missed the top spot by less than 100,000 tons of carbon pollution. Cook County, a suburb of Chicago, placed third with more than 13 million tons of CO2 emission.

The study – named the Vulcan project, after the Roman god of fire – focuses only on carbon production from the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and gasoline.

Of the 20 counties that made the list for CO2 emissions, Boston and New York are near the bottom. Las Vegas was the lowest with less than 6 million tons of carbon emission.

--Excerpted from [www.medicalnewstoday.com](#).



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The operator control unit attached to the Cubic GFI Odyssey model Universal Fare System (UFS) fare box allows bus operators to acknowledge receipt of proper fare, classifies the types of passes used or purchased, or note if a rider is short on the fare. Most importantly, it allows riders to use their Transit Access Passes (TAP) to validate their fares.

Process for Collecting Fares is No Simple Matter

- Maintainers, operators appreciate errrrrrns, beeeeps and chiiirrrps.

By JIMMY STROUP



Electronic Communications Technician Leader John Sheridan vaults a cash box from the UFS fare box into the receiver vault at Central City Division 1. The cash box is taken out of the bus, emptied into the vault and returned to the bus – all within a few seconds.

(May 1, 2008) Errrrrrn! Beeeeeeep! Chiiirrrrp! These noises may be just noise to most people, but to the maintainers and operators who repair and use the Cubic GFI Odyssey model Universal Fare System (UFS) fare box they know exactly what each sound means – and what to do about it.

All 2,700 coaches in Metro's fleet are equipped with these fare boxes, not including the Orange Line fleet.

Operating like light rail, the Orange Line cash rider purchases a ticket from stationary ticket vending machines at each station as proof of payment, or validates their TAP card at the validation device installed at the curb so customers can board quickly, without use of an on-board fare box.

"The bus fare boxes provide the interface for the operator to acknowledge full fare or short fare when a rider inserts the

minute. money," said John Sheridan, the Gateway Cities Sector electronic communications technician leader who oversees the fare boxes at Central City Division 1.

The Odyssey models have been around since 2004 – the last of the buses were outfitted with the all-electronic UFS devices in 2006.

"They're very reliable," he said. "There are some coin jam issues when the reject coin cup fills up with foreign currency – which happens a lot. But it's a simple thing to fix that. It's not even worth complaining about."

The daily grind

The average UFS fare box will collect money and validate TAPs all day and cruise into the yard sometime after 5 p.m. At the end of the work day, the cash is "vaulted" in the vault house, which has safes to hold that day's revenues.

Service attendants ("vaulters") probe the UFS device with an infrared (IR) sensor that opens the cash box section at the bottom of the device. Once the door opens it goes into alarm mode and gives the vaulters about a minute to empty the cash box into the onsite vault and return it to the fare box. If they don't: EEEERRRRRRN!!

As this happens, a radio frequency local area network (RFLAN) is activated by the probe, allowing the UFS to communicate and transmit detailed transaction records with one or more remote data collection sites. The IR and RF sensors capture each transaction on each fare box, and transmit the records to an integrated central data collection system at Gateway. Everything. All wirelessly and with high speed communication systems connecting all Metro operating divisions.

Buzzzzzzzz!

All in all, Sheridan finds this device superior to the fare boxes Metro used before. Its capacity has been increased and, most notably, the interface with the operator has been vastly improved.

"This fare box will only validate legitimate U.S. currency," he said. "When you put in foreign or fake money, it will make a little warble or buzzing noise to let the operator know the bill isn't being accepted."

The greatest benefit to the UFS, though, is its ability to accept TAP (transit access pass) as fare payment. Jane Matsumoto, deputy executive officer in charge of the TAP program, said TAP payments make it easy on the operators.

"The more people who use TAP, the more convenient it is for the operator who doesn't have to deal with cash or inspect passes," she said.

Sheridan and his group of eight technicians service the hundreds of buses at divisions 1 and 2 in the Gateway Cities Sector. Sheridan's team performs quarterly inspections of the UFS boxes, although he finds that beyond a little cleaning, the boxes generally need only routine upkeep.

"I'd say they're more user-friendly for maintainers, as well as reliable, and have a more streamlined operation, which helps the operators, too," he said. "Plus, it takes TAP cards, which are becoming more prominent all the time."

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Metro team takes center stage in Austin: from left, APTA President William W. Millar, Metro San Fernando Valley GM Richard Hunt, West valley Division 8 Operator Julio Flores, Arthur Winston Division 5 Mechanic Frank Forde, Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers, Metro South Bay GM Dana Coffey, Arthur Winston Division 5 Mechanic Rommel Vargas, Arthur Winston Division 5 Mechanic Andrew Warren and mechanic team Coach Steve Mullaly of Central Instructions.



Photo by Margaret Merhoff

Arthur Winston Division 5 Mechanics Place 3rd at International Bus Rodeo in Austin

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(May 7, 2008) The results from the 2008 International Bus Rodeo in Austin, Texas, are in and the news is good for Metro's maintenance team.

The maintenance champs from Arthur Winston Division 5 – Andrew Warren, Frank Forde and Rommel Vargas – placed third in a field of 47 competitors from around the U.S. and Canada.

The veteran maintenance team, who took home the gold in the 2007 International Bus Rodeo held in Nashville, Tennessee, battled 47 teams in the maintenance competition, which tests mechanics' abilities to troubleshoot mechanical problems and fix them quickly.

The Orange County Transportation Authority maintenance team from Orange, California, won first place in the category and the maintenance team from Delaware Transit Corporation in Wilmington, Delaware, earned a second place finish.

Meanwhile, West Valley Division 8 Operator Julio Flores competed against 76 transit operators in the 40-foot bus competition – aptly named "rodeo." The operators' skills behind the wheel were put to the test as

they maneuvered their coaches on a difficult 11-part obstacle course which included judgment stops, right and left hand reverses and passenger stops.

Jesse De la Cruz of Alameda-Contra Transit District in Oakland, California, was named the best driver in North America, winning first place in the 40-foot bus competition. Second place was awarded to Rendol Whidden of Broward County Transit in Pompano Beach, Florida. Gilbert Castro of Tri Delta Transit in Antioch, California, received third place honors.

Overall, Metro placed in the top 20 among the 88 transit properties who competed for bragging rights as "Best Overall Transit Property."

"The (Metro) team was great!" said Frank Cecere, Operations Instruction Manager who organizes the Metro Bus Rodeo and traveled with the team to Austin. "They did good! We're looking forward to Seattle already," he said. King County Metro Transit will be hosting the 2009 International Bus Rodeo in Seattle.

More than 88 public transportation systems in North America competed in the 2008 International Bus Rodeo competition. The International Bus Rodeo is sponsored annually by the American Public Transit Association. The winners were announced at an awards dinner on May 6.

The Delaware Transit Corporation in Wilmington, Delaware, won the Grand Champion Award at the 33rd International Bus Rodeo. This honor, recognizing the men and women who keep North America's bus systems safe and efficient, is given to the bus operator and maintenance team that has the highest combined score.

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Duane Martin, Director of Rail Transportation Operations, is among a number of employees featured in advertisements for Metro's 'Imagine' campaign.



Imagine Ad Campaign Uses Familiar Faces to Spread the Word

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 7, 2008) Metro has a long history of using employees as models for advertising – and the “Imagine” campaign applies that practice in full force.

Launched in April, the campaign is made up of 10 different phrases, each playing on the “Imagine” theme. The ads feature employees posing as riders imagining a specific improvement to Metro’s system.

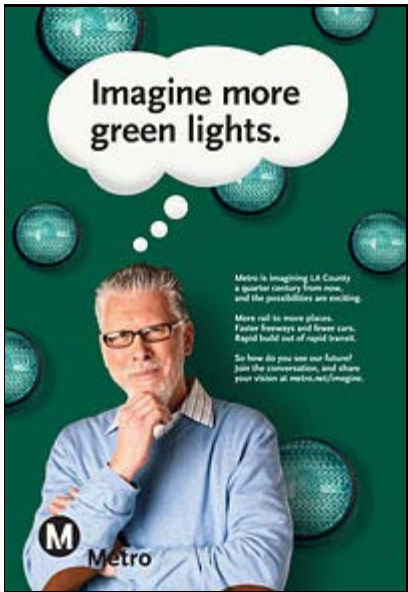
The campaign dovetails with the Long Range Plan, addressing each of the different ideas in the ads in lots of different ways. The overall thrust of “Imagine” is to get the public engaged – as the agency is – in improving the agency through desire, planning and support.

We talked to each of the models and asked what they thought about being a model and if their “imagined” phrase fit them. The “Imagine” campaign will appear throughout the county on buses and billboards until the end of May.

Imagine Better Connections – Aspet Davidian,
Director, Project Engineering Facilities.

“I was very glad to participate in raising public awareness of our transit system and how great it works if you work it,” Davidian said. “It helps the economy, too. There are connections everywhere: social, economic, cultural. Transit is bringing things together in ways your car can’t.





Imagine More Green Lights – Art Henry, Government Relations Manager.

"I had never done this before...the photographer was great in creating a relaxing atmosphere," Henry said. "I've been recognized by lots of friends and colleagues."

Imagine More Rail to More Places – Tiffany Barber, Creative Services Administrative Intern.

"I haven't been recognized by anyone in the public, but a host of my friends have sent me messages about their encounters with my face on the side of a bus, on the train or on a billboard," Barber said. "They want me to pursue pick-up modeling work...Ha!"

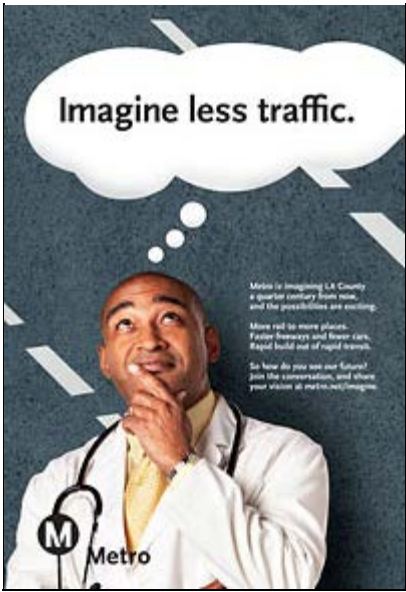


Imagine Getting There Faster – Duane Martin, Director of Rail Transportation Operations.

"Many Metro employees think it's fun," Martin said. "I've gotten quite the ribbing. People are talking about taking up graffiti as a hobby...."

Imagine Less Traffic – Keith Compton, Chief Analyst, Diversity and Economic Opportunity.

"It was very hard," Compton said. "Everything looks easier until you actually try it. After 60 seconds of posing and changing facial expressions, I couldn't figure out what else to do."



Imagine a Greener LA – Anne Flores, Audit Support Manager, and her daughter Maddie.

“Originally the idea that was to accompany our picture was ‘Imagine More Quality Time,’ which fits with us perfectly; we take transit here everyday and it really does provide us with more time together,” Flores said. “But when they came out and it said ‘Imagine a Greener LA,’ I was really thrilled with the change because doesn’t that really sum up what we’re trying to do here at Metro?”

“I liked taking the picture,” Maddie said. “I liked standing on the boxes so I was taller.”

Imagine Building Everything Faster – James Marcel, Administrative Analyst, Diversity and Economic Opportunity.

“Posing was more challenging than I thought it would be,” Marcel admitted. “It’s extremely hard to act ‘naturally’ in front of a camera when you know that many people are looking at you during the photo shoot – and that many more people will be looking at you in the poster. I definitely have a more profound respect for people in this profession after doing the ‘Imagine’ photo shoot. I think I’ll stick to my day job, that’s for sure.”



Imagine Freedom to Go Everywhere – Tom Horne, Communications Manager, Customer Relations.

“I don’t really know how I was selected as a model; perhaps it was my movie star quality,” Horne joked. “Wow, have I ever gotten very positive feedback from family, friends – they loved it – and strangers. Strangers greet me with, ‘Hey, you’re the guy on the poster!’”




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Honor Roll: Celebrating Metro's 2008 Graduates

- Download and print your [2008 Honor Roll Form](#) here. (PDF)

(May 7, 2008) May and June are the "cap and gown" months for many families – a time to honor our high school, vocational school and college graduates.

Once again this year, the names of graduates will be listed in a special "Metro Honor Roll," a compilation of those who earned their diplomas, certificates or degrees in 2008.

If you or someone in your immediate family graduated last winter or will graduate this semester, *myMetro.net* wants to know. Last year more than 175 graduates were listed on the Honor Roll.

The names of Metro employees and the children and spouses of employees are eligible to be included in "Metro Honor Roll." Due to a lack of space, the names of employees' grandchildren can no longer be included.

Posted on web site end of June

The "Metro Honor Roll" will be posted in June on the *myMetro.net* web site and will be distributed as a special employee publication the following week.

To be included, employees must fill out and submit a Metro Honor Roll form no later than June 13. Forms should be returned to Ned Racine at mail stop 99-19-8 or faxed to 213-922-2704.

Forms are being delivered to all work locations. Additionally, the form can be downloaded from the intranet.

Metro Honor Roll forms also are available by mail or FAX by contacting Ned Racine at 922-4139.

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New Bike Signs Will Tell Riders Where They Can Park It

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 8, 2008) Two new bike signs will appear at Metro stations in June to direct riders where to store and park their bikes.



These newly redesigned decals will help direct bicycle riders to the spaces provided for storing and locking away bikes. The new signs are seen here with Dave Sotero's British-made six-speed Brompton folding bike. Photo by Jimmy Stroup.

The new bike parking signs are carefully designed by Metro's Design Studio in conjunction with Metro Art, Marketing and the Westside Area Team to match the theme of the agency's other signage.

"We're reinvigorating the previous bike signs that didn't have as much cohesion as we'd like," said Yvonne Price, senior marketing and communications officer. Price is steering the redesign to fruition.

"The beauty of this, and the reason it was so important to get everyone involved, is that it will

integrate with our existing signs. The look and the feel will be the same," Price said.

The new signage is easy to read with a graphic illustration of a bike next to a lock. The signs also feature a contact telephone number and the metro.net/bike link to all things bi-pedal.

Another new feature for cyclists is a specially designed map, available on metro.net, which shows the locations of bike lockers and bike racks at Metro Rail stations. A glance at the map reveals that most stations have lockers or racks – a lot of which are new, too.

Universality is the goal

"These are very universal and reader friendly signs," Price said. "We're even working with the [Los Angeles County] Bicycle Coalition, which is helping us evaluate what would work and what could be improved."

Though hundreds of these new signs will be soon printed and applied throughout the system, it's only part of a larger project to completely revamp signs and directions that have to do with bikes.

"We've developed an overall package – a total way-finding package – that matches the current sign themes and includes everything from signs to painted information on the ground to the website," Price said. "We'll implement the minimal and then grow the signs as funding allows. We'll put up the most useful first then add."

The Gold Line’s Sierra Madre Villa Station will serve as the test bed for the new package as it gets introduced. But ever-ready, the new bicycle signage project has anticipated that each station is different.

“The nice part about creating a full package – even if we don’t end up using every part at every station – is that it will allow us to use different elements where they would be most useful,” she said. “The Sierra Madre Villa Station isn’t going to get the same treatment as the Canoga Station, for example.”

New decals should assist in directing riders where they can park it within a month. As funding becomes available, more elements of the bicycle package will start to appear on the system.

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The lathe cuts from the inside out. The line in the middle of the disc represents the present position of the cutting tool, which cuts both sides of the rotor simultaneously. As the lathe finishes, the line moves from the center toward the outside edge.

Division 10 Maintenance Puts Extra Effort into Stopping its Buses

- Two separate practices ensure that the brakes on Gateway Division 10's coaches are the safest they can possibly be.

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 8, 2008) Frank Lonyai, the maintenance manager at Division 10, has always been interested in exceeding expectations when it comes to the care of his buses – as have his maintainers. So it should surprise few that Division 10 is on the literal cutting edge in terms of brake maintenance.

Two recent technological additions have greatly improved the brake maintenance at the division: a disc brake lathe and a Hunter brake tester.

Photos by Jimmy Stroup

"One of the unsung success stories of the new buses we're getting, the advanced design buses, is that they all have disc brakes," Lonyai said. "They're safer than standard drum brakes, better performing, smoother and more consistently efficient."

About half of Division 10's coaches are equipped with disc brakes. Disc brakes squeeze a rotor from both sides with pads, giving greater

contact that allows for more efficient stopping.

"We were the first agency in the U.S. to use disc brakes and now there is a great interest by other transit agencies as well," he said. "Besides safety, these brakes are a benefit in labor and parts. It's much cheaper to replace the pads."

Replacing the rotors – the part the pads press against to stop – can be costly and time consuming though. David Klinkenborg, mechanic "A" leader, said it's an eight-hour day to replace the rotors on an axle when the pads have worn them down unevenly.

**Using European devices
American-style**

Fortunately, Division 10 recently acquired a disc brake lathe made in Italy that allows the maintainers to essentially recycle a rotor. Rotors that used to be discarded and replaced are now reground, realigned and returned to service – and in nearly 90 percent less time.

Lonyai said the brake lathe smoothes the rotor surface, returning it to a like-new condition. The smoother surface allows the brake pads more contact onto the rotor, which allows for better braking.

"As a result, the brakes perform better and have a longer life," he said.

The disc brake lathe carves off the top surface of the rotor, creating a new top layer for the pads to contact. It takes about an hour to do both wheels on an axle. Along with the part saved by not having to replace the rotor, the division saves seven hours of labor.

"When the rotor surface is true the brakes are more efficient," Klinkenborg



Mechanic "A" Eddie Cardiel runs the disc brake lathe machine. The lathe cuts a new surface into the rotor so the pads have a smooth surface to press against and stop the bus. Below, these metal flakes are the remnants of a formerly warped disc brake rotor that has now been refinished. Cardiel said it best: "It doesn't look like much when it's coming off, but it's a pretty big pile by the time its done cutting."



said. "And you'll be able to tell that on the sensor."



These four grates cover a network of sensors that measure brakes in action as a bus is driven over them and then stopped. The data they collect is compiled into an easy-to-read pass/fail report that points to problem spots for maintainers to address.

The sensor he's talking about is a Hunter brake tester. Buses are driven over four grates and the brakes are then applied. Sensors in the grates measure the braking and articulates that in a report that passes or fails an axle.

The standards for brakes at Metro – known as the Vericom test – is a visual inspection accompanied with a road test and measurement of stopping distance, which must be lower than 40 feet to pass. But Klinkenborg said he's running across buses that pass the Vericom test but fail on the Hunter tester.

Identifying issues before they become issues

"There was an articulates bus that stopped at 28 feet, which is well within passing, but it felt weird to me," Klinkenborg said. "When I put it on the tester, I could see that the rear left brake was basically non-functioning.

"It wasn't something we would've known until we could see that the rotor and pads weren't wearing down at all. But that could've been months," he said. "So even though there were two fully functional axles and the bus stopped within tolerances, there was a bad brake caliper. This tester allows us to find those issues before they become issues out on the road."



This Hunter brake tester allows maintainers like David Klinkenborg to identify problems that might not even be noticed visually or in operation.

The Hunter tester is versatile enough to measure all the different kinds of buses Metro has. Articulated models have three axles but all the technician testing the buses has to do is tell the machine to be prepared to test an extra axle and it does.

“We still inspect the brakes visually, but this tester allows you to put a real measurement on the efficiency of the braking,” Klinkenborg said.

Maintainers at Division 10 use the brake tester at brake repair work or anytime a bus has come in from a road call with problems in service.

Klinkenborg said about 10 coaches go through the tester each day and that, so far, it’s been a great tool to identify potential problems before they become real problems. The tester is only four months old so it has a long life ahead of it.

At two months old, the disc brake lathe is also a recent acquisition. Each time it gets used, though, it’s saving the agency money. Lonyai isn’t afraid to sing the praises of his maintainers for their dedication and of the new devices for their usefulness.

“We needed to find a way to measure the brakes in an objective way and the tester is doing a great job, and the lathe has really come in handy,” Lonyai said. “We’re trying to use technology to put out a safer, better bus.”



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Amtrak is celebrating National Train Day on May 10 with a celebration at Union Station.

Amtrak to Host Free Events, Concert to Celebrate First 'National Train Day'

- Online: [Schedule of Events](#)

(May 8, 2008) Amtrak has reason to celebrate. Thanks in large part to gas prices Amtrak's ridership for 2008 is already up 12 percent. To celebrate, Amtrak has declared May 10 as the first National Train Day and is throwing a party at L.A.'s Union Station to commemorate it. Metro has partnered with Amtrak to promote the event.

The highlight of the day will be a free concert by Drake Bell, but train activities will happen all day. The train-curious can take train tours on Amtrak equipment, check out train driving simulators and train model displays, take in a train photography exhibit, and peruse the many Amtrak and vendor display booths.

When: Saturday, May 10, 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Where: At the Old Ticket Concourse, Main Station, and Arcade of Union Station, 800 N. Alameda St., Los Angeles.

Cost: Free!

Why May 10? The date is the anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in Utah on May 10, 1869. Amtrak is reportedly spending \$2.2 million on the celebration – with major events also happening in New York City, Washington D.C., and Chicago, and other, smaller events taking place all over the U.S.

--From the Los Angeles Times



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Procurement is getting ready to launch its new Customer Satisfaction Survey.

(May 13, 2008)—Procurement’s new electronic customer satisfaction survey, scheduled to begin in May 2008, will allow users to rate the level of service provided for various acquisitions.

These survey forms will be generated based on the dollar amount and type of services provided and automatically emailed to the project managers whenever a new procurement is completed.

Approximately 18,000 contracts and purchase orders are generated each year by Procurement staff, and about 7% of these orders will generate a survey which will allow the department to better assess its clients’ needs.

The questionnaires will seek information on overall satisfaction, communication, problem solving and timeliness.

Among the feedback requested are:

- Rate the overall service you received.
- Rate the problem solving ability of the staff.
- Rate the response to client need and timeliness.

The Procurement and Material Management department is looking forward to everyone’s participation to help us improve the quality of service.



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Tunnel Vision: Media toured the tunnel between the Hollywood/Highland and Universal City stations May 13 for an up-close look at Metro's new digital advertising. An LED system composed of 360 digital strips lights up at timed intervals as the train passes the subway wall at speeds of 70 miles per hour, blends together to form a smooth-flowing video advertisement, currently a trailer for the movie "Speed Racer." Media Relations released a video of Communications Officer Luis Inzunza taking in the electronic display.

< Click white arrow on the gray bar to play video.

**Digital Advertising Display Debuts in
Metro Red Line Tunnel**

- Metro's latest effort to increase agency revenues turns to innovative tunnel advertising

By DAVE SOTERO

(May 13, 2008) The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today pushed the technology envelope by debuting a new electronic LED display for advertising purposes on the Metro Red Line subway, the first such system in North America.

The two-year pilot project, installed and operated by Sidetrack Technologies, Inc, will display 15-second advertisements visible to passengers on northbound trains between the Hollywood/Highland and Universal City stations. Advertisers are expected to include motion pictures, television shows, retailers and other national advertisers.

The project will generate at least \$240,000 per year in additional rail operating revenues for Metro. All fabrication, installation and maintenance costs are borne by Sidetrack Technologies; Metro pays nothing. The two parties have arranged an additional revenue sharing structure if ad revenues exceed certain benchmarks.

"This is a no-cost, revenue generating agreement that will bring in critically needed operating revenues," said Pam O'Connor, Metro Board Chair. "It may not be a fortune, but it is a step in the right direction as the agency pursues a host of new funding avenues to help maintain the transit services it provides to L.A. County."

The dark subway tunnels briefly turn trains into mobile movie theatres where passengers are dazzled by colorful, live-action video segments. The

LED system is composed of 360 digital strips that light up at timed intervals as the train passes the subway wall, blending together to form a smooth-flowing video presentation.

The system will be controlled remotely via internet from Sidetrack's headquarters in Winnipeg, Canada. It has the capability to rotate ads, show different ads at certain times of the day, or specific ads for passengers going in different directions.

"We know the displays will engage and entertain the riders, providing our clients – the advertisers with an extremely effective medium for reaching the Metro audience," said Rob Walker, President of Sidetrack Technologies.

Passenger feedback during initial tests was positive. Riders described the advertisements as cool, engaging and a stimulating change from the typical subway commuting experience. The test ad featured a preview of the just-launched Warner Brothers movie "Speed Racer". The launch advertiser featured beginning today is the latest in a series of multiple "Bull's Eye" images from retailing giant – Target who has consistently used tunneling advertising in its media mix. Tens of thousands of Metro Red Line commuters are expected to see the new display as they travel between Hollywood and Universal City every day.

Digital tunnel advertising displays have been installed in other international cities, including London, Singapore and Beijing. Los Angeles is the first North American location for Sidetrack's digital displays. Within the next two years, the company expects to install them in Boston, San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Washington.

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Metro Sponsors Commuter Organization's Sustainability Conference

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 14, 2008) Supporting sustainability efforts is one thing, but ideas need to come from somewhere. To that end, the Southern California chapter of the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) held a conference, May 8 and 9, to try to drum up new and inventive ways to get people interested in making transportation issues number one.

Photos: Jimmy Stroup



Metro Director of Commute Services pulled emcee duty at the Southern California Chapter of the Association for Commuter Transportation's (ACT) two-day conference in Long Beach, May 8-9. Sutton is on the regional board for ACT, which is a group dedicated to improving transit in multiple areas.

Metro sponsored the two-day conference, titled "Go For the Green: Sustainable Commutes." The topics of discussion from transportation pundits were varied. Some spoke on strategies for getting employers involved, while others argued for practicing what you preach – getting *everyone* out of their cars and onto transit.

The event was held in the stunning Queen's Salon at the Queen Mary and was well-attended at nearly 100 transit professionals from near and far.

David Sutton, Metro director of Commute Services and an ACT chapter board member, moderated the event, guiding the space in between the speakers.

"We're gladly supporting this event," Sutton said. "One of [ACT's] primary goals is to entice business to embrace strategies to get their employees to work in ways that use transit."

Although Metro is a leader in getting employers involved in transit, no one knows it all and most of the agency's Commute Service staff – who are on the streets daily showing business how it can work with Metro – were on hand for the event to soak in new ideas and practices.



Some of Metro's Commute Services team attended ACT's "Go For the Green: Sustainable Communities" conference to pick up on new ideas to help them convince employers that transit is a solution businesses can profit from. From left: Sarah Zadok, Valerie Rader, Jocelyn Feliciano, Helena Morad and Rickey Walker.

In an effort to lead by example, ACT contracted Vanpool services for the conference attendees to use when traveling off-site during their stay.

"ACT is looking for new solutions," Sutton said. "They want to encourage people to abandon their solo commutes. That could be through incentives or transit benefits. We're trying to do all we can."

To reduce pollution and congestion, a recurring message at the conference was the tangible benefits of using public transit.

"There's no better time for this than now, really," Sutton said. "With the gas prices looking to reach \$4 a gallon this summer, transit can be a solution on lots of different fronts."

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Photos by Juan Ocampo



East Valley Transportation Manager Gary Spivack, the Mummy, Board member and Glendale City Councilman Ara Najarian, Los Angeles City Councilman Tom LaBonge, Shrek, and Los Angeles City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel get on board Metro to launch Bike to Work Week at Universal City Station on Monday.

Metro Launches Bike to Work Week at Universal City Station

- Alternative transit proponents Shrek and the Mummy ride Metro Rapid and bike to work

By JOSÉ UBALDO

(May 14, 2008) The 14th annual celebration of Bike to Work Week kicked off with a big, really big, smile, May 12, at the Metro Red Line Universal City station where Shrek and the Mummy, the characters from Universal Studios Hollywood took charge of the celebrity bike pit stop.



Shrek and the Mummy give a bike a tune-up at the celebrity pit stop. Los Angeles City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel and Metro Board Member Ara Najarian lend a helping hand.

Metro Board member and City of Glendale Council member Ara Najarian joined City of Los Angeles Council Members Wendy Greuel and Tom LaBonge in welcoming the Universal Studios Hollywood characters in kicking off the week-long bicycle festivities.

On Thursday, Metro is offering a chance to win a folding bike from REI to those who register in advance online at www.metro.net/biketowork and pledge to be part of the solution to reduce traffic by pedaling to work, school, or other destinations on Bike to Work Day.

In addition, on Thursday, May 15, Metro will offer free rides to bicyclists on Metro buses and trains throughout Los Angeles County.



Transportation Planning Manager and Bike to Work Week coordinator Paula Carvajal, with Events Planning coordinator Esther Carlstone, hands out 'goody bags' at the busy information

booth. A number of media outlets and nearly 50 bicyclists attend the festivities. Some 2,600 bicyclists are expected to participate in Bike to Work Day on Thursday, when Metro and local organizations co-host some 35 bike pit stops throughout the county for bicyclists to stop by for refreshments and free giveaways.

Metro also is supporting a series of events in conjunction with Bike to Work Week. The fifth annual interfaith Blessing of the Bicycles at the Good Samaritan Hospital was held on May 13. Next up: the Los Angeles River Ride on Sunday, June 8, sponsored by the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition.

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New Communications Manager of Web Services Appointed

- Content oversight of metro.net and myMetro.net merge into a single position.

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 14, 2008) As the new Metro Communications Manager of Web Services, Vivian Tran has a knack to parlay prose and an eye for all things visual. It's no wonder the recent Metro hire believes the World Wide Web is the ideal medium for her. Tran, who started April 28, will oversee content for the agency's two websites metro.net and myMetro.net. She also will manage Metro's printed publications, Metro Quarterly and MetroPeople.



Vivian Tran is the new Communications Manager of Web Services. Photo: Gayle Anderson

"I think Metro's two websites are incredible online resources. Metro.net and myMetro.net are full of useful information, and there's a lot of depth to the sites," Tran said.

"I'd like both sites to have fresh, dynamic content daily and to make it more fun and functional," Tran said. "The idea is to make metro.net a Top 100 destination website where people want to keep coming back everyday – whether it's for the Trip Planner, customized and interactive features like Google or Yahoo, videos, information, or blogs – because there's something new and different available that they can only get from Metro."

Tran comes to Metro from the Los Angeles County Arts Commission where she managed the agency's two websites as the web editor, webmaster and programmer in Communications.

A recent graduate of Claremont Graduate University, where she received her master's degree in visual communications, Tran sees the Web as an extension of the work she did as a journalist.

Tran covered the O.J. Simpson trial for National Public Radio before she joined the *Orange County Register* as a news reporter and the *Los Angeles Times* as a features staff writer. Fluent in Vietnamese, she covered government, transportation issues, arts and entertainment and the Asian-American community in Orange County, which is home to the largest Vietnamese population in the world second only to Vietnam.

Like many Vietnamese-Americans, Tran shares her own harrowing story of escape from the Vietnam War as a political refugee with her family.

Her father served as a combat helicopter pilot for the democratic South Vietnamese (known as the ARVN), who were allies with American troops. When South Vietnam's capital city of Saigon fell to the Communists,

Tran's father had to hot-wire a broken and discarded helicopter to flee from the country with his family.

"It didn't have any working gauges," Tran recalled of the ailing craft. "My father was flying blindly and there was no telling how much gas was in the helicopter."

Tran's father piloted the helicopter over the coastline out into the ocean, leaving Vietnam behind. Then the helicopter began to sputter. Not knowing where to land, Tran's father motioned the craft to tilt into a nose-dive just as he caught a glimpse of a speck of land in the distance. He headed toward the speck to find that it was a tiny, deserted island formerly used as a prison colony. The family crash landed and S.O.S for rescue.

"We were picked up by a Filipino cargo ship," she said. "That Filipino ship was ... a rescue ship the Americans had chartered to pick up Vietnamese refugees. When we got on board, we saw thousands of refugees who had escaped."

Tran and her family eventually settled in Miami Beach and participated in the American Dream like thousands of refugees on boats similar to the one that picked her up.

She became a journalist to continue to report and tell stories about people and their unique experiences. In doing so, she was named a three-time fellow by the National Press Foundation and covered issues such as Terrorism/Counter-Terrorism at RAND, global healthcare and AIDS in Bangkok where she also elephant trekked through jungles and met with the Queen of Thailand's giant panda bears. She also was named a USC Annenberg School for Communication Fellow for online journalism.

"I have a love and passion for words and all things visual," Tran said. "So whenever you see one of my stories, there's always a lot of visual imagery to accompany the story. As a journalist, I've always tried to make both words and images come together. On the Web, words and images come together seamlessly."

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The Metro Support Services Center (MSSC) is home to the Logistics Walkers, a group of Metro employees who use their lunch breaks to exercise by walking as far as three miles.

Photo by Jimmy Stroup

'Logistics Walkers' Work Out by Walking on their Lunch Breaks

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 15, 2008) The Logistics Walkers group can be seen walking at breakneck speeds as far away as Chinatown in an effort to keep healthy, which fits nicely with the agency's recent wellness campaign.

This group of 20 or so who work at the Metro Support Services Center (MSSC) decided in January that it was time to use their lunch hours to do something more than simply eat.

"They tease us that we go to eat, but we don't," said Margaret James, Inventory Management material manager and one of the unofficial leaders of the Logistics Walkers. "We do end up in some interesting places though."

Sometimes the group heads to Chinatown. Other times they head toward City Hall. The core group will walk as far as three or four miles in an hour, depending on where they're heading that day.

"We've found some neat routes," said Inventory Management material supervisor Lorraine Melendez, also one of the unofficial leaders of the walking group. "We're looking for interesting places to go and things to see because it keeps it fresh, and that keeps us motivated."

The Logistics Walkers make use of pedometers to record how many steps they take on a daily basis. Pedometers have been cropping up all over the agency in the last year or so – thanks in large part to the American Red Cross, which has been helping the agency with fitness information and equipment lately.

10,000 steps a day

The Red Cross advises that everyone take 10,000 steps a day; that's roughly four miles of walking each day. So even if the Logistics Walkers do a two-mile trek on their lunch break, they're only halfway to an

optimal goal.

James said the group figured it would need to create some incentives to keep people investing time and energy into the daily walks. So, each week, members log what the pedometers recorded as their total steps for the week. If the walkers log their steps, they're eligible for a monthly drawing to win things like workout gear, ankle or wrist weights, or classic Metro hats or water bottles.

"When we won our money from the [Safety Health Assessment Review Program] audit, we figured we could use that to encourage people to stay healthy," James said. "We figured this was the best way to spend that money to benefit everyone."

James and her fellow walkers also spent some money to personalize their safety vests. Their vests were embroidered with their names on the front and proudly proclaim "Logistics Walkers: Walking for my Health" on the back.

The vests make the Logistics Walkers conspicuous as they walk through the downtown streets. And since their regimens carry them through public areas – like the Union Station Red and Purple Line platform – Metro riders will ask them for directions or information about the system.

The Logistics Walkers happily oblige the patron, but aren't slowing down to answer. Those with questions get their information on the move.

"It doesn't help much if you not moving. If you're going at a slow pace, you may as well be sitting in a chair and just swinging your legs," Melendez said. "You've got to get that cardio going."

Metro's Logistics Walkers can be seen winging their way through Union Station on their way to better health every weekday sometime between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. James said people shouldn't be shy if they want to join them on their daily constitution.

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[Club Scene @ Metro]



The Lunch Walkers @ Metro came out in support of the Revlon 5K Run/Walk at Exposition Park Saturday, May 10. More than 60 Metro employees and their family members walked for the cause, which raises money and awareness for cancers that strike women. Before and after the 5K, live music, food and free vendor goodies kept the atmosphere upbeat for the 60,000 people who walked in the event. Duane Martin, Metro Rail director of transportation operations, was part of the group and said there was no drawback to supporting a cause that helps others and keeps you fit, too. "It was incredible," he said. "A beautiful day, not too hot. There was a lot of compassion and love for the cause out there on Saturday. We all felt like we represented the agency well."

-- From Jimmy Stroup.





Top photo: Jimmy Stroup. Photos taken on location: Larry Cosner.

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Rail Rodeo round-up: Metro Rail gets in gear for the APTA International competition in San Francisco



2008 Metro Rail Rodeo Team: From left, coach Esther Pippins, Operator Robert Rodriguez, Operator Geronimo Young, Equipment Maintenance Specialist Toshi Manaka, and, background, Equipment Maintenance Specialists Ronnie Burt, Eric Czintos and coach Russell Homan. *Photo by Gary Leonard*

(May 15, 2008) Metro's Rail Rodeo dream team are off to the International Rail Rodeo in San Francisco May 29 to defend their maintainer crown, bag an Operator trophy or two and bring home the gold in a competition that crowns the best rail operations in North America. Sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Rail operator team competition measures an operator team's professional customer service and operating skills, including knowledge of safety regulations, train equipment, wayside rules, regulations, and procedures. The Rail maintainer team competition is a test of the maintainer's skills and abilities. Some 20 public transportation systems will compete in the 2008 International Rail Rodeo competition. Defending the title will be the champion Metro Rail equipment maintenance specialists team of Eric Czintos, Ronnie Burt, Toshi Manaka, and coach Russell Homan, who won first place at the APTA International competition in Toronto, June 2, 2007. Top operator Robert Rodriguez, a veteran of six international competitions and backed by high-scoring teammate Geronimo Young and coach Esther Pippins, goes for the gold this time, up from a respectable seventh place in Toronto, where Metro achieved third place in the overall combined team score. Winners will be announced June 2.

-- From Gayle Anderson

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[<See also:](#) Venice Division 6 Building Receiving New Life

Venice Division improvements include new operator window, kitchen



(May 20, 2008) Venice Division 6 is being reconstructed with some much-needed upgrades. The new operator window, above, gives operators and transportation operations supervisors a cleaner, neater space to work from as assignments are handed out. The only thing they're missing now is new furniture, which should be arriving within three weeks. Division Steno Susana Barillas said the new construction is a "big improvement" for the division. "It's more convenient for me," she said. "My files were in another office before, and now I have them with me. Plus, I used to have to turn sideways to squeeze into my desk area – thankfully I don't have to do that anymore." A new kitchenette, below, was also added. Operators had to make do with cramped space and an inadequate cooking facility before this shiny new kitchen was built to suit their needs. Facilities Operations Project Manager Tim Lindholm said that the agency has wanted to improve the division for some time, but that the future of the division's present location was in jeopardy. "We didn't want to spend a bunch of money for reconstruction only to see the division's location get moved, so we waited," he said. "But even if we relocated as early as [in] five years, we couldn't afford to keep running the division like that for too much longer. So we decided to make these needed changes, come what may." *Text and photos by Jimmy Stroup*



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Metro Nominated for Three California Transportation Awards

(May 20, 2008) Metro has been nominated for three California Transportation Foundation "Tranny" Awards, which are given in recognition of excellence in transportation during 2007.

Metro earned nominations in three of the 14 possible categories. The Urban Congestion Relief Changeable Message Sign that shows drivers current drive times was chosen as one of three projects under the "Traffic Operations" category.

Under the "Roadway" category, Metro's assistance in the Santa Monica Boulevard Transit Parkway Project was noted. And in the "Community Awareness" category, Metro's unique Art Docent Council was honored with a nomination.

The nominations in the "Traffic Operations" and "Roadway" categories were both earned for the dramatic efforts Metro participated in to reduce overall congestion.

The "Community Awareness" nomination bestowed on Metro Art Docents honors the program that familiarizes riders with the Metro system by showing it to them while also discussing the public art projects featured at many Metro Rail stations.

The 19th Annual Tranny Awards Awards will be held at the Sacramento Convention Center on June 4.



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Photos: Gayle Anderson

An anti-traffic audience of alternative transportation enforcers keep rapt attention to the urban adventure tales of Air Traffic Reporter Tom Storey at the start of the 10th Annual Rideshare Diamond Awards hosted by Metro Commute Services at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel.

Metro, Ventura County, Shine 'Green' Spotlight on Pioneering Rideshare Programs of Southland Employers

- 10th annual Rideshare Diamond Awards showcase the rideshare programs of employers whose unfailing stick-to-itiveness continues to chip away at traffic congestion by providing their employees with a full range of rideshare commuter options, services and programs.
- Go to: [Winner's Circle](#)

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(May 21, 2008) From the super-sized savings in commuters' pockets to a decrease in gasoline consumption and emissions reflected in recent public transportation ridership tallies, the concept of ridesharing is emerging from a disregarded option perceived as inconvenient into an acceptable, reliable and, yes, even hip, commute of choice.

So hip, in fact, that some 25 glittering Diamond Awards were handed out today in downtown Los Angeles to Southern California employers who are pushing ridesharing into the fast lane.

Hosted by Metro Commute Services and the Ventura County Transportation Commission at the posh Millennium Biltmore Hotel, the 10th annual Rideshare Diamond Awards showcase the rideshare programs of employers whose unfailing stick-to-itiveness continues to chip away at traffic

congestion by providing their employees with a full range of rideshare commuter options, services and programs.



Corporate Diamond Award winner Raytheon drew top honors for its 30-year-long rideshare program. Accepting the award is Raytheon ETC Rose Bennett, left, and, Monica Hykes-Tully, at right, with award presenters 'Miss Traffic' and Metro Commute Services Director David Sutton.

Illuminating a stellar effort in unraveling the region's huge traffic knot, the Corporate Diamond Award was awarded to Raytheon's Space and Airborne Systems business, headquartered in El Segundo. Raytheon's pioneering effort evolved from a carpooling program to combat a parking shortage in the 1970s to a highly-effective and committed rideshare program of more than 2,000 participants.

The company donated land to the construction of a nearby Metro Green Line Station, co-founded the South Bay/Westside Transportation Management Agency and offered employees a variety of rideshare services, programs, donations, incentives and subsidies to encourage program participation, reduce fuel consumption, alleviate traffic congestion and improve air quality, noted Raytheon Employee Transportation Coordinator Rose Bennett.

In an array of categories that demonstrate the multifaceted approach needed to corral the region's errant traffic, 20 other programs were singled out for recognition.



Metro Commute Services team at Diamond Awards photo op: from left, Rita Linsey, Helana Morad, Agnes Jose-Eguaras, Jocelyn Feliciano, Teresa Milliken, Liz Armijo-Holbrook, Sarah Zadok, Mary Ann Garcia, Laura Almeda, event coordinator Donna Blanchard, Valerie Rader, and seated, David Sutton and Rickey Walker.

The Diamond Awards underscore the Texas Transportation Institute's 2007 Annual Urban Mobility Report, which noted that traffic congestion continues to plague American cities of all sizes, creating a \$78 billion annual drain on the U.S. economy in the form of 4.2 billion lost hours and 2.9 billion gallons of wasted fuel.

Citing 2005 statistics, the report noted the Los Angeles/Long Beach/Santa Ana area still leads in annual delays for travelers, amounting to 72 hours and 57 gallons of wasted fuel per traveler. That's 490.5 million wasted hours stuck in traffic, 384 million gallons of gas and a congestion cost of \$9.3 billion.

By promoting public transportation options in the face of the daily traffic grind, Southern California employers are becoming part of the solution to the problem posed by solo drivers, said David Sutton, director of Metro Commute Services.

Although some form of organized ridesharing has been around since the 1970s, the recent peak in alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicle mode of transportation may signal a turning point in relieving traffic congestion on the car-laden corridors of Southern California, he said.

And the Diamond Award for best, most innovative Rideshare program goes to

Metro Vanpool Program: General Motors and Federal Express pooled resources to keep vanpools up and running with flexible routes, fast commute times and low fares.

Metro Rewards: Gail Allen, ADP. (Automatic Data Processing, Inc.)The program attracted more than a third of ADP employees to ridesharing using Metro Rewards incentives.

Metro's School Pool Program: La Crescenta Valley View Elementary School. Its "park it and walk it week" campaign was derived from a parent concerned about the impact of traffic tie-ups on student safety.

Ventura County Awards: Three awards for Highest Average Vehicle Ridership went to the City of Thousand Oaks Municipal Service Center followed by California Lutheran University and, for "Most Improved" to Bend-Pak Incorporated. Cherylanne Dooley, Cal State, Channel Islands, was

named Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) of the Year. Patagonia, the environmental outfitters and outdoor clothiers, earned the Group Achievement award.

Outstanding Individual Achievement - Kreigh Hampel, City of Burbank. The recycling coordinator for the city of Burbank commutes by bike daily and encourages his fellow employees to do the same. At community events, Hampel runs a free hands-on bike tune-up workshop. Last year alone, he repaired more than 150 bikes and reached thousands of people with bicycling information.

Outstanding Employee Transportation Coordinator: Vera Tylecek, Los Angeles City College. Since she took over the rideshare program three years ago, Tylecek has doubled the number of transit riders and quadrupled her budget to \$20,000.

Outstanding Group Achievement: Eric Garcetti, Helen Leung, Michele Mowery, Melina Mariano and Francois Vern, City of Los Angeles. A range of city employees teamed up to increase facilities at the Los Angeles Civic Center for employees who bike to work.

Shoestring Program: Rosalind White, Los Angeles County Employees Retirement Association. Doing a lot with a little, White led efforts to form four vanpools last year for the association's 250 employees and expects to get several more on the road in 2008.

Innovative Rideshare Program: Sandy Paulin for Specialty Labs. The company, which offers subsidies and monthly celebrations, has 23 vanpools and 37 carpools on the road, after relocating the workforce to a new site, the rideshare programs helped the company retain employees faced with a longer commute.

Innovative Rideshare Program: Penny Menton, UCLA. A new seat-filler program called "+ One Better" allows participants to ride stand-by. The "+ One Better" program provides extra assurance that vanpools won't have empty seats.

Innovative Rideshare Strategy: Devon Deming, Los Angeles World Airports. The comprehensive rideshare program includes subsidized vanpools, free transit passes for employees and carpool rewards. In addition, special events and marketing activities keep ridesharing at the forefront of employees' minds. In 2007, the rideshare program at Los Angeles World Airports saved over 350,000 vehicle trips, 600,000 gallons of gas, saved employees \$1.7 million in fuel costs and stopped more than 12 million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, Deming reported.

Innovative Rideshare Program: Jean Ghianuly, Aerospace Corporation. In 1970, Aerospace Corporation created the first corporate vanpool program west of the Mississippi. Vanpoolers also have access to an auto shop, car washes and even on-site fueling. Over the years, Aerospace vanpools have made the equivalent of 144 trips to the moon – over 20 million miles.

Outstanding Marketing Program: Dave Flores, Cal Poly Pomona. Outreach efforts put ridesharing center stage at sporting events and engaged students in contests – such as shooting free throws at basketball games halftime - while dispensing rideshare information.

Outstanding Marketing program: Luanna Huber, Walt Disney Company. Huber tied the summer rideshare promotion to the launch of the movie Ratatouille and sparked a 34 percent increase in rideshare enrollment. The rideshare department created a gourmet menu theme called 'savor the flavor of cleaner air' which included entrees of rideshare information and a "whine list" of excuses and solutions. Pictured: Disney rideshare promotion project team.

Honorable Mention: Judi Masuda for the City of Pasadena's vanpooling program; Ellie Knapp for the City of Burbank's "Buck-a-Bike" program; Mardy Rosal for Baxter Bio Science vanpool fleet; Cal State L.A. outreach commuter appreciation breakfast; Kathleen Chaney for Southern California Edison's vanpool program expansion; Terrie Castillo for Wesco Aircraft's vanpool program; and Luanna Huber for the Walt Disney Company's brainstorming cross-promotion of the launch of the ABC comedy series, "Carpooler." The cross-promotion drew attention to ridesharing and it also gave a boost to the show, which premiered in October 2007 with 9.3 million viewers but fell prey to the writer's strike six months later.



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Private Services Planned for Carl Motley, Sr., Retired Division 7 Operator

(May 21, 2008) Carl Motley, Sr., a 28-year Metro veteran, has died after a long bout with cancer. He was 83.

Motley, a United States Navy veteran, will be buried at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Boulder City, Nev. today, according to his son Carl Motley, Jr., a transit operations supervisor in Bus Operations Control.

Motley, Sr., a native of Memphis, Tenn., retired from Metro in 1991 as a bus operator; although he worked out of West Hollywood Division 7 for most of his career; he also worked at divisions 11 and 16.

Motley, Sr. is survived by his wife of 62 years, Helen. In addition to his son, Motley is survived by his daughter Carol Metoyer, two grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

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Metro Offers Tomorrow's Leaders a Peak at Its Operations and Challenges

By Ned Racine, Editor

(May 21, 2008) Metro offered a peak at its operations and challenges to tomorrow's leaders, May 20, as it hosted 17 current and future members of the San Fernando Valley Leadership Institute—including several Metro employees.

With a goal of identifying, educating and preparing future public and private sector leaders, the Valley Leadership Institute introduces its participants to a variety of private, non-profit and governmental organizations. Participants visit environmental, justice, media and—yesterday—transportation agencies.

Shawn Lowe, Administration and Financial Services manager, found her nine-month commitment to the San Fernando Valley Leadership Institute “a great experience.

“It was a great opportunity to be introduced to so many agencies in LA County,” Lowe said. “I learned so much. You learn how agencies work together.” She also took away an understanding how organizations could work together to make LA County a better place to live.

She was also struck by the thread uniting the leaders she met through the institute. “What they do is create good.”

Lowe and Rachel Bird, assistant manager transportation for Manpower, Systems & Support, were this year's Metro participants. Marion Colston, director, strategic organizational planning, sits on the institute's board, as does Maria Reynolds, West Valley Division 8 transportation manager.

Following rides on the Metro Orange, Red and Blue lines, members of the institute's current nine-month program heard Carolyn Flowers, chief operations officer and a former member of the institute, offer an overview of Metro's contribution to Los Angeles County and the region.

Noting Metro's extensive bus system and growing light rail and Metro Rapid system, Flowers stressed the agency's goal of offering safe, reliable and quality service to attract more discretionary riders.

Flowers message was particularly appropriate. Besides its two Metro employees, none of this year's program participants had ever taken public transportation.

Flowers asked the institute's participants to look at Metro's services as an integral part of Los Angeles County's economy and remember that “Public Transportation does work in this city and does present a viable option to the population.” She also pointed to Metro's role in reducing the County's carbon footprint.

Looking toward Metro's future, Helen Ortiz-Gilstrap, communications manager, presented the Imagine campaign video and asked her audience to imagine the benefits of an expanded Metro System and elaborated on Metro's need for more funding to make these solutions possible.

Explaining Metro's commitment to transit oriented development, Roger Moliere, Chief of Real Property Management & Development, described Metro's vision of developing residential and retail properties around Metro stations in hope of increasing transit ridership and reducing the short trips that create so much congestion—40 percent of the trips in Los Angeles County are two miles or less. Moliere also noted that Metro was looking at more transit oriented development in the San Fernando Valley.

Terry Matsumoto, chief financial officer, detailed fiscal considerations confronting public transit, informing his audience that passenger fares cover only approximately 27 to 28 percent of the operating cost of the Metro System. After briefly explaining the source of Metro funding, he reminded the participants that "We have very desperate transportation needs."

With all the experiences Lowe has been exposed to through the institute, perhaps the most important thing she gained was a new view of herself. "I never thought of myself as a leader, but [the institute] would like us to become a boardmember of one of the groups you visit. This has inspired me to go out and make the community part of my family."

"Whatever I end up doing, I'll make Metro a part of that," said Lowe, who works with her teenaged son and his friends to use public transportation.

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Three Million Accident-Free Work Hours! Board Lauds Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension Construction Safety Milestone



Pictured with construction crew members able to attend the May 22 Board meeting are, from left, K.N. Murthy, Metro Deputy Chief Capital Management Officer; Eastside LRT Constructors Tomo Hosokawa, Underground Engineering Manager; and LRT Deputy Project Director Carl Sandstedt; CEO Roger Snoble; Director Richard Katz; Director Gloria Molina; Chief Capital Management Officer Rick Thorpe; LRT Project Director Mike Aparicio; Metro Project Director Dennis Mori, and James Brown, Metro Director of Construction Safety. Construction Safety Engineer Javier Lora, also honored, is in the back row, center. *Photo by Gary Leonard*

(May 22, 2008) It's 3 million work hours without an accident for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension project contractor, Eastside LRT Constructors -- a safety milestone that ranks high in construction annals. Since construction began in July 2004, the work crew has tallied 1,415 work days without an accident requiring a single day of missed work. To celebrate the milestone, CEO Roger Snoble invited the construction team to the Board meeting today, where Board Member Gloria Molina and Board Member Richard Katz heartily lauded the effort, presenting commendations on behalf of the Metro Board of Directors and the City of Los Angeles.

Construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension light rail project is more than 80 percent complete. The project is on budget and scheduled to open on time in mid-2009.

The Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, which will feature eight stations (two underground), will span six miles from Union Station in downtown Los Angeles via the Arts District/Little Tokyo and Boyle Heights to Atlantic/Pomona Boulevards in East Los Angeles.

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East Valley Division Partners with UTU for Health Fair

- Partnership targets improved employee health

By LORENE KELLEY

(May 22, 2008) The East Valley Division 15 wellness team, with United Transportation Union (UTU) General Chairman James Williams and Carolyn Flowers, Chief Operations Officer, held a Health Fair on May 14, 2008, to encourage participation in the new Wellness Program.

Representatives from the American Heart Association, health care and dental services providers, Metro's Employee Assistance Program and UTU's Employee Assistance Program were some of the vendors at the event, which drew an estimated 250 employees.



At left, Gary Spivack, Division 15 transportation manager, joins the exercises at the division Health Fair May 14. At right, Amy Lopez spurs attendees into motion.



Amy Lopez, health and wellness program manager for the San Gabriel Valley Sector, got everyone up and out of their chairs to do a five-minute workout. Lopez told her audience that a few minutes of exercise a day can help get the blood circulating and improve overall wellness.

Division 15's Wellness Ambassadors, operators Elenilson Cartegena and Daniel Magana, also joined the festivities. Vijay Khawani, director of Corporate Safety, also attended.

The Wellness Program is designed for all employees to become fit and stay healthy.

More information on Metro's Joint Wellness Program can be found online in the [Corporate Wellness](#) pages on myMetro.net.



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Services Planned for Mario Ugalde, 31-Year Metro Veteran

(May 22, 2008) Mario Ugalde, a Gateway Division 10 mechanic A, has died from a weakened immune system caused by a recent kidney transplant. He was 56.

Ugalde, who started working with RTD in December 1977, was known for his technical skills and his dedication to his job. In the last few years, he was the head of the Air Conditioning group at Division 10.

"Every one recognized his deep understanding of refrigeration and his 'special touch' in diagnosing difficult cases," said Frank Lonyai, Division 10 maintenance manager.

Ugalde is survived by his wife, Diane, five children and four grandchildren.

The family plans a private ceremony.

"I consider myself very fortunate to be a friend of Mario," said Pete Lujan, also a Division 10 mechanic A. "Mario always reminded me [to be] good at what you do and you will have a job."

Lujan remembers Ugalde as an avid outdoorsman who liked camping, fishing, hunting and archery sharp shooting.

"I miss my friend," recalled Lujan. "Not just the great fights we had but the great talks we both enjoyed."



Mario Ugalde was an avid outdoorsman. (Photo by Fidel Hernandez)

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Fifth Chat Questions Target Congestion Pricing and Transit Funding

- Metro Chair Pam O'Connor explains possible one-half sales tax measure
- Read complete transcript at [chat archives](#)

By NED RACINE, Editor

(May 22, 2008) Holding her fifth digital Town Hall meeting, Metro Chair Pam O'Connor answered 21 questions during her hour-long chat May 21 at noon, many targeting funding for transit projects and details of congestion pricing efforts.

Fifty questions were received.

Several questions asked which vehicles would be allowed on any demonstration project using high occupancy toll (HOT) to reduce highway congestion, as Metro has suggested for several County highways.

The Board Chair answered that "vanpools, with their high capacity of occupants, will be free, as will buses. Regarding carpools, this is a policy issue that has to be discussed such as the threshold number of people in the car . . . the bottom line is for the toll lanes to be moving at 45-50 mph."

Other questions explored the details of a possible Los Angeles County half-cent sales tax for transit projects. One participant asked how voters could be sure that proceeds from a half-cent ballot measure would be spent on transit improvements.

"The ballot measure that is envisioned for LA County will specify projects," O'Connor answered. "And remember that the monies would be locally controlled, by the county (not the State)."

Other comments praised the TAP universal fare card and asked if congestion would be relieved if some highway lanes could be made reversible, to better handle morning and evening rush traffic.

Unfortunately O'Connor answered, because County highway traffic is bi-directional, the advantages would not justify the cost.

The next 'live chat' will be held in June.

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Operations Chief Flowers Receives Heart Association Honor, Walks the Talk

- Carolyn Flowers discovers her own risks, ends passion for chocolate
- [Plus!](#) Bus operators take wellness program to heart

By NED RACINE, Editor

(May 24, 2008) Carolyn Flowers, chief operations officer, received an honor from the American Heart Association (AHA) last month, but her biggest reward was appreciating her own health risks—even if it cost her some chocolate.



Role model: Carolyn Flowers, chief operations officer, is determined to be a healthy example for Metro Wellness Program participants. *Photo by Ned Racine*

At an AHA convention in Atlanta, Flowers was named a Power Ambassador by the association, for her success in bringing its "Power To End Stroke" information to thousands of Metro employees.

In an interview with AHA, Flowers noted that she is well aware that her African-American and Latino workers have a higher risk of heart disease, just as she is aware that stroke is the No. 3 killer in the nation.

According to AHA, African-Americans are at particularly high risk. In fact, African Americans have almost twice the risk of first-ever stroke compared with whites. Those 35 to 54 years old have four times the relative risk for stroke, partially due to increased rates of high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity.

Once Flowers became involved in the AHA's outreach efforts and Metro's Wellness Program, she realized she had a personal stake in a healthier lifestyle. Even though she knew heart disease ran in her family, she never linked that risk to herself.

Her grandmother died of a heart attack; her father had quadruple bypass surgery; and, despite his healthy appearance, her physically active brother has battled clogged arteries. After listening to a Power To End Stroke presentation three years ago at an American Heart Association meeting, Flowers knew that she had found her cause.

"When [AHA] said Metro was one of the employers they hoped to engage in the movement, I jumped at the chance because we really see the value in keeping our workforce productive, efficient and healthy. From that point on, I got involved," she said.

"AHA has gone out to each of our divisions throughout the transportation side. They've given us some sponsorship on the walking program. UTU and the healthcare carriers have also contributed \$42,000 to the Wellness Program."

In particular, she wants busy bus operators to know a healthier life is possible. To show her commitment to that idea and the Wellness Program overall, Flowers has attended the launch of the program at each division, as has UTU General Chairman James Williams.

If she could impress employees with one thing, it would be "that it takes commitment and dedication to change your lifestyle. As an agency—along with our union partners—we are putting in that commitment and dedication for the long haul."

"We've looked at the experience of other transportation agencies, and they said it usually takes three to five years [to see improvement]—this is a long-term commitment," she added.

How will she know the program is working? She will look to comments from employees and Metro's healthcare carriers.

Because Flowers promotes a healthier lifestyle throughout Operations, her freedom to indulge her love/hate affair with chocolate has evaporated. People notice if she buys a candy bar and are not above reminding her it is a poor choice.

"I haven't had a candy bar in five weeks," she said proudly and without tears. "I have to make sure that my diet is more exemplary."

In fact she is under pressure everywhere to walk the talk. Recently, at a Wellness Program kickoff at Central City Division 1, an operator who is member of her gym noticed her. "We haven't seen you there lately," he said to Flowers, responding to her defense of the event's chocolate-free hors d'oeuvres.

She quickly explained to the operator, "Listen, my trainer moved and I followed my trainer. When I finish my free lessons, I'll be back." Her gym mate seemed skeptical.

"You can't be out here telling us what to do if you're not working out," he replied.

"I swear, I'm at the gym," she answered.

"You never know who sees you," Flowers said. "I have to set an example."

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Eastside LRT Constructors Project Director Mike Aparicio accepts commendation for reaching 3 million accident-free hours during construction of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension from CEO Roger Snoble, Director Gloria Molina and Director Richard Katz, far right, at May 22 Board meeting.

Board Approves Fiscal Year 2009 Budget, Extends CEO's Contract, Contributes \$58.9 Million to Metrolink

In this report:

- [Item 6. \\$58.9 Million Contribution to Metrolink](#)
- [Item 7. Revisions to Immediate Needs Transportation Program](#)
- [Item 8. Funding for I-5 Carmenita Road Interchange Reconstruction](#)
- [Item 23. Five-Year Contract to Veolia Transportation](#)
- [Item 30. Study on Potential of Further Congestion Pricing](#)

By NED RACINE, Editor

(May 27, 2008) The Board approved the proposed Fiscal Year 2008-2009 budget at its regular meeting May 22, extended the contract of CEO Roger Snoble for up to one year, programmed funds for Metrolink and approved the annual inflationary increase for Union/Non-Contract and non-represented employees.

The \$3.4 billion budget begins July 1, 2008, which is 7.3 percent more than the Metro budget last fiscal year. The increase is largely for transportation subsidies for municipal bus operators, paratransit service, Metrolink, the County of Los Angeles and cities, preparation to start the new Metro Gold Line service to East Los Angeles later in 2009 and rehabilitation of older Metro Rail cars.

There will be no fare increase in the next fiscal year despite Metro's higher

operating costs and projections that local sales tax revenue will only increase one percent. Non-labor expenses will be reduced to stay at or below current levels.

The Board also approved the total budgeted salaries and benefits for each Union/Non-Contract group as required by the Position Authorization and Compensation Policy. In addition, the Board approved the non-represented Employee Salary Schedule adjusted for the annual inflationary increase.

By the end of FY 2009, the full rapid bus network – 25 lines operated by Metro and three by municipal bus operators crisscrossing the county – will be in place. The Board this spring voted to purchase 260 new 45-foot buses. Half of those high-capacity buses should be delivered in FY 2009 and the rest the following year.

The FY 2009 budget calls for spending \$1.5 billion or 45 percent of the total budget on bus operations and capital for Metro and the municipal bus operators in Los Angeles County and for paratransit programs for the disabled who cannot use regular service.

The budget earmarks \$781 million or 23.2 percent for countywide rail, including Metro Rail operating and capital costs and a \$58.9 million subsidy for Metrolink.

Amendments to the proposed budget added one full-time equivalent (FTE) to Construction and one FTE to Countrywide Planning for sustainability activities. One FTE was added to manage the I-405 Sepulveda Pass widening project and another was added to Communications for the Safety Education and Outreach Program.

Item 6, Contributing \$58.9 Million to Metrolink. The Board programmed \$58.9 million in Proposition C 10-percent local sales tax funds as Metro's share of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority Fiscal Year 2008-09 Preliminary Budget for Metrolink.

The \$58.9 million includes \$37 million for operations and \$15 million for rehabilitation and renovation. Metro's contribution also includes \$6 million for capital projects.

The \$58.9 million would consist of \$53 million from the Fiscal Year 2009 budget and almost \$6 million in prior year surplus subsidy.

Item 7, Revisions to Immediate Needs Transportation Program. The Board approved a Planning and Programming Committee recommendation to improve the effectiveness of the Immediate Needs Transportation Program (INTP).

Established in 1992, the INTP provides supplemental transportation assistance to meet the basic needs of Los Angeles County residents with limited resources by providing subsidized taxi service and/or transit subsidy.

The Board altered the ratio of bus tokens and taxi coupons dispersed to 50 percent bus tokens and 50 percent taxi coupons. Currently the ratio is 65 percent tokens and 35 percent coupons.

Item 8, I-5 Carmenita Road Interchange Reconstruction. The Board approved additional funds for the I-5 Carmenita Road Interchange Reconstruction, a \$105 million increase, raising project funding from \$283.3 million to \$388.8 million.

Caltrans requested additional Metro funding to cover design modifications, including revisions in structure and roadway elements, as well as escalating values for residential and commercial property. Also cited were mitigation of project impacts on the community and businesses and higher costs for construction material.

One of 12 overpasses that span the I-5, Carmenita Road is currently too narrow to construct the I-5 Widening and High Occupancy Vehicle Lane project currently in design.

Item 23, Five-Year Contract to Veolia Transportation. The Board authorized the CEO to award a five-year firm fixed price contract to Veolia Transportation for contract bus service.

The not-to-exceed contract cost would be \$53 million. The contract also includes \$11 million for fuel cost reimbursement during the contract length, bringing the contract total to \$64 million.

Item 30, Study on Potential of Further Congestion Pricing. The Board instructed the staff to present a study on the potential for congestion pricing for the remainder of the freeway corridors in Los Angeles County (for example, the I-405, US-101, SR-170). The Board asked for the research to be presented at its June 2008 meeting.

The study will include timeframes for the earliest implementation of congestion pricing on these corridors and the funding requirements needed to implement these corridor congestion pricing proposals.

-- Marc Littman contributed to this report

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New design from Creative Services will soon appear on some Metro Vanpool vehicles. More on vanpools at www.metro.net/vanpool.

Metro Vanpool Program Becomes Nation's Fastest Growing

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 27, 2008) As the Metro Vanpool Program marks its one-year birthday this month, it has enrolled more than 600 vehicles, making it the fastest growing public vanpool system in the country.

In November 2007 the program consisted of 500 vanpools in Los Angeles County, largely the existing private vanpools Metro consolidated under its wings and opened to the public. The explosive growth to 600 vanpools in a little more than 6 months exceeded Transportation Planning Manager Jami Carrington's expectations.

"We plan things out and expect them to perform within a 2- to 3-percent level of certainty," she said. "The Metro Vanpool Program has exceeded our expectations by 10 to 17 percent in key performance areas. What's really great is that people are interested and understand the benefits of vanpooling, and the growth in vehicles reflects that."

Metro subsidizes each enrolled public vanpool vehicle to the tune of up to \$400 a month, reducing the average cost of a monthly vanpool commute fare from \$224 to \$170 per person. Gas prices and car costs being what they are, the same commute could cost a solo driver as much as \$785 a month, based on a 70-mile commute. Participating in the Metro Vanpool Program could save the average commuter as much as \$561 each month.

The program has logged nearly 10.5 revenue million miles and now carries more than 5,500 riders to and from work daily – that's 5,500 potential solo commuters taken off the roadways, reducing congestion and improving air quality.

"These high gas prices are helping us convince people that ridesharing can save people money," Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor said. "We

encourage everyone to think twice about riding solo and join a vanpool or ride transit so that they aren't gouged at the pump."

A new public promotional campaign will second O'Connor's vanpool sentiments. Beginning in June, as many as 30 vanpool vans will feature advertising for the program as a way to further increase awareness of vanpooling as a commuter alternative.

The bigger fish

This recent success has Metro's Research and Development team dreaming large. Carrington said they have a solid base among individual commuters and are now going after bigger fish: business owners and developers.

"We want business owners to look at vanpools as a way to keep their parking lots cleared of employee cars so their customers aren't searching for spaces," she said.

Metro's participation in transit-oriented developments is complimentary to vanpool services, she said. Most developments are light on parking by design as a way to encourage using transit. Carrington said the vanpool program needs to be working with the developers to offer public vanpool service availability as an additional tenant benefit.

"The transit-oriented developments are the perfect opportunity to get both owners and developers involved," she said. "Then we have the circle complete: the individual commuter and the employees of the businesses, who are the consumers and the occupants of developments in Los Angeles County, working in partnership with Metro. It's a win-win."

-- Dave Sotero contributed to this report

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[Hot off the Web]



[Check it out:](#) A one-stop shop for commuters at metro.net.

(May 28, 2008) With gas prices leaping over the \$4 per gallon mark, commuters nationwide are exploring options they never considered before. Are you one of them?

The Commute Services web page offers a number of ways to reduce the pain at the pump while remaining mobile in Southern California. The page refers to itself as a "one-stop shop for commute information and resources."

Here you can find a carpool partner, learn about incentives for ridesharing, and explore the Guaranteed Ride Home program for those who rideshare.

If you are the parent of a school-aged child, the Metro School Pool voluntary program offers tools to help parents form carpools.



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FSP driver Enrique Nava has been patrolling the Glendale (2) Freeway and the Ventura (134) Freeway for six years. He says the program really helps to keep traffic clear and congestion down.

'Freeway Angels' Help to Tame Snarling Traffic

- Riding with Enrique Nava, a six-year FSP veteran through the San Gabriel Valley

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 28, 2008) Metro Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) driver Enrique Nava gets visibly excited when he receives a rescue call from a stranded motorist on the freeway.



"Ooh! I think we can get to this one. I hope one of my partners doesn't beat us there," Nava says as he exits the Glendale (2) Freeway to head in the opposite direction. "I'm pretty sure we'll make it."

It's not really a contest for Nava. He and other FSP drivers just want to respond quickly to motorist calls for help. For

hundreds of stranded motorists who dial #399, they call Nava and his fellow FSP drivers "angels" of the freeways.

Nava's "beat" is the Glendale Freeway between Golden State (I-5) Freeway and Foothill (210) Freeway. He's also responsible for patrolling Ventura (134) Freeway between Hollywood (101) Freeway and the Foothill Freeway.

Nava generally sees routine troubles: flat tires, empty gas tanks, fender benders. He learns of those problems through various methods, mostly by finding disabled vehicles through routine patrol. He also receives assignments from CHP dispatchers who receive calls from motorists via freeway Call Boxes, #399 (mobile Call Box) cell phone calls and 911.

"You get called an 'angel' a lot out here," Nava says. "It keeps you wanting to do this job. People really appreciate and are thankful for what you do. And when they find out it's free? If they didn't know, they're even happier than they were just to get help."

Nava and five other drivers are employed by the contracted tow service provider responsible for weekday patrol on these two freeways. The FSP patrol routes are contracted out to private companies by Metro. CalTrans and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) partner with the agency to support the program. This particular route is contracted to Hollywood Car Carrier, who Nava works for directly.



Nava used wire to tie up the muffler of this SUV so its owner could at least drive it off the freeway and get the damage repaired. The accident victims discuss the crash with a CHP officer. FSP drivers work closely with CHP authorities. Calls for assistance are routed through the CHP switchboard and answered by FSP drivers.

Still, Nava said that he feels like he works for Metro, considering the stringent training regulations contracted businesses like Hollywood Car Carrier are required to maintain.

Dangerous surroundings

FSP drivers need to be fully qualified to change flat tires, jump-start cars, refill radiators and tape leaky hoses, and open locked cars – not to mention hooking up and towing incapacitated vehicles off the freeway.

"We have to attend refresher courses [twice a year to maintain our driver's license certifications and] to stay current on methods," Nava says. "For example, here in California we don't get a lot of all-wheel drive vehicles, which require a certain kind of tow hook-up compared to front-wheel or real-wheel drive. But just because we don't do it very often doesn't mean we don't need to know how."

Nava says this training also ensures that the FSP drivers stay safe while performing their duties.

"There's always spots where you feel unsafe...you're on a freeway, after all," Nava says. "If [I] think a spot is dangerous, I'll ask the driver to move. Some customers will complain that it'll scratch up their rims or something, but most understand and are happy to move."

In his experience, there are more people in distress in the evening rush than in the morning. He says summertime is the busiest season for flat tires because the heat is hard on tires that aren't in top condition.

Mostly, Nava says he stops to help people with flat tires or people who run out of gas. When he does end up towing a vehicle, FSP policy requires that the vehicle is towed off the freeway to the nearest drop location designated by CHP. Drop locations are adjacent to freeways, are well lit and near businesses that can lend some sort of assistance to the motorist, such as gas stations or restaurants.

“I take them someplace safe, someplace with lots of people and someplace they can get access to a phone,” Nava says. “I leave them somewhere so they can be responsible for their car and get on with their day.”

To be continued> Part II: Escalating gas prices make Nava's job more difficult.

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Metro's Design Studio created a Metro Rapid shoe and a Metro Local shoe—size twelve—complete with headlights and wheels.

Design Studio Creates Buses with Soles

By NED RACINE, Editor

(May 28, 2008) There is more than one way to promote the Metro identity. Certainly buses and trains are nice but who could resist shoes resembling Metro buses?

Apparently, no one.

As a submission to the Sole Search Design Contest sponsored by AIGA/LA (the Los Angeles chapter of a professional organization for designers) and TOMS shoes, Metro's Design Studio created a Metro Rapid shoe and a Metro Local shoe—size twelve—complete with headlights and wheels.

The Design Studio staff painted the canvas shoes with a primer and a final coat in Metro colors—including a layer of silver at the bottom—and added decals.

"The studio did a fantastic job," Christian Rocha, art director said. "This interview should be with all of us. I'm in their debt."

Rocha particularly praised Adam Rosen, husband of Melissa Rosen, senior graphic designer, who wired the shoes so their lights functioned, embracing the "Safety 1st" Metro goal, even for vehicles that carry only one human foot.

The shoes did not win the contest, however, which did not surprise Rocha, because the winning shoe had to be easily reproduced. The Metro shoes were too complicated for that.

"We really thought it would be fun" to do something for the contest, Rocha

added. "It was interesting to apply the Metro brand to another form . . . to see how we can apply the Metro brand to something as awkward as shoes."

AIGA/LA had philanthropic goals—contributing shoes to children and benefiting the AIGA/LA Scholarship fund. The shoes were unveiled at a design fest May 14, where they were encased in a glass case for display, much like a gallery opening. Metro's entry is pictured on the [AIGA/LA website](#).

Rocha has one lingering disappointment. "I was disappointed that we couldn't skate in the shoes; they wouldn't support our weight."



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Marie Tervalon sings of a "Blue Monday" while Paul Burke offers sax appeal. On right, Augustine Zuniga and Joe Parise lay down a rhythm. Raul Gomez, partial hidden by his drum set, keeps the beat. Photo by Ned Racine.

Blue Liners Sing About Blue Mondays

By NED RACINE, Editor

(May 29, 2008) Under a warm sun the Blue Liners, a band composed of Metro employees, laid down some cool tunes during a lunchtime concert.

The Blue Liners played an extensive repertoire, the early Rock and Roll of "YaYa" to bossa nova, with "Girl From Ipanema." And then there was Marie Tervalon singing "Blue Monday" on the Plaza Patio West.

The Blue Liners are: Mike Ortiz, lead guitar; Larry Morris, keyboard; Carl Hobson, congas; Raul Gomez, drums; Joe Parise, guitar; Paul Burke, sax; Augustine Zuniga, guitar; and Marie Tervalon, lead vocals.

Not only do the Blue Liners help move people during the day, they move people with their music.

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FSP driver Enrique Nava checks on an accident victim on the Glendale (2) Freeway. Nava has patrolled the Glendale and Ventura (134) freeways for six years. Photo by Jimmy Stroup

Rising Gas Prices Add New Wrinkle for 'Freeway Angels'

- Enrique Nava, Metro Freeway Service Patrol driver, cruises San Gabriel Valley freeways to keep highways flowing and drivers safer.

By JIMMY STROUP

(May 29, 2008) Metro Freeway Service Patrol driver Enrique Nava faces a new wrinkle in his work. The recent escalation of gas prices has caused some people to try to use FSP as a rolling gas station.

Nava says he recently had to report a woman who he'd found four times trying to get free gasoline. "There are a lot of people trying to take advantage," Nava says. "With gas at \$4 a gallon, it's no wonder."

To catch those trying to game the system, Nava and the FSP folks politely ask the driver to attempt to start his or her car and move it off at the next exit. If the driver makes it, they reassess and perhaps give the driver gas at the exit. If the driver can't start the vehicle, Nava happily supplies the stranded motorist with a gallon.

Accidents are a little different situation for the FSP drivers. They aren't trained paramedics, so they don't attempt to move injured people unless they feel their lives are being threatened.

"If someone's injured, we wait for the CHP and the fire department to come handle the situation," Nava says. "I'll put out cones and flares, divert traffic around them, and then tow them off to the side once the CHP gives me the go-ahead."

Countywide

Metro's FSP program is composed of 151 trucks patrolling more than 475 miles of freeway in Los Angeles County. Nava is only one of dozens of drivers patrolling the freeways each day, attempting to limit the traffic congestion caused by accidents and lookie-loos.

In the 16 years of operation since the program began in July 1991, FSP drivers have conducted nearly four million assists. Operating under the theory that Metro is here to help people move around LA County, FSP continues to be a huge success for the agency and its partners: CHP and Caltrans.

As someone who drives each day on the freeway, Nava sees the good the program does. "You can really see how traffic clears when we get people off to the side in a timely manner."

Metro's Freeway Service Patrol is the largest program of its kind in the U.S. A 2006 survey by UC Berkeley found that the FSP benefit/cost ratio for motorists was 6.3 to 1; for each dollar spent on the FSP program, LA County motorists realized a savings of \$6.30. This is based on FSP reducing commuting delays.



Nava stops to assist stranded motorist on the freeway.

Reporter's Recount: A Wednesday morning call

Wednesday, May 21, 10 a.m. I had been riding with Nava since 6 a.m. And we'd only stopped once to make sure a trucker wasn't in trouble – he'd only stopped to check his load was secure.

After four hours, we'd traveled the Glendale (2) Freeway twice. The same with the Ventura (134) Freeway: back and forth twice with nothing to stop for. We'd heard some calls, but we'd either just passed them or were nowhere near the location, and Nava's partners aided those motorists.

I was almost ready to return to Gateway.

Just as we exited Glendale Freeway southbound, Nava picked up on a #399 call: a three-car accident between Verdugo Road and Avenue 36. We were less than a mile from the accident. Nava did a quick U-turn and we headed south to the accident.

We were first responders, arriving only 10 minutes after the accident, to a fender bender in the left-most, number one lane. A driver had stopped

quickly, causing the driver of a small SUV to do the same. A Honda Accord driver was on a cell phone and didn't see the quick stop. CRASH.

No one was hurt, but the SUV's muffler was dragging on the ground and the Honda Accord's front end was a mess – the radiator had been punctured and was leaking. Traffic was backing up quickly.

Nava rapidly assessed each car and driver's condition and determined they could be moved to the right shoulder. We waited for a CHP officer (one was on the way) to run a "break," to stop traffic so Nava could get the cars off to the right shoulder. Nava cleared the bigger pieces of debris and prepared for the move.

After the cars were over, CHP began to take a report. Nava dug through his truck for wire to tie up the SUV's muffler so it was safe to get to a garage. While the drivers dealt with the CHP, Nava was under their cars, making sure everything was safe.

The Honda Accord needed a tow, but its driver had called AAA to get the car all the way to a dealership; FSP only tows to the next freeway exit.

Each driver thanked Nava for his assistance and after CHP had written out the accident report, we were all off. The incident had taken less than half an hour from start to finish.

"Not only was congestion reduced in this incident, but other accidents were avoided," Nava says. "The longer you let the cars sit in lanes, the greater the possibility for other accidents – people not avoiding them and even the lookie-loo factor."

Though it was after morning rush, many cars traveled that stretch of the (SR-2). Once CHP threw up the break, traffic backed up at least a half mile and slowed substantially.

But after the accident was cleared to the right, traffic resumed. Within 10 minutes, you wouldn't have known there had been an accident if you didn't notice the cars, CHP cruiser and FSP tow truck on the right shoulder.

Hearing that FSP provides a valuable service is one thing. Going out with a driver and watching him in action, watching him clear an accident and avoid further congestion is another.

Read ['Freeway Angels' Part 1](#)

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Summit organizer and Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor calls for a plan of action to achieve sustainability practices in the region. Photos by Gayle Anderson.

Civic Leaders Explore Climate Change, Mitigation Efforts at Sustainability Summit

(May 29, 2008) A legion of stakeholders took first steps May 28 in a collaborative effort to develop a region-wide sustainability policy at the first Sustainability Summit hosted by Metro.



CEO Roger Snoble: "Mass transit is a basic principle of sustainability."

Well-attended by top-level executives of agencies responsible for the region's infrastructure and utilities, the purpose of the summit was to bring government in Los Angeles County together to develop a united path towards a more sustainable transportation and land use system for the region.

Addressing the convening civic leaders and local government staff, Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor, who organized the summit, called for "collective action" needed to achieve a more sustainable region. "No one

agency or department can do this on its own, but together, we can work to meet the goals that we decide for the future we want," she said.

The morning session gave a regional perspective on sustainability featuring panel representatives from SCAG, Los Angeles World Airports, Metropolitan Water District and the County of Los Angeles.

The morning session was followed by concurrent breakout sessions on Green House Gas Emissions and Local Government Operations Development, Renewable, Energy Conservation and Incentives, Green Infrastructure and Environmental Management Systems and Community Growth and Development.

The group reconvened in an afternoon session to study the results from an 18-question electronic survey distributed countywide. The survey identified and measured sustainability awareness and practices in the region.



In an afternoon breakout session, Sustainable City Coordinator Shannon Perry gives an overview of the City of Santa Monica's pioneering sustainability program that debuted in 1992.

"We've heard from many different voices offering best practices in sustainability and climate action," said O'Connor in her closing remarks. "We will reconvene to collaborate, to learn together, and to put into action the best thinking in the region." -- *From Gayle Anderson and Helen Ortiz-Gilstrap.*



Metro staff from a number of departments pooled resources to help organize the summit. Pictured here are, from left, Rachel Marquez, Gwenneth Doyle, Stewart Chesler, Helen Ortiz-Gilstrap, Tim Papandreou, Tim Lindholm, Cris Liban, Danielle Boutier and K.N. Murthy.