

[Home](#)[CEO Hotline](#)[Viewpoint](#)[Classified Ads](#)[Archives](#)[Metro.net](#) (web)

## Resources

- ▶ [Safety](#)
- ▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)
- ▶ [Ask the CEO](#)
- ▶ [CEO Forum](#)
- ▶ [Employee Recognition](#)
- ▶ [Employee Activities](#)
- ▶ [Metro Projects](#)
- ▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)
- ▶ [Archives](#)
- ▶ [Events Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Research Center/Library](#)
- ▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)
- ▶ [Bazaar](#)

## Metro Info

- ▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)
- ▶ [Policies](#)
- ▶ [Training](#)
- ▶ [Help Desk](#)
- ▶ [Intranet Policy](#)

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APTA officials present prestigious Rail Transit Team Achievement Award to Los Angeles Metro Rail team. Pictured are, from left, APTA Vice-chair Gary Thomas, Metro Rail Fleet Services Director George Kennedy, Los Angeles Metro Rail General Manager Mike Cannell, Metro CEO Roger Snoble, Metro Rail Fleet Equipment Maintenance Instructor Russell Homan, Metro Rail Operations Instructor Esther Pippins, Metro Rail Transportation Director Duane Martin, Metro Rail Operator Robert Rodriguez, Metro Rail Operator Geronimo Young, APTA President William A. Millar, Metro Maintainer Eric Czintos, APTA Chair Michael S. Townes, Metro Maintainer Ronnie Burt, Metro Maintainer Toshi Manaka, and FTA Administrator James S. Simpson.

## One More Time: Metro Rail is Number One

### Metro Rail Team Takes Top Honors at 2008 APTA International Rail Rodeo

- Maintainers hold on to championship title for second year in a row

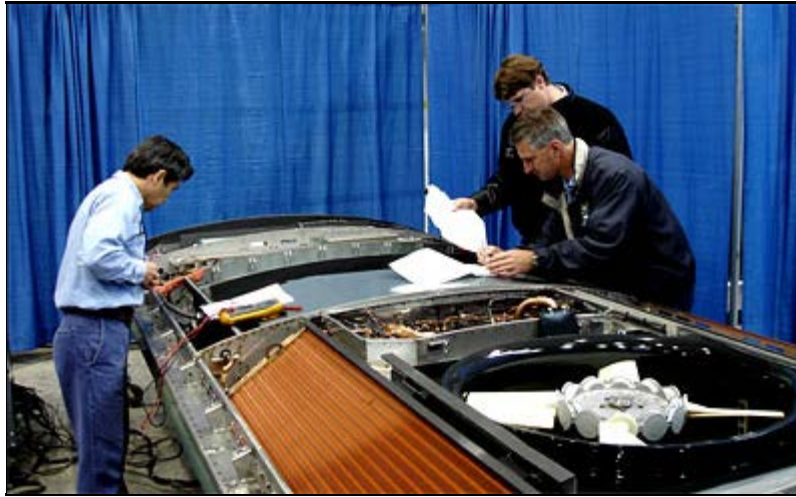
By GAYLE ANDERSON

(June 3, 2008) The Los Angeles Metro Rail championship team won the prestigious Rail Transit Team Achievement Award at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual American Public Transportation Association (APTA) International Rail Rodeo, held in conjunction with the 2008 APTA Rail Conference in San Francisco May 31 - June 2.

The winning team members are Operators Robert Rodriguez and Geronimo Young and Rail Equipment Specialists Eric Czintos, Ronnie Burt and Toshi Manaka.

The Los Angeles Metro team, racking up the highest rail operator and maintainer team combined score, walked away with the Team Achievement Award. Eighty-one contestants from 20 rail systems competed for top honors.

The Maintainers Competition judges the ability to troubleshoot maintenance problems. The Metro maintainers earned first place in this competition for the second year in a row. The winning maintainers were Eric Czintos, Ronnie Burt and Toshi Manaka of Los Angeles Metro. San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit took second place and Metro St. Louis came in third place.



Maintainers Toshi Manaka, left, Eric Czintos and Ronnie Burt work out an air conditioning defect at "HVAC" event, where they scored a perfect 100 points.

*Photo by Russell Homan*

It was a triumph for the returning champion maintainers and Instructor Russell Homan, who won first place at the APTA International competition in Toronto, June 2, 2007.

"I couldn't be any prouder of those guys," said Homan. "They are the best, by far." The top-scoring team scored a perfect 100 points in the "defective component," "HVAC" and "tools and fasteners" events.

Homan attributes the rail maintenance team's achievement to hard work and a great deal of experience. Veteran competitors Ronnie Burt and Eric Czintos have teamed up every year since 2003, when they took first place in the International Competition held in San Jose.

International competition is no stranger to Operator Robert Rodriguez.

The operator team of veteran competitor Robert Rodriguez and high-scoring newcomer Geronimo Young came in a close second to the victorious home team from the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency. Rodriguez has competed at the international level on numerous occasions since 1997, said Instructor Esther Pippins. Rodriguez and teammate Tu Phan took home the gold in two of the international competitions.

The Operators Competition measures professional skills including: train operation, knowledge of safety regulations, train equipment, and track right-of-way rules and procedures. First place in the Operators Competition went to San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency; the winning operators were Chi Ki Hau and Jason Lao. The Los Angeles operator team of Metro Red Line Operator Robert Rodriguez and Metro Green Line Operator Geromino Young came in second, and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority placed third.

The APTA International Rail Rodeo Competition is designed to encourage excellence and professionalism in rail transit operations. The competition was held on May 31 at Muni Metro East in San Francisco.