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CEO Roger Snoble sharpens the visibility of alternative modes of transportation at 'Dump the Pump' Day news conference.

## Metro, Transit-Related Agencies Join National Movement to 'Dump the Pump'

By JIMMY STROUP

(June 19, 2008) Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor and CEO Roger Snoble were among local transit leaders urging drivers to embrace public transit as part of national Dump the Pump Day, June 19.

In the painful context of rising gasoline prices, O'Connor and Snoble hoped their message would cool drivers' love affair with their cars.

"Industry watchers are telling us that the days of \$2 a gallon gas are over. Gone. Goodbye," O'Connor said. "Today public transit agencies are gathered across the country to encourage people to 'dump the pump.'"

More than 125 public transportation agencies in 28 states joined the American Public Transportation Association to make June 19 the day to emphasize that transit—in its many forms—can be a solution to rising transportation costs.

"We're very excited that people are looking for an alternative [to solo commuting] and we're trying to provide that for people," Snoble said. "We can really make a huge difference. We need to look at ways to travel that not only save money but help the environment, too."

According to AAA, annual costs of driving your own car range from \$6,320 for small sedans to as much as \$10,488 for mid-sized SUVs. Both O'Connor and Snoble pointed out that a Metro Day Pass is just \$5 a day for

Metro field service truck towing a gas-guzzling SUV parades by transit officials and media cameras. A Metro articulated bus, followed by the newly branded Metro Vanpool comes to the rescue of solo commuters.

unlimited riding, which is about what a gallon of gas costs.

"Think about that SUV," O'Connor said. "\$50,000 over a five-year period – that's a down payment on a house. It only costs \$744 a year to Go Metro. Compare that with any other way of getting around."

### **Partnering with like-minded agencies**

Metro wasn't the only agency pitching public transportation. Metrolink Assistant Executive Officer Steve Wylie said with the combination of Metro and Metrolink someone can get virtually anywhere in Los Angeles County.

AAA's Steve Finnegan, manager of government affairs and public policy, suggested that carpooling can help reduce traffic congestion and costs. He also said that small adjustments can influence the pocketbook in big ways.

"A person's driving style can have a big impact on the kind of gas mileage they get," Finnegan said. "Driving economically and keeping [your car] well-maintained can reduce your annual car costs by 10 to 20 percent."

Transit's environmental benefits were a primary focus of the press event. O'Connor – a long-time advocate for environmentally-friendly behavior – highlighted that topic.

"There are obvious environmental benefits," she said. "Think about your carbon footprint. The simple [action] of using public transit reduces carbon pollution."

"There is no greater step you can take to reduce your carbon footprint than to take public transit," Wylie added.

In a visual demonstration of dumping the pump, one of Metro's Freeway Service Patrol tow trucks drove up with a Toyota Highlander in tow, complete with two five-gallon gas canisters strapped to the top of the SUV. O'Connor took great pleasure in dressing down "Guz," the gas-guzzler.

"Hey Guz! You're getting too expensive. It's just too much money to feed you!" she said. "Plus, since we're being straight, you kind of smell bad."

She then unceremoniously "dumped" the SUV – only to suggest people replace "Guz" with a variety of Metro products: Metro Rail and bus



service, as well as Metro Vanpool.

To drive the point home, a Metro Local articulated bus and a Metro Vanpool van (complete with the new advertising motif) drove by and parked.

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