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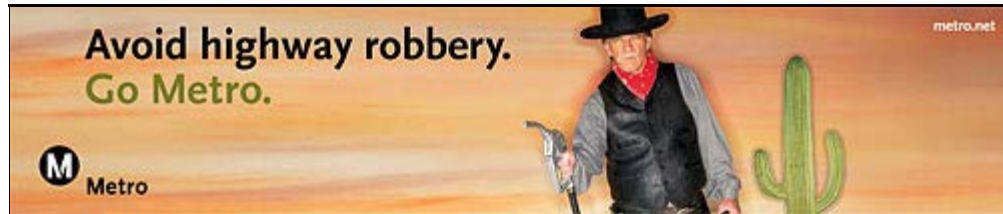
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Based on June's ridership numbers, commuters appear to be embracing Metro's message.

Metro Rail, Metro Orange Line Set New Ridership Records in June 2008

- Bus ridership grows from last quarter

(July 17, 2008) The Metro Red and Purple subway lines, the Metro Gold and Green lines all set weekday ridership records in June 2008, and the Metro Blue Line fell just short of a record as riders flocked to public transportation to avoid high gas prices.

Metro Orange Line buses also set a ridership record.

Last month 309,000 passengers boarded Metro Rail trains on an average weekday, up 12.8 percent when compared to June 2007. About half of those riders (153,928) rode the subway.

Metro bus ridership, which had been lagging following last summer's fare hike, bounced back. It's still down 1.96 percent for the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2008 compared to last year, but it had been down as much as 7 percent in previous quarters.

"The increase in prices has changed travel behavior in two ways," said Ed Muncy, director of service planning. "One is riders are substituting transit for car trips. Two, they are organizing their trips better to consolidate their errands, whether they take cars or transit."

For the second month in a row, the Metro Gold Line between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena set a new ridership record with 26,338 average weekday boardings, up 31.8 percent this year over last year.

"The cost-effective, convenient alternative to driving propelled the Gold Line to an all-time high in ridership," said County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Michael D. Antonovich.

The Metro Green Line connecting Norwalk and El Segundo nabbed a record with 44,034 boardings. The Metro Blue Line, which travels between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach, experienced its second highest ridership with 84,353 average weekday boardings.

The popular Metro Orange Line, operating between North Hollywood and Woodland Hills in the San Fernando Valley, boosted weekday ridership by 4.4 percent over last year, reaching 26,596 boardings.

An even better measure of Metro Rail's growing popularity is to compare total boardings for the fourth quarter of FY 2008 (April-May-June) with the fourth quarter of FY 2007. Metro Rail ridership surged 7.13 percent.

Metro schedulers observe that a sharp drop in Metro Day Pass sales has resulted in bus riders making fewer extra discretionary trips, however, Metro Rail has consistently gained new commuter riders.

Combined Metro Bus and Rail ridership was just about even in the fourth quarter compared to a year earlier.

-- Marc Littman contributed to this report