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Chip Hazen, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance administrator, explains the importance of the wheelchair ramp being deployed at the proper angle, 8.33 percent or lower. He demonstrates that a higher angle could cause a wheelchair to tip over. North Los Angeles Division 3 Bus Operator Quaneika Franklin listens in. *Photo by Ned Racine*

New Online Form Offers Riders With Disabilities Chance to Comment and Commend

By Sarah Winfrey

(July 1, 2008) Metro bus riders with disabilities will soon be able to comment on Metro service online, as well as commend operators who provide superior service for riders with disabilities.

"We will use this [information] to determine what issues there are and get a snapshot of what is happening on the system," says Chip Hazen, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance administrator. "We also want to find operators who should be receiving commendations for going above and beyond what is required."

To do that, Hazen and John Downey, Information Management software engineer, have created a Metro Bus Rider's Evaluation Form for the Web, allowing users to easily share their observations of riding Metro bus lines.

"If they ride a line once a day or for five days, they can report on each time they ride," Hazen says.

"We tried to make this as easy as possible," Hazen says about the online feedback process. "I think we went through about 20 versions before this final one."

Still in the testing phase, this form will only be available to participants

who are trained by Hazen in state law requirements for ADA compliance. He hopes to eliminate any misunderstanding over what the law says and what service riders expect to receive when riding fixed route transportation services, Hazen explains.

For example, some riders believe an operator must force those sitting in priority seating reserved for seniors or persons with disabilities to move if they are not a senior or disabled. The operator is only required to make the request, however, not enforce it.

Each rider using the form will receive a password from Metro. Then all they do is click "submit" to send their comments directly to Metro.

Currently, there are three Metro riders testing the online form. All are considered legally blind, and two participants are completely blind. Additional participants will be drawn from regular Metro riders within the disabled community.

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