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## [ Metro News Briefs ]

### California Lawmakers Approve Bill Allowing Congestion Pricing on Two Highways

[Online](#) at metro.net

(Sept. 2, 2008) On Saturday, Aug. 30 California lawmakers approved Senate Bill 1422, which allows [congestion pricing](#) on two Los Angeles County highways. The bill now awaits the Governor's signature.

The legislation allows Metro to use \$210.6 million from a federal grant to convert carpool lanes on segments of the I-10 (El Monte Busway) and I-110 (Harbor Transitway) highways.

Designed to reduce traffic congestion and gridlock, the one-year-long demonstration project, which Metro has named FastLanes, will convert High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes on segments of the highways.

Besides maximizing freeway capacity usage, Metro, Caltrans, and other FastLanes partners hope to use proceeds from congestion pricing to fund additional transit alternatives.

Senate Bill 1422, by Sen. Mark Ridley-Thomas, requires Metro to provide discount tolls for low-income commuters.

For the bill to become law, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger must sign it before Sept. 30.



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Mechanic Mark Lacanilao holds a compressor seal, one of the most frequently replaced pieces in a coach air conditioning (AC) system.

*Photos by  
Ned Racine*

## Efficient AC Team Keeps Division 8 Passengers Cool

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 2, 2008) When Larry Remata and Scott Lanski began working on buses, a passenger turned on the air conditioning (AC) by opening a window.

Now Remata, Lanski and their partner Mark Lacanilao work on sophisticated AC and heating systems with multiple zones and computer sensors and new coolants. They troubleshoot problems with a laptop computer and ensure the West Valley Division 8 coaches resist the San Fernando Valley heat.

They must be doing a good job because Pat Orr, the Division 8 maintenance manager, claimed, "I will stand their excellence against anyone in the company."

Perhaps their excellence stems from the experience this trio of mechanic "A"s have accumulated. Lanski has 30 years as a Metro mechanic, 20 years working on AC systems. Remata has worked for Metro for 29 years. Metro taught him how to service AC systems 20 years ago, and he has worked on them since.

Remata first worked on the 4801s, the classic round coaches that Metro retired in 1982. He also worked on Metro's first articulated buses in the early 1980s.

The "baby" of the group, Lacanilao, has worked for Metro for 11 years, six years of those repairing AC and heating systems.



Mechanic Larry Remata points to the insulation that separates the AC equipment from the heat of the outside air. Division 8 and other divisions are installing thicker insulation to limit strain on the AC equipment. Below, Remata checks the thermometer on a Metro coach. To the right is a filter for the AC system.



Lacanilao, who began working on air conditioning systems when he worked for a Mazda dealership, now works on systems 10 times larger than the Mazda systems. The basic theories, he noted, are the same.

Sometimes their accumulated experience allows them to hear a knocking sound in the compressor and know it's starting to fail.

As mechanics often do, these three enjoy the variety in their job. "It's always a different type of problem;" Lanski said. "It could be electrical; it could be lines leaking." Adding a mechanic's ironic touch, he commented, "You could say the heater runs all summer and the AC runs all winter."

Although operators and passengers rightly expect their cool or hot air when they request it, the AC Three have to nurture a variety of parts—heaters, defrosters, opening valves, copper tubes, filters, compressors and blowers—to ensure the correct air temperature arrives. That's a particularly difficult task for local buses, which open their doors for passengers approximately every two-tenths of a mile.

That takes some work, and they believe the computerized AC systems they service sometimes make that work more complex.

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"When we started in 1988, they had a lot of mechanical switches, clicking on and off, and now it's evolved to a computer running the heating system," Lanski recalls. "Now you plug in a laptop and read the error codes."

"You have to know at least a little about computers," Remata said. "[Electrically], everything runs through the computer systems; it's basically more difficult to trace down problems when you have problems with AC. [And] a lot of the electrical parts in the computers are sensitive."

Lacanilao likes the challenge of the systems on the new coaches, such as the 9000 series articulated buses, with their two complete air conditioning systems. "There's a lot more computers, sensors; you've got LED lights,



pressure readings; it's so much more complicated."

Using laptops to find shorts or soap bubbles to spot Freon leaks, the AC Three service five or six buses a day. While repairing problems, they also fit in preventative maintenance.

"Why wait to fix it,?" asks Lanski, a Lancaster resident. "In the middle of summer is not the time to start working on the AC. Anyone can tell you when an AC system isn't working in the summer, but it takes a professional to tell you that the AC is not working in the winter."

One thing that would make systems run better, Remata and Lacanilao point out, would be better understanding of how AC systems work.

Approximately once a week, when they receive a write-up that a coach's AC is not working, the AC Three discover that all the windows are down. The operator did not have enough patience to wait for the air conditioning to begin cooling the coach, so he or she lowered all the windows. Simply put, it takes a while for the AC system's heat exchange to begin.

Orr praises the AC Three for working so well together, a trait Lanski attributes to team chemistry "I have a great crew here. We always seemed to synchronize. Every movement is a movement of accomplishment."


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## Measure R Frequently Asked Questions

- [What is Measure "R"?](#)
- [How much money would it generate and for how long?](#)
- [Exactly what projects would the money fund?](#)
- [Do local jurisdictions benefit from this tax?](#)
- [What would be the yearly cost to individuals here in LA County?](#)
- [What are the economic impacts of Measure R?](#)
- [How do we know the money will be spent on transportation improvements?](#)
- [How is the revenue distributed among the County's different sub-regions?](#)
- [If there's no project in my immediate neighborhood, how does Measure R affect my neighborhood?](#)
- [How much of the revenues generated will go for Metro administrative costs?](#)
- [Are there already transportation sales taxes in LA County?](#)
- [How has the money been used from those sales taxes?](#)
- [Why is another half-cent needed?](#)
- [How long will it take to complete these projects?](#)

### What is Measure "R"?

Measure R asks voters to authorize a new half-cent sales tax for Los Angeles County that would finance dozens of transportation improvement projects -- everything from fixing potholes to major highway construction, buying clean-fuel buses to building new rail lines. If the measure garners at least a two-thirds vote, it will become law January 2, 2009, with the tax taking effect in July 2009.

### How much money would it generate and for how long?

Measure R is expected to generate \$40 billion over 30 years. These monies may also enable Los Angeles County to qualify for additional state and federal transportation funds that may otherwise be awarded outside of Los Angeles County.

### Exactly what projects would the money fund?

Measure R will fund a variety of new rail, bus and highway projects. Among these are the Foothill Extension of the Metro Gold Line, a subway extension and Expo light rail line on the Westside, highway enhancements such as adding capacity to the I-5 from the I-605 to the Orange County Line, an extension of the Metro Orange Line busway to Chatsworth, a rail connection to LAX, and much more. In developing Measure R, the Metro Board of Directors approved a complete expenditure plan detailing how all of the funds will be spent.

### Do local jurisdictions benefit from this tax?

Yes. Beyond the specific projects cited in the expenditure plan, the region's 88 cities and County unincorporated areas will receive 15 percent of all sales tax revenue for local needs such as transit service improvements, street resurfacing, left turn signals, bikeways, pedestrian improvements and more. In addition, 20 percent of the sales tax revenue will subsidize Countywide bus operations, helping to help keep fares low for



seniors, students and commuters.

**What would be the yearly cost to individuals here in LA County**

The private nonprofit Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) estimates that the tax increase would cost each resident an average of \$25 per person annually.

**What are the economic impacts of Measure R?**

The LAEDC also projects the construction of projects listed in Measure R would create over 210,000 new jobs and infuse \$32 billion into the local economy.

**How do we know the money will be spent on transportation improvements?**

To ensure that Measure R funds are spent in Los Angeles County for what voters were promised, the ballot measure calls for an annual independent audit and report to taxpayers, plus ongoing monitoring and review of spending by an independent taxpayer oversight committee.

**How is the revenue distributed among the County's different sub-regions?**

The dozens of highway, bus and rail projects specified in the plan are spread throughout the County. In addition, each of the individual cities and unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County will receive a share of the revenue to use at their discretion for local transportation needs.

**If there's no project in my immediate neighborhood, how does Measure R affect my neighborhood?**

All of the region's 88 cities and unincorporated areas will receive a portion of the sales tax revenue to use at their discretion to fix potholes, add left turn lanes, make bike and pedestrian enhancements and implement other local transportation needs. Further, improvements in various regions will make it easier for all taxpayers to travel from one area of the County to another.

**How much of the revenues generated will go for Metro administrative costs?**

The measure limits Metro administrative costs to no more than 1.5% each year.

**Are there already transportation sales taxes in LA County?**

Yes, there are currently two half-cent transportation sales taxes in LA County.

**How has the money been used from those sales taxes?**

Los Angeles County has greatly expanded bus and rail service, freeway carpool lanes and local street improvements over the past decade from the revenue generated by the existing sales taxes. That has allowed the area's transportation infrastructure to keep pace with major growth in population, employment and goods movement throughout the area. We now have the third largest public transportation system in the nation, carrying 1.6 million boarding passengers on an average weekday, along with the world's largest network of freeway carpool lanes.

**Why is another half-cent needed?**

Population and job growth continue and port activity could more than double in the next quarter century. The revenue generated from the existing transportation sales tax is inadequate to fund the range of transportation projects to keep pace with the needs of Los Angeles County over the next 30 years.

**How long will it take to complete these projects?**

There are short, medium and long-term traffic improvements. Street resurfacing and deployment of additional bus and Metrolink service can be done relatively quickly. Construction of new busways and light rail lines often can be accomplished within five years, while highway and subway projects can take up to a decade or longer. However, no project can be completed without first having the funds to begin.


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## CEO UpDate

### How Measure R is expected to relieve traffic

- If passed, Measure R is expected to attract hundreds of millions of additional dollars in state and federal matching funds.
- Get the [Measure R FAQs](#)

By CEO ROGER SNOBLE



CEO Roger Snoble

Well, it's official: On Election Day in November, voters will have a way to help bring traffic relief to LA County. If passed, Measure R is expected to generate \$40 billion for county-wide transportation projects over the next 30 years through a half-cent sales tax.

It's critical for all of us at Metro to understand what Measure R will do so we can answer questions accurately for family and friends...and trust me, if anyone knows where you work, you'll be hearing a lot of questions.

Measure R will provide the local resources necessary to finance dozens of new transportation projects and accelerate a few that are already in the pipeline. The projects are spread throughout the region and fall into five basic categories:

- **Rail Expansion** – Measure R will expand Metro Rail and MetroLink service to many parts of the County not currently served, including a direct airport connection.
- **Local Street Improvements** – Measure R is projected to return \$5.9 billion to local jurisdictions to make transportation improvements in their respective areas, including traffic signal synchronization, pothole repair and safety upgrades for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- **Traffic Reduction** – Measure R will fund projects to relieve highway traffic congestion and enhance safety, including freeway widening and interchange improvements.
- **Better Public Transportation** - Measure R is projected to provide \$7.88 billion to improve bus service countywide and keep fares affordable for seniors, students and the disabled, while providing additional funds to cities for transit improvements such as dedicated bus lanes and higher capacity vehicles.

- **Quality of Life** – Measure R provides alternatives to high gas prices, helps meet the region's air quality targets and decreases dependence on foreign oil.

Measure R is expected to attract hundreds of millions of additional dollars in state and federal matching funds, if passed. If we do not qualify for these state and federal matching funds, the money may otherwise go outside of Los Angeles County.

We all need to understand Measure R and be able to discuss it in an informed way.

So, please, look at the accompanying overview that answers frequently asked questions about Measure R.

For more details, check out [metro.net/measureR](http://metro.net/measureR) website at metro.net.

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## Measure R: Frequently Asked Questions

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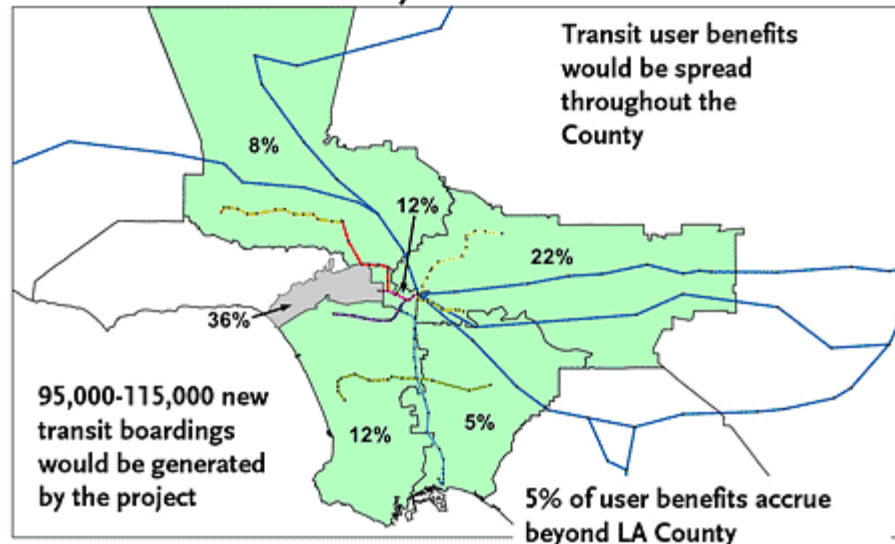
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## Regional Benefits of the Project

### Transit User Benefits Countywide



According to the Westside Extension study team, both proposed subway routes would draw riders from throughout Los Angeles County.

## Two Proposed Routes for 'Subway to Sea' Unveiled Tonight in Public Meetings

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 3, 2008) Beginning tonight, Metro's [Westside Extension](#) study team will unveil two proposed routes for the "subway to the sea" at public meetings.

At five outreach meetings in September, the study team will present the two most promising subway alternatives that have emerged after a year-long study. The team will also present station locations, estimated ridership and estimated budgets for the two routes.

One route, estimated to cost approximately \$6.1 billion, would extend the Metro Purple Line from Wilshire/Western Station to Fourth Street in Santa Monica. The 13-mile alignment would pass through Century City and Westwood, both high employment areas.

The other route would cost an estimated \$9 billion and supplement the Wilshire route. This route would include a branch starting at the Hollywood/Highland Station on the Metro Red Line and travel underneath West Hollywood, primarily following Santa Monica Boulevard to La Cienega or San Vicente boulevards before rejoining the Wilshire alignment in Beverly Hills and heading west.

The “subway to the sea” project remains unfunded. Of the estimated \$40 billion to be generated by Measure R over 30 years, some of that money may be available for the subway. If [Measure R](#) does not reach the November ballot, Metro has said it will continue to seek money to build the subway.

David Mieger, the study’s project manager, estimates that the combined subway extension project would generate between 272,000 to 292,000 daily boardings when joined with the combined Metro Red Line/Metro Purple Line system.

Later this year, Metro staff will present their recommendations to the Board of Directors and request authorization to continue analyzing these options through the environmental process. Approximately two more years of studies and engineering would be needed before construction could begin.

Here are the times and locations for the September meetings:

- Wednesday, Sept. 3, 6 - 8 p.m.: Santa Monica Public Library
- Thursday, Sept. 4, 6 - 8 p.m.: West Hollywood Plummer Park
- Saturday, Sept. 6, 2- 4 p.m.: Beverly Hills Public Library
- Monday, Sept. 8, 6 - 8 p.m.: LACMA West
- Wednesday, Sept. 10, 6 - 8 p.m.: Westwood Presbyterian Church



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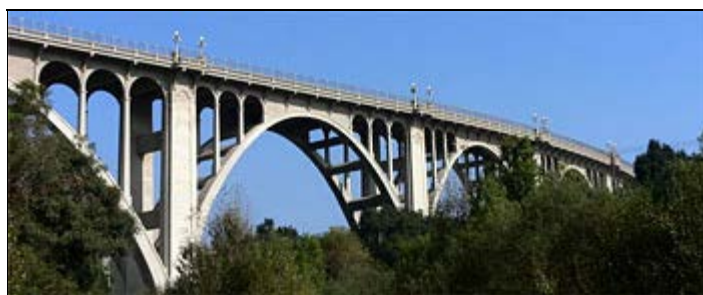
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## Employee Helps Prevent Distraught Man from Plummeting to His Death

By CHAD SIMON

(Sept. 3, 2008) On Aug. 13, Ramon Gutierrez, property maintainer, Stops and Zones, helped prevent a distraught man from plummeting to his death, after the man had climbed the Colorado Street Bridge fence in Pasadena.

The man, who appeared to be in his late 20s or early 30s, was hanging from the bridge (long ago given the grim nickname of Suicide Bridge), which towers about 150 feet above the Arroyo Seco canyon.



The Colorado Street Bridge, built in Pasadena in 1913, was known among locals as "Suicide Bridge" following the stock market crash of 1929.

*Wikimedia Commons  
photo by Mike Dillon*

According to Gutierrez, he was traveling westbound across the two-lane bridge at approximately 11 a.m. on his way to Highland Park when he saw a vehicle parked mysteriously in the middle of the road with its emergency lights flashing. Suddenly, he saw a man on the south side of the bridge hanging backwards from the fence in a jump position.

"I didn't want to startle him, so I put on my lights, crossed the street and approached the man slowly and spoke to him softly to calm him," Gutierrez said. "I held his legs and prayed while another gentleman who happened to be passing by jumped up onto the railing and started praying."

The whole ordeal lasted approximately five minutes until Pasadena police showed up and made the arrest.

"I just reacted to what the other guy was doing, so we could stop the man from jumping," Gutierrez said. "He was crying for help. Suddenly he turned around and grabbed the bars like he didn't want to jump."





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Services Pending for Division 18 Bus Operator

- Terri Aitken was 21-year Metro veteran

(Sept. 4, 2008) Services are pending for Terri Aitken, a South Bay Division 18 bus operator, who died Aug. 29. Aitken was 61.

Aitken began working for Metro in May 1987 and spent the last 11 years working for Division 18.



Terri Aitken


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Click on image for myMetro.net summary page of Measure R developments.

## Measure for Half-Cent Sales Tax Increase Clears Hurdles

- Challenges remain for placing transportation funding measure on Nov. 4 ballot
- [Timeline](#): Measure R wends its way to the November ballot

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 3, 2008) When the Metro Board voted to support a new half-cent sales tax measure on the November ballot, a measure that would finance dozens of transportation projects, its July 24 action capped months of work and set a complex process in motion.

The tax measure, Measure R, which will end after 30 years, would provide funds to fix potholes, fund major highway construction, buy clean fueled buses and build new rail lines spread throughout Los Angeles County in a concerted effort to keep pace with major population and job growth.

Measure R would also block a fare increase for the Metro System proposed for 2009, as well as delay fare increases for five years for riders with disabilities, seniors, students and those receiving Medicare benefits.

"The likelihood in the next few years of getting the support [in federal dollars] we need is not likely," said Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, when the Board voted on June 26 to draft the sales tax increase.

In voting to draft the measure, Metro directors included an [expenditure plan](#) that details how the sales tax—estimated to generate \$40 billion over 30 years—may be spent. These monies also could be leveraged with state, federal and private-sector funding.

The idea behind the measure—the first sales tax increase for transportation since 1990—is to generate funding for transportation within Los Angeles County.

Because the measure is a tax increase, voters must approve it by a two-thirds majority. If approved, the measure would become law in January.

## Several hurdles remain

Several hurdles remain and an unexpected one appeared Aug. 5. At that time the five-member Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors deadlocked 2 to 2 (Supervisor Gloria Molina abstaining) whether to

put the measure on the Nov. 4 general election ballot. That hurdle fell Aug. 12, when the supervisors voted 3 to 2, with Supervisor Don Knabe reversing his previous 'no,' to place the measure on the ballot.

The ballot measure's future also rests on passage of Assembly Bill 2321 by Assemblyman Mike Feuer, D-West Hollywood, which would give Los Angeles County authority to levy the tax if voters approve it. (The bill is necessary to amend the current sales tax cap.)

The bill, introduced in February 2008, would affect only Los Angeles County.

AB 2321 identifies several projects that may receive new sales tax revenue generated from Measure R. These include Phase 2 of the Expo Line (from Culver City to Santa Monica), a project along Crenshaw Boulevard (that mode is undefined) and extension of the Gold Line farther east in the San Gabriel Valley.

Other projects identified are a subway extension west, improvements to the 5 (Golden State) Freeway and 210 (Foothill) freeways and \$200 million for extending the Metro Green Line to Los Angeles International Airport.

**Lawmakers approve AB 2321**

Another hurdle fell on Aug. 31, when the California State Legislature approved AB 2321. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has 30 days from the date of the bill's passage to sign it.

Although the governor has threatened to veto all bills coming to him until the Legislature passes a state budget, he recently made an exception and signed a bill pertaining to a high-speed rail system bond measure on California's November ballot

CEO Roger Snoble has stated that approximately 35 percent of the funds generated by the measure "would go directly to new transit projects, primarily light-rail projects and the subway. Twenty percent would go to highway bottlenecks to really help move regular vehicles and, of course, buses on the highways."

Snoble has stated that another 20 percent of the funds would go to bus operations, and five percent would go to operating the upcoming rail services, the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension and the Expo Line.

According to Snoble, the remaining 20 percent would go to local cities, with a goal of their fixing potholes, improving traffic light synchronization, maintaining local streets and improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians.

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### Metro hosts Field Hearing for U.S. Senate Committee

- CEO Roger Snoble provides testimony on the implementation of the FTA's New Starts program before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee



**CEO Snoble to Senate Committee:** Not business as usual. It is time to embark in a bold new direction.

(Sept. 4, 2008) CEO Roger Snoble joined panelists from the region's key transportation and environmental agencies to discuss before the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee a number of items related to America's surface transportation program. Speaking about the need to improve mobility in our region and across America, CEO Snoble urged fundamental reforms that would make the FTA's New Starts program a more efficient tool to promote mobility and ultimately lead to better air quality. The investment of additional resources in the New Starts program would yield a huge national return in job growth, in the economic vitality of our cities, in congestion relief, and in air quality, said Snoble.

--From Gayle Anderson  
Photos: Luis Inzunza



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Photo by Ned Racine

Sheriff's Sgt. Chris Meadows, who led the Aug. 28 anti-tagging sweep, shows Duane Martin, director of Rail Transportation Operations, and Hector Moreno, assistant manager of Rail Division Transportation, photos of a tagger's vandalism before the serving of a warrant in Hollywood.

## Transit Services Bureau Deputies Test New Strategy in Sweep for Taggers

- Sweep leads to arrest of 11 tagging suspects

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 4, 2008) Employing a new strategy to battle the vandalism of Metro vehicles, officers from the Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau (TSB) conducted a sweep against the UPN tagging crew, arresting 11 tagging suspects on Thursday, August 28.

According to Sheriff's Sgt. Chris Meadows, who led the sweep, the idea was to target the suspected members of a single tagging crew, in this case, UPN (Ur Property Next or Under Pigs' Noses).

"I think this is the first time [so] many members of a crew have been arrested at one time," said Meadows, who added that arrests were made in residences in Hollywood, South Los Angeles and Carson, as well as Orange and Riverside counties.

The sweep employed 70 officers, 30 of those TSB investigators, to serve warrants or conduct probation searches on 13 residences. Meadows estimated that the warrants covered approximately \$200,000 in newly documented damage and \$500,000 in previously documented damage to Metro vehicles and property.

The Aug. 28  
sweep collected



a variety of tagging tools.

*LASD photo*

### **Sweep reaches convicted taggers**

Convicted taggers at the California State Prison in Lancaster and Sierra Conservation Center had their cells searched as part of the sweep. Meadows said this was to demonstrate that even convicted UPN taggers would be pursued.

For a high-risk tagging suspect, the Sheriff's Special Enforcement Bureau (equivalent to a SWAT team) took part in serving a warrant.

Duane Martin, director of Rail Transportation Operations, and Hector Moreno, assistant manager of Rail Division Transportation, attended the serving of a warrant and arrest in Hollywood.

Although Martin said he knew in theory how the TSB conducted its anti-tagging efforts, he found it valuable to see the process in action. He found it "a shame, when you look at the resources pulled" from policing the Metro System to address vandalism.

Moreno was there to report back to his rail operators the end result of their anti-vandalism efforts. Moreno asks operators to check out their vehicles before they roll out and before they leave each terminus.



A palm tree outside one suspect's apartment house was tagged with the UPN initials.  
*Photo by Ned Racine*

### **Moreno sees follow-through**

"There's follow-through, and finally you get a [tagger] off the street," he plans to tell the rail operators.

Meadows, who was recently assigned to TSB's anti-tagging campaign, visited bus divisions 5, 6 and 7 during their graveyard shift to see for himself the damage done to the coaches.

"It was interesting seeing the same name come up over and over again," he said, noting that the UPN crew has hit every bus and rail division. "It's almost impossible to document all the damage," Meadows added, because some Metro vehicles are always in service.

What is particularly helpful, Meadows stressed, is when bus or rail operators immediately report to the Bus or Rail Operations Center when they have found new graffiti. Knowing a specific time-frame, for example, investigators have an easier search for digital evidence from the rail vehicle cameras. It also allows them to

photograph the damage before it's repaired.

Operator information on new graffiti also helps investigators separate evidence of new vandalism from existing vandalism, particularly important when charging a tagger, according to Meadows.

And although he admits that finding a tagger in the act is difficult for investigators, they do receive benefits from checking passengers for valid fares. Meadows said it is common to arrest a person for fare evasion and discover evidence of tagging.

**Serving warrants brings notoriety to taggers**

Meadows sees great value in the serving of warrants on residences. "Basically, it ties them to where they live and brings notoriety to their actions at home," he said. "It brings the taggers' crimes to the attention of their parents."

During the Aug. 28 sweep, Meadows said several suspects receiving warrants had never been arrested, although the majority of warrants were for taggers already on probation.

One tagger, whose moniker was "47er" was charged with causing \$78,000 in damage to Metro property. Charged with felony vandalism, "47er" was also charged with possession of a stolen firearm.

A 20-year-old nursing school student who lives in Hollywood was charged with damaging Metro vehicles from two divisions. The woman, whose moniker was "DOTS" or "DOTZ," had been arrested for vandalism twice before, the last time in March.

Sheriff's investigators believe DOTS has etched bus windows at West Hollywood Division 7 and slap-tagged buses at Arthur Winston Division 5.

In a symbol of vandalism's collateral damage, DOTS' mother waited outside her apartment—handcuffed, crying and speaking to herself in Spanish—while deputies searched her home for evidence of her daughter's new crimes.

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## [ Club Scene @ Metro ]

### Deadline is approaching for Employee Clubs to apply for annual subsidies

- Subsidy is \$300 for FY 09; application deadline is Sept. 30
- Download form and guidelines for Employee Clubs at [Forms Online>Communications](#)

(Sept. 9, 2008) Want to start an employee club?

Eligible for funding in the amount of \$300 in 2009 fiscal year, Metro employee clubs are defined groups of employees who get together for social, recreational or professional purposes. Under the guidelines, clubs, such as Toastmasters @ Metro and the African American Employees Association, hold meetings and plan activities or events.

Metro Employee Activities plans to provide funding for 10 employee clubs this fiscal year and is encouraging groups of employees with similar interests to get together and organize clubs.

The application deadline to start an employee club is Tuesday, Sept. 30.

"From cycling to knitting to professional development, Metro employees have many interests and talents," says Danielle Boutier, director of Communication Services. "This employee program provides a supportive environment for our activities."

Approved clubs will be eligible for annual subsidies – currently \$300 per fiscal year – from Employee Activities. To qualify, clubs must submit organizational rules or bylaws, a list of officers, a meeting schedule and justification for the use of funds.



Lunch Walkers @ Metro, with coordinator Vilma Hernandez, foreground, were one of the first clubs to organize at the onset of the Employee Activities subsidy program in 2008. The Lunch Walkers club, which trims waistlines and boosts energy levels, conduct daily walks during the lunch hour.

**Open to all**

Clubs that set qualifications or screen for membership must explain the process. Clubs must be open to all employees regardless of race, color or creed, political or religious affiliation.

If more than 10 groups apply for funding this fiscal year, Boutier says, a drawing will be conducted to select those that will be funded. The number of clubs to be funded each year will depend on funds available in the Employee Activities budget.

To remain eligible for funding, a club must use at least 70 percent of its funding each year.

Funds may be spent for speakers or to attend conferences, club clothing items or supplies, parties or events, or other appropriate activities. Funds may not be spent on alcohol or other items or activities that violate Metro policies. -- *From staff reports*



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**Lost in L.A.** With the help of at least three Metro Bus Operators, an elderly man from Thousand Oaks got back to his car after a roundabout visit to the hospital. *Photo by Gayle Anderson*

## Unknown Metro Good Samaritans Help Elderly Man Find His Way

- Injured man helped by three bus operators

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 9, 2008) This is a story with a beginning and an end, but with three unknown Metro heroes.

First, the reason why the good Samaritans were needed.

On Friday, July 25, Cheri Kelley, a Gateway Cities Governance Council member, celebrated her 12th wedding anniversary with her husband. When she returned home, there was a message from her father's employer.

The telephone message explained that her father, Ken Von Zell, had fallen in a parking lot in Downtown Los Angeles. Von Zell, who will soon turn 80, had probably been taken by paramedics to Good Samaritan Hospital, stated the message. No further details were given.

The message offered just enough murky information to trouble the daughter of an elderly father, especially because Von Zell lives 65 miles from Kelley.

Kelley called her father's cell phone. No answer. She called Von Zell's employer, a courier service. Someone there had spoken to Von Zell around 7 p.m. Von Zell had checked himself out of the hospital and was on his way home.

Maybe.



Von Zell's driving home meant more anxiety for Kelley. Her father lives in Thousand Oaks. Although he drives approximately 200 miles a day as a courier, Downtown Los Angeles to Thousand Oaks is a considerable distance for an injured, elderly man.

So Kelley called her father's cell phone again. Again, no answer. She called half-an-hour later. No answer. Considering her father's personality, "cantankerous and stubborn but nice," Kelley respected his independence and went to bed around 1 a.m.

When he hadn't called by morning, Kelley began another round of calls: 8 a.m., 9 a.m., 10 a.m. At 10:30 a.m., Kelley risked her father's embarrassment and called his apartment manager.

The manager had just spoken with her father five minutes earlier. Both relieved and irritated, Kelley was soon talking to her father. Von Zell explained that he had left his cell phone in his car. He reassured his daughter that he had simply fallen and only received scratches and bruises.

But how, Kelley asked, did you get from the hospital to your car miles away?

Von Zell explained that when he walked out of the medical center, under a darkening sky, he asked a Metro bus operator how to get back to the Los Angeles Times Building on 1<sup>st</sup> Street, near his car. The operator explained that Von Zell needed to go to the bottom of the hill to catch another bus.

When the operator sized up Von Zell's condition, however, he told Von Zell that he would drive him to the bottom of the hill. When they reached that location, the operator made sure Von Zell knew where to catch the next bus.

When the next bus arrived, Von Zell asked the same question: "How do I get to the Los Angeles Times Building?" That operator also sized up Von Zell's condition.

"Come on, I will get you there," Von Zell remembers the second operator saying. A third operator showed the same courtesy and concern.

"With the help of at least three [Metro] bus drivers he got within a block of his car," Kelley said.

Von Zell remains fuzzy on some details of the evening, so he cannot recall the names of the bus operators or their lines.

Von Zell won't like this story; he thinks Kelley has made too much of his adventure. She disagrees.

"My gratitude is that each driver took the time to help a 79-1/2-year-old man—who I am sure looked a little worse for wear—find his way on a Friday night in downtown LA. They set him behind their seat and told him where to get off."

"They just wanted to get him where he needed to go," Kelley added. "They really took care of him. I wish I knew who they were."

Are you one of these operators?



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Barbara Burns, community relations manager, traveled to Sacramento last week at the request of the Sacramento Regional Transit District. Sacramento Transit wants to begin a transit safety program and sought Metro's advice on building one. *Photo by Ned Racine*

### Sacramento Transit District Pays Metro Safety Program Ultimate Compliment

- Sacramento Transit sees Metro as role model for transit safety

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 9, 2008) If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then Barbara Burns, community relations manager, and the Metro Transit Safety Program received a dose of compliments last week in Sacramento.

The Sacramento Regional Transit District (RT) flew Burns to the state capital, Sept. 4, to seek her advice on building a bus and light-rail safety program.

RT operates 97 bus routes and 37.4 miles of light rail, including a Blue Line and Gold Line. What RT does not have is an outreach program teaching children how to safely use the transit resources in their neighborhoods.

RT research on such a program led them to Operation Lifesaver, the non-profit, international public education program created to reduce railroad deaths and injuries. Operation Lifesaver recommended Metro.

During a three-hour seminar for RT upper management, Burns detailed the origins, development and implementation of the safety outreach program, which has visited hundreds of schools near the Metro Blue Line, Gold Line, Orange Line and Gold Line Eastside Extension, prior to their openings.

"I had charts explaining how we have expanded our outreach, and I

showed how our accidents have gone down," Burns said. "They were pretty astounded by it."

She explained to her audience, which included RT's General Manager, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Planning, how a cost-effective program can be developed for the RT system, which moved 31 million passengers in Fiscal 2006.

The RT covers six school districts, so it's not surprising the transit authority asked Burns to present the Metro transit safety program for children from kindergarten through high school. Burns recalls RT being particularly interested in two aspects of the Metro program: "how-to-ride etiquette" and showing children how to live with a rail system as a neighbor.

As she does with all transit agencies, Burns gave RT two copies of Metro's award-winning rail safety videos: "Look, Listen and Stay Alive," an animated film which targets audiences 10-years-old and younger, and "Tracks Are for Trains," a live-action video tailored to older students.

Additional seminars might be in Burns' future. "I just got another [request] from the Orange County Transportation Authority asking about our program," she said.

Burns described the RT administrators as being "very appreciative, very grateful." She added, "This invitation was highly flattering to us."

Burns' current projects include the pre-opening safety program for the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, scheduled to open in mid-2009. By December, the Transit Safety Program will visit all 81 schools near the six-mile-long project, reaching out to almost 52,000 students.

Beginning in March 2009, the program will walk every classroom of students along the new project's route closest to their school.

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## Services Scheduled for James Stubblefield, 13-Year Metro Employee

(Sept. 10, 2008) Services are scheduled for Sept. 11 and 12 for James Stubblefield, a 13-year Metro employee, who died Sept. 9 after becoming ill at his home.

Stubblefield, 73, had worked for Metro since July 1995. He was a senior quality engineer/auditor, one of only two employees holding that classification in the agency.

"He was fabulous to work with," said Larry Tipton, who also held the same rare classification, and had worked side-by-side with Stubblefield since June 2007.

"It was a comfortable, easy relationship," added Tipton, who praised Stubblefield's extensive knowledge and easy-going manner.

According to Tipton, Stubblefield had worked for engineering and construction firms such as Bechtel, Hughes and Parsons before joining Metro. Stubblefield was working on the Gold Line and other capital improvement projects at the time of his death.

Stubblefield, a Chino resident, was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He is survived by his wife Shirley and three sons, Mike, Kirk and Mark. Stubblefield is also survived by 11 grandchildren.

"His work was his hobby," said Shirley Stubblefield.

A viewing will be held for Stubblefield on Sept. 11 at Memory Gardens Memorial Park and Mortuary, 455 West Central Avenue, Brea, Calif. (714.529.3961). The viewing will be held from 5 to 9 p.m.

Burial will be Sept. 12 at the same location at 1 p.m.



**James Stubblefield**

\*Jim Stubblefield reviews Expo Line construction display in the Metro Headquarters lobby in this photo taken Dec. 15, 2005.

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During the Sept. 9 All-Hands Meeting, CEO Roger Snoble updated Metro employees on two pieces of legislation that could shape Metro's future. *Photo by Ned Racine*

## CEO Roger Snoble Offers Update on Two Pieces of Legislation Affecting Metro's Mission

- Measure R dominates Sept. 9 All-Hands Meeting

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 10, 2008) In an All-Hands Meeting on Sept. 9, dominated by a discussion of Measure R, the new half-cent sales-tax measure on the Nov. 4 ballot, CEO Roger Snoble explained what Measure R is. Snoble also detailed the restrictions preventing Metro employees from promoting the proposition.

Measure R, which will end after 30 years, would provide funds to help fix potholes, fund major highway construction, buy clean-fueled buses and build new rail lines throughout Los Angeles County to keep pace with major population and job growth.

Early in his talk, Snoble praised Metro staff for their work on another piece of legislation, Senate Bill 1422, which allows congestion pricing on the carpool lanes on segments of the I-10 (El Monte Busway) and I-110 (Harbor Transitway). See: [metro.net/fastlanes](#)

Gladys Lowe, director, Countywide Planning & Development; Ashad Hamideh, transportation planning manager "V"; and Frank Flores, executive officer, Countywide Planning & Development, all received Snoble's praise.

The CEO also mentioned the accomplishments of Carol Inge, chief planning



officer, and Stephanie Wiggins, executive officer for the Congestion Reduction Demonstration. Snoble noted that Wiggins helped develop legislation "to a point where we actually could take it to the legislature and they could actually see and understand [the legislation]."

Snoble mentioned Metro's state lobbying team, led by Michael Turner, Government Relations manager, and including Patricia Bruno, Government Relations administrator.

"We owe all these people huge recognition," he said.

SB 1422 now awaits Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's signature.

"Congestion pricing will be a major test for us," Snoble said. "If we can make it work on the 110 and the 10, there are other freeways that would be candidates for it."

The majority of the 45-minute talk was devoted, however, to Measure R.

The genesis of the sales-tax measure, he explained, grew from the two years Metro staff spent creating the [2008 Draft Long Range Plan](#).

"We just didn't have the ability to come up with anything near what the demand out there is," the CEO said. "People really want alternatives and would be willing to use alternatives. We just didn't have the resources."

Looking for those resources, Snoble said, led to Measure R.

The statutory authority for Measure R is waiting for the Governor's signature.

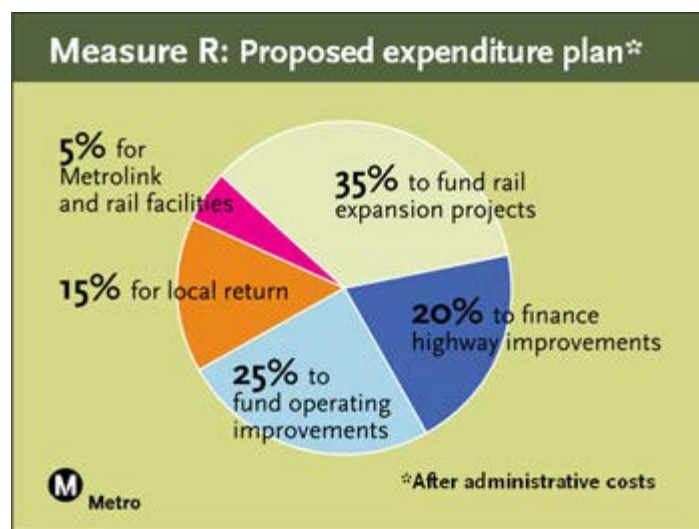
Snoble sees little help coming from state or federal funding. "This state is broke and getting more broke by the minute: It still doesn't have a budget." And even if federal funding increases, "it is still not going to be a program—in our wildest imagination—that is really going to solve the problems we have here in Los Angeles County."

Instead, Snoble told his audience, Measure R provides Los Angeles County a means to raise additional funds for transportation through the sales tax. He added that the measure would not replace two other half-cent sales-tax measures which fund transportation but would be an additional tax for 30 years.

He praised the Metro Board for supporting the measure. "It took a lot of courage for them to do that. Nine of our members—two-thirds of our Board—voted for the ordinance."

Even with the estimated \$40 billion the measure would raise over its 30-year life, the CEO explained, "We had to really make some hard decisions."

In voting to draft the measure, Metro directors included an [expenditure plan](#) that details how the sales tax—estimated to generate \$40 billion over 30 years—may be



spent. These monies also could be leveraged with state, federal and private-sector funding.

Snoble acknowledged the ongoing debate about distributing any Measure R funds fairly. He told his audience it is important for Metro to target the greatest needs: "[Metro will] focus on where the needs are and how we can solve the needs and serve the most people with the precious dollars we have. We really do think this plan could solve a lot of mobility problems in the region."

Regarding the role employees can play in the Measure R debate, Snoble emphasized the restrictions Metro staff are under. Download: [Metro & Measure R Employee Guidelines](#)

"We do have an obligation on the one hand to inform people who are interested in the measure. But we need to make sure that we are unbiased about how we portray it."

"We are prohibited from expending funds to advocate for the ballot measure," he said. "That is a very important point. Everything that we do or touch is really taxpayer supported. It is simply unfair for us to use taxpayer money to promote this measure or any other measure. We cannot use any of our facilities to advocate our position on this. Anything that is funded by the taxpayers is off limits."

Metro employees still have freedom-of-speech rights, of course, Snoble emphasized, giving the example of a Metro employee who serves as a Peeewe football coach. That individual is free to share his or her Measure R opinion with fellow coaches during his or her free time.

If employees are asked a direct question, the CEO suggested sending the questioner to the Measure R website on metro.net.

"Let the campaigns do their jobs . . . and then on Nov. 4, the people will make their choice," Snoble said.


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## John Thomas, 21-Year Metro Employee, Loses His Fight Against Cancer

(Sept. 11, 2008) John Thomas, a 21-year Metro employee, died Sept. 8 after losing a second battle with cancer. He was 70.

Thomas, a West Valley Division 8 bus operator, worked two stints for Metro. He began working for the agency in February 1987 and retired from Division 8 in February 2000. He returned to Metro in Sept. 2000 and worked at Division 8 until his death.

"We miss him," said Maria Reynolds, Division 8 transportation manager. "He was so courageous up to the very end. He was always as positive as he could be." Reynolds added that Thomas frequently contributed good ideas for improving service.

Francisco Escobedo, who worked with Thomas on and off for approximately five years, recalls the Akron, Ohio native receiving an "all clear" diagnosis after fighting esophageal cancer, only to have the disease return in July 2008.

Escobedo, also a Division 8 bus operator, recalls Thomas as "a very good guy; easy to talk to." Escobedo remembers Thomas being a big National Football League fan and active in efforts to bring a professional team back to Los Angeles.

Concerned about Thomas' financial situation, Escobedo led a successful collection effort among Div. 8 operators to raise for Thomas.

Thomas is survived by a daughter and grandson.

No funeral services are planned.



John Thomas is pictured here with Div. 8 Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds in November 2006 photo.


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## Campaign Hopes to Increase Riders' Personal Security

(Sept. 11, 2008) Late next week, Metro will distribute 80,000 copies of a guide on increasing personal security to its bus and rail riders.

Jack Eckles, DEO, System Safety & Security, wants riders to know what to do if they feel their safety or security is threatened; for example, if they suspect they are being stalked or spot a suspicious package.

Because Eckles believes personal security begins with each individual, he suggested riders be aware of their "surroundings, knowing what's normally [there]. Trust your instincts."

"A lot of the time people don't know how to articulate the danger signs they see," Eckles explained. When he questioned witnesses in his patrol officer days, he would ask, such as, "Did he walk funny? Did he stand in the shadows? Did he look you in the eyes?"

When he asked the right question, the witness would instantly remember what made him or her suspicious of a person.

Eckles believes the "How to . . . Increase Your Personal Security" guide is important—not only to help passengers protect themselves, but because passengers themselves can supplement the size of Metro's security force in reducing crime.

If a passenger spots suspicious activity, Eckles asks her or him note the following information:

- The nature of the activity
- The time when the activity occurred
- An accurate description of the suspicious person
- The location of that person (on the train, off the train)

"That information . . . allows the CCTV [closed circuit television] to track" the suspicious person.

Bus operators have the communications device on board to contact the



Late next week, 80,000 guides will be distributed on Metro buses and train cars. According to Jack Eckles, DEO, System Safety & Security, electronic devices remain a target for robbers riding the Metro System and should be kept hidden in purse or pocket.

Bus Operations Center for assistance, Eckles reminds passengers, and train riders can contact their train operator through the intercom at either end of the train car.

"I think our operators already support the public in their safety concerns," Eckles said. "This is just another tool in [better] training the public better."

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## Rail Class Aims to Keep Customer Relations Agents on Track

- Rail safety class also prepares employee transit riders to help in emergencies

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 11, 2008) To better prepare Metro employees to deal with a rail emergency and to aid Customer Relations representatives in explaining the 62-station Metro Rail system to riders, a new Rail Safety class offers an overview of the complex system.

The idea for the special class, a variation of the standard Rail Safety class, came to Duane Martin, director of Rail Transportation Operations, "as he read Customer Relations' answers to rider complaints about rail service.

"I started to see responses that I thought [indicated] the people responding to the customers didn't have a clear idea about how the system is integrated," Martin said.

In response, Martin began offering the new class in May. In addition to the standard subjects covered, attendees visit the Rail Operations Center and learn how the rail system is integrated.

"They see how the railroads are run," Martin said of the Customer Relations staff who have attended the Wednesday classes. "It gives them a broader perspective. They can now put their mind's eye to the complaints."



Dalila Valles, a passenger relations representative, recently attended the new Rail Safety class designed for Metro employees who routinely assist the public.

• Photo by Ned Racine

Dalila Valles, a passenger relations representative, came away from the class with a healthy respect for the power of the trains—particularly the Red Line—and the electrical systems that run them.

"I can't believe there is so much power," she said of the Red Line trains,



adding that passengers waiting on the station platforms should respect that power as well and avoid standing on the edge of the platform.

Besides being equipped to answer questions about why trains are single-tracked, why Red Line trains sometimes stop between stations and why bus bridges are needed, Valles learned there is an emergency walkway through the tunnels.

She also learned how to de-energize a track in an emergency. Valles saw some of the things she learned as crisis management, which fits with Martin's goals.

He sees Metro employees who are frequent Metro Rail riders as being crucial assets in a rail emergency if the operator needed help. "If we have employees on the train, we hope the employees [would] calm and inform the public," he added, "because it is impossible to have the [rail] staff everywhere."

"I can help others in case of an emergency rail situation," said Gail Harvey, director of Customer Relations, who was in Martin's first class. Harvey, who received a Rail Safety Certification badge, values learning of several safety pockets within a rail station. "Key locations where you can be safe," she added.

"I know a lot more about the aspects of rail safety: what to do, what not to do; how to help people if something goes wrong," said Harvey. Members of her Information Operators group have also taken the class.

Valles, who speaks with 30 to 40 callers each day, believes even a bit of accurate information shows that Metro has a handle on the situation.

Tom Horne, communications manager, who has had four of his five Customer Relations operators take the course, sees his operators better able to conduct "customer education" and offer a deeper understanding of rail operations when customers call.

"Once customers understand how the system works, they're more pleased with it," he said, adding that his newly trained operators can reduce caller frustration.

Eventually, Martin would like to offer the training to other Metro employees who ride the system, as well as key members of the community outside of Metro.


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## Metrolink Crash in Chatsworth Takes a Violent Toll on Metro Family

### • 'Worst Train Accident in Recent Years' claims the life of Metro Storekeeper Donna Remata

- [See myMetro.net report Sept 24:](#) Metrolink Crash Survivor Says No Horror Movie Could Capture the Scene



Image of friend and co-worker Donna Remata is encased in floral wreath at the stationery store on P-1 where she worked.

Remembering Donna Remata - [Share your memories here.](#)

Also, visit Donna Remata's memorial page at the Los Angeles Times website commemoration of the crash victims:

<http://projects.latimes.com/metrolink-crash/name/donna-remata/>

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(September 15, 2008) Metro employees and friends are mourning the loss of fellow employee Donna Remata, a storekeeper at Metro Headquarters who was among the 25 passengers and train crew members killed in a Metrolink train accident on Friday.

Remata was aboard Ventura County Line 111 in car one. The Metrolink train that had departed Union Station at 3:35 p.m. en route to Moorpark collided with a Union Pacific freight train on the tracks about a mile and a half north of the Chatsworth Metrolink Station. The accident, which occurred at approximately 4:23 p.m., has claimed 25 lives and left 135 injured, 40 critically.

The accident involved an undetermined number of Metro employees, some of whom are

regular passengers on the Ventura County Line 111 Metrolink train. (According to Terree Holman, corporate employee transportation coordinator, some 26 employees take Line 111 and exit at Moorpark, Simi Valley and Oxnard stations.)

### Metro employees among the first responders

Reports of Metro employees involved in the accident include the horrific ordeal of Jim Hugo, a traction power inspector at Wayside Systems. Hugo was on board the second car of the three-car train when the collision occurred. Fully trained as a first responder, Hugo was tossed about by the impact but recovered in the midst of chaos to assist in the rescue efforts and help the injured out of the wreckage. He reportedly was on the scene late into the evening.



Wayside Systems' Jim Hugo, pictured here with niece at recent event, was on board car 3 and helped pull crash victims out of danger.



Co-worker and close friend Marie Tervalon rushed to the Remata family home in Simi Valley.

Customer Information Agent Marie Tervalon missed the 3:35 p.m. train she sometimes takes with her co-worker and close friend Donna Remata. With the tracks blocked by the accident ahead, Tervalon had to exit the train at the Northridge Station, where her husband was waiting for her. Knowing almost certainly that her friend Donna was on the earlier train, Tervalon went directly to the Remata home in Simi Valley to comfort Tiffany Remata, the 17-year-old daughter awaiting news.

[See myMetro.net report: Remembering Donna Remata...](#)

Charlie Fitzsimmons, a Metrolink passenger on Line 111 since moving to Chatsworth a little more than four years ago, boarded the train at Union Station and exited at the Chatsworth Metrolink Station just a few minutes before the collision.

"Just as I was leaving the train station parking lot, I looked up and saw black smoke," said Fitzsimmons, a senior contract administrator. It wasn't until he stopped at the grocery store that he found out the smoke was from the crash of the train he has just exited moments before.

Fitzsimmons, who believes lightening can strike even more that twice, was slightly injured in the Metrolink accident that occurred in Glendale in January 2005. But he's not handing in his transit pass. "Trains are the best way to travel," he said, "safer than driving. What happens is in God's hands," he said.



Charlie Fitzsimmons in Contracts survived the 2005 Metrolink crash in Glendale and exited Line 111 just minutes before the Chatsworth crash.

Among the injured is Gary Katzman, a senior contracts administrator on board the Ventura County Line 111 train. Katzman reportedly suffered cuts and bruises and is recuperating at home after being released from a hospital, co-workers say.

At least 50 Sheriff's Deputies from the Metro Transit Services Bureau responded to the accident, said Lt. John Bayliss. "Deputies Barry Ryan, Bill Lynch, Brad Johnson, and others were among the first to arrive and begin rescue efforts," he said. The TSB crew assisted the Fire Dept. responders in pulling passengers out of the wreckage and working the command post. Sheriff's Deputy John Ebert, returning home from his station at the Van Nuys Courthouse, was riding in the third car when the impact of collision nearly embedded him in the wall. "He was the one who made the initial call to responders and gave an accurate assessment" despite suffering a broken hand, broken ribs and punctured lung in the ordeal, said Lt. Bayliss.



The scene of the crash in Chatsworth shows responders aiding victims amidst scattered wreckage.

**Bus bridge transports passengers**

With the investigation underway and crews working around the clock to remove the wreckage and repair the damage, Metro joined with four other municipal operators to establish a bus bridge. The bus bridge transports passengers from Moorpark and Simi Valley around the crash site to operating trains at the Chatsworth Station, said Metro San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt.

The bus bridge began operations at the Moorpark Station Monday morning at 6:24 a.m. and transported an estimated 40 to 50 passengers from Moorpark and another 20 from the Simi Valley Metrolink Station in a somber caravan to Chatsworth. The sector contributed nine buses from West Valley Division 8 in Chatsworth and East Valley Division 15 in Sun Valley, said Hunt. Buses will connect from the Van Nuys Station to the Northridge, Chatsworth, Simi Valley and Moorpark stations for the afternoon transport. "We're prepared to support Metrolink service for as long as we're needed," said Hunt.

According to the Metrolink website, service depends on the circumstances of the ongoing investigation being conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The Ventura County Line special schedule is posted at [www.metrolinktrains.com](http://www.metrolinktrains.com): "Outbound evening trains 111, 113, 115, 117 and 119: Metrolink will operate train service between Los Angeles Union Station and Chatsworth Station. Buses will connect to Simi Valley and Moorpark Stations from Chatsworth."

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Full coverage of the Metrolink crash:  
[Los Angeles Times](#)  
[Daily News](#)



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The Operations Committee will consider approving the initial study for the Union Division Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility, a project that will include expansion of the existing Material Support and Services Center (MSSC) near Metro headquarters.

## Several Major Metro Initiatives May Take Step Forward in This Week's Board Committee Meetings

### IN THIS REPORT

- [Item 5. Authorize \\$110 Million in Advanced Funding](#)
- [Item 7. Authorize \\$290 Million To Support Congestion Reduction](#)
- [Item 28. Purchase Armored Vault Vans](#)
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- [Item 32. Increase Contract Cost for Elevator and Escalator Repair](#)
- [Item 33. Procure Light Rail Rehab and Repair Equipment](#)
- [Item 35. Approve Initial Study of Union Division](#)

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 16, 2008) Several major Metro initiatives will take a step forward if Board committees recommend that the Board approve actions as diverse as purchasing armored vault vans and approving the initial study of a new bus division.

Long-range initiatives such as congestion reduction, rehabilitating Metro CNG bus engines, the Interstate 405 carpool lane project and enlarging vehicle maintenance facilities are on committee agendas this month.

### Sept. Committee Meetings

#### Wednesday, Sept. 17

1 p.m. – Planning and Programming  
2:30 p.m. – Finance and Budget  
3:00 p.m. – Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee

#### Thursday, Sept. 18

9:00 a.m. – Executive Management and Audit  
11 a.m. – Construction (Cancelled)  
12 noon – Operations

#### Thursday, Sept. 25

9:30 a.m. – Full Board Meeting

**Item 5, Provide \$110 Million in Advanced Funding.**

The Planning and Programming Committee will weigh providing \$110 million in advance funding for projects on Interstate 5, Interstate 10 and Interstate 405. The funding would allow the projects to proceed until the California Transportation Commission (CTC) resolves its funding shortfall.

The Interstate 5 project would add carpool and mixed-flow lanes from the Orange County line to Interstate 605. For Interstate 10, carpool lanes would be added between Interstate 605 and State Route 57.

Metro staff is requesting the Board approve the advanced funding necessary to avoid delays on the three projects.

The committee will also weigh recommending the Board adopt a \$48 million funding commitment for the Interstate 405 Northbound Carpool Lane project and enter into an agreement with Cal Trans to use those funds for that project.

**Item 7, Provide \$290 Million To Support Congestion Reduction.**

The Planning and Programming Committee will consider providing \$290.6 million in funding to support congestion reduction projects, part of the Los Angeles Region Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative. This is in keeping with a Memoranda of Understanding with the United States Department of Transportation.

Approval of this item would authorize Metro staff to negotiate and execute funding agreements with local agencies to implement demonstration projects.

These projects include enhancements to park-and-ride facilities, additional bus stops and rail stations along Interstate 10 and Interstate 110 and purchase of 57 buses for Metro and municipal operators. These buses would allow increased service along the high-occupancy toll lane corridors.

**Item 28, Purchase Armored Vault Vans.**

The Operations Committee will consider recommending the purchase of six armored vault vans for a total not to exceed \$275,770, including sales tax.

The vans will be used by Revenue Collection to gather revenue from ticket vending machines throughout the Metro Rail system and the Orange Line. The new vehicles would replace current vehicles approaching six years of service or 100,000 miles while offering increased protection for Revenue Collection staff.

**Item 31, Purchase of CNG Engines and Repair Parts.**

Continuing the rehabilitation of Metro's bus fleet, the Operations Committee will weigh purchasing 140 Cummins L10 CNG engines and the parts to repair them.

The new engines will be used to replace aging engines in the Neoplan CNG buses. In many cases, the engines have exceeded the manufacturer's warranty period.

The firm fixed-price contract for approximately \$5.4 million includes sales tax and an option to purchase up to 60 additional engines, if funding is available. The option would not exceed \$2.4 million, including sales tax.

**Item 32, Increased Contract Cost for Elevator and Escalator Repair.**



The Operations Committee will consider an increase in the contract cost that procures elevator and escalator repair for Metro's transit facilities. The total contract value would increase by almost \$4.8 million, to approximately \$35 million.

Although Metro staff reports that "up time" rates for the elevators and escalators has risen since the five-year contract was awarded in Jan. 2006, a high rate of vandalism to elevators and escalators has exceeded contract requirements.

**Item 33, Procurement of Light Rail Rehab and Repair Equipment.**

Focusing on repair equipment to service the overhead power sources of Metro's light rail lines, the Operations Committee will consider recommending the Board establish a budget of \$4.7 million to purchase specialized trucks.

The firm fixed-price contract would purchase three heavy-duty high-rail platform trucks to rehabilitate and maintain the overhead systems and would replace current equipment.

**Item 35, Approving Initial Study of Union Division.**

The Operations Committee will consider approving the initial study for the Union Division Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility, a project that will include expansion of the existing Material Support and Services Center (MSSC) near Metro headquarters.

The project includes construction of a public facility totaling approximately 360,000 square feet. Contained in the facility would be a three-story parking structure, a vehicle bridge for ingress/egress, a fueling station, a Central Cash Counting Facility and an expanded MSSC Building 1.



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Los Angeles drivers who heed Metro's message can save more than \$10,000 annually.

Public Transit Users Save \$9,596 per Household Annually Compared To Drivers

- Total rises \$411 from 2007

(Sept. 17, 2008) Despite a recent decline in gasoline prices, the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) analysis for September shows a person using public transportation saves an average of \$9,596 per year compared with a driver's expenses.

That is an increased savings of \$411 annually compared to this time last year.

Based on current gas prices and the average unreserved parking rate, APTA's "Transit Savings Report" shows that the expenses of driving remain a considerable chunk of a household's budget.

The average annual savings represents more than one-third larger than the average amount a household pays for food in a year (\$6,111), APTA reported, using calculations from the Food Institute.

In the table below, APTA ranked the top 20 cites with the highest ridership, in order of their transit savings. Totals are based on the purchase of a monthly public transportation pass and considers current local gas prices (Based on gasoline prices as reported by AAA on 9/4/08) and the local monthly unreserved parking rate.

Top Twenty Cities – Transit Savings Report			
	City	Monthly Savings	Annual Savings
1	Boston	\$1,124	\$13,490
2	New York	\$1,119	\$13,431
3	San Francisco	\$1,054	\$12,648
4	Chicago	\$978	\$11,738

5	Philadelphia	\$946	\$11,346
6	Seattle	\$944	\$11,327
7	Honolulu	\$935	\$11,215
8	Washington DC	\$883	\$10,593
9	Los Angeles	\$871	\$10,455
10	Minneapolis	\$859	\$10,302

You can calculate your individual savings when riding public transit by visiting [www.publictransportation.org](http://www.publictransportation.org).


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### Then and Now -

Division 10's Martin Abeyta, pictured at left on the job at Metro and at right on duty in the UAE, is named Airman of the Year while in Kuwait. Abeyta has worked for Metro for 28 years.



## Metro Mechanic Returns from Three Tours of Duty in Middle East

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 17, 2008) When Martin Abeyta learned that he had been named the California Air National Guard Airman of the Year, he was stationed at the Ali Al Salem air base in Kuwait, dispatching dozens of vehicles each day to carry supplies and personnel.

Abeyta, a mechanic "A" for Gateway Division 10, was on his third tour of duty in the Middle East. Instead of servicing coaches for Metro, the grandfather of nine was responsible for scheduling vehicles that moved 5,000 to 50,000 tons of material and 1,000 to 1,200 personnel, including diplomats, each day.

Those vehicles included tractor trailers, armored personnel vehicles, huge forklifts for loading and unloading the aircraft and 15-person passenger vans, which the 28-year Metro veteran sometimes drove.

Abeyta's first tour began in February 2005, and it found him at the Al Dhafra air base in the United Arab Emirates for 14 months.

His latest tour, which lasted seven months, found him loading and unloading giant U.S. Air Force cargo planes, such as C-17s, C-130s and C-5s.

"Any cargo coming into the base we moved," Abeyta said, still amazed at the size of the giant transports.

Even thousands of miles from Division 10, Abeyta found his Metro experience aided him in Kuwait.

"It helped me a lot in dealing with people [and] being able to diagnose problems with the vehicles we had," he explained. "We would work on the vehicles out there because we couldn't get a mechanic."

He found that the diesel engines and



Martin Abeyta, a mechanic "A" for Gateway Division 10, served two tours of duty at the Al Dhafra air base in the United Arab Emirates.

buses he serviced at Ali Al Salem faced similar rigors Metro vehicles face. "The same problems we have here, just [it's] a lot hotter over there," Abeyta said. Air conditioning systems and belts gave out frequently because of the heat, he added.

How hot was it?

Abeyta compares the heat at the air bases to Arizona's Lake Havasu in the summer—only 40 degrees hotter. He measured the heat at Ali Al Salem during his last tour. It was 145 degrees!



"You acclimate," he said, noting he and his colleagues drank water constantly and watched each other to make sure they were hydrated. Not so easy to acclimate to was the work load he faced as a dispatcher.

"We used to say that every day is Monday; that's what I used to tell my wife," Abeyta said. "You don't even care about . . . dates—one day just runs into the next."

Perhaps the dates flowed together because he was working an average of 12 to 16 hours per day, six or seven days a week, or because he found his role of dispatcher so mentally draining.

During his free time, besides watching movies, Abeyta learned Italian through an online course—a language his wife and daughter speak. He initially studied

Arabic, but he found it difficult to learn, in part because there are 200 dialects of the language.

Abeyta, who will rise to the rank of staff sergeant this month, does not believe he will be heading back to the Middle East, in part, because he now appears at personnel development conferences for the Air Force. In fact, he has just returned from a conference in Georgia. His colleagues now refer to him as a "poster child."

That would be good news for his nine grown children and his wife Lucy. "[It was] a big responsibility for her to take care of everything at home and still work."

In March 2008, Abeyta returned to the United States, and he returned to

work in June. He could have taken another month off, but he felt he was ready to return.

"This [tour] took a lot out of me," Abeyta said, recalling that he had trouble relaxing when he returned home.

Now, when he answers questions about his tours of duty from his grandsons, Abeyta thinks "it wasn't too bad."

One thing he doesn't miss is the sound of captured explosives being detonated at the outskirts of the Ali Al Salem air base. "It always seemed to happened on your day off," he said, adding that the first time he heard the explosion, it awakened him from a sound sleep.

Besides the care packages he received from co-workers at divisions 2 and 10, Abeyta valued his supervisors' understanding. "I really appreciated the support I received from Frank [Frank Lonyai] and all my supervisors and my co-workers," Abeyta said, particularly "Sending me off and welcoming me back."



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## [ Web Tips 101 ] by Vivian Tran



Vivian Tran is the Communications Manager of Web Services.

Got a question about the Web? Click here to [Ask Viv!](#)

Editor's Note: Beginning with today's edition of *myMetro.net*, we want to introduce a new weekly column called "Web Tips 101" by Vivian Tran. The new web column will provide tips and tricks on how to use the web. The goal is to provide basic yet useful information that may help make your interactive Web experience better for you. We debut the first "Web Tips 101" column with step-by-step instructions on how to save and e-mail articles from *myMetro.net*.

## How to Save a *myMetro.net* Article (html) as a PDF

(Sept. 17, 2008) Metro employees who enjoy reading articles on *myMetro.net* often have asked how can they save an article for reference or e-mail the article to friends and family. The best way to save and share a *myMetro.net* article is to convert the online article to a PDF.

In order to do so, you must have the standard version of *Adobe Acrobat* (not just the *Acrobat Reader*) installed on your computer and added as a printer.

Here's how:

- Step 1: Go to File, then select Print.
- Step 2: A Print Window pops up and you see a section called Select Printer. Here, you should see Adobe PDF as choice.
- Step 3: Select or highlight Adobe PDF, then click the Print button.
- Step 4: Give the new PDF a filename or title.
- Step 5: Select where you want to save the new file, such as your personal drive where you save all other documents. Click Save.
- Step 6: Now that you've Saved the *myMetro.net* article as a PDF, you can e-mail it as an attachment.



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**Public Transit Ridership Surges in Second Quarter 2008**

(Sept. 18, 2008) Americans took more than 2.8 billion trips on public transportation in the second quarter of 2008—an increase of almost 140 million trips from the second quarter of 2007, according to an American Public Transportation Association (APTA) report released last week.

In 2007, 10.3 billion trips were taken on public transportation—the highest number of trips taken on U.S. public transportation in 50 years, according to APTA.

In the second quarter of 2008, public transportation continued to climb, rising by 5.2 percent. Conversely, the Federal Highway Administration has reported that the vehicle miles traveled on United States roads declined by 3.3 percent in the second quarter.

Making the rise in public transportation more remarkable, according to APTA, is that usually fewer people ride public transit during an economic slowdown.

Comparing all transit modes, light rail had the highest percentage of ridership increase, with a 12.3 percent increase for the second quarter.

Bus ridership followed with the second highest increase, 5.1 percent nationwide. The largest part of that increase (14 percent) occurred in communities with populations ranging from 100,000 to 499,999.

Ridership on commuter rail rose 4.9 percent nationally, with heavy rail (subways and elevated trains) ridership increasing by 4.3 percent.

The complete ridership report is available at [apta.com](#).



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## Metro Bus Rodeo Rolls Out Saturday at Santa Anita

- Maintenance competitions begin at 7:30 a.m. Bus Operators start on the Obstacle Course at 8:30 a.m. Trophies take the stage at 1 p.m.
- Families are invited to partake in transportation extravaganza of sport, feast and fun in the California sun.



By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 18, 2008) Showcasing the skills and expertise of some of the finest operators and mechanics in transportation, Metro will hold the 33rd annual Bus Rodeo, Sept. 20, in search of the next round of champions to represent the excellence of Los Angeles public transit.

Balmy Southern California weather, clear skies and a big turn-out are expected for the popular event, which starts at 7:30 a.m. and ends with the trophy awards at 1 p.m.

Employees, who are invited and encouraged to bring their families to Santa Anita Park this Saturday, can expect a fun-filled day, said Metro Westside/Central General Manager Mark Maloney.

This year's Rodeo will feature a barbecue feast with all the trimmings, the expanding car and motorcycle show, more interactive exhibit booths, and an expanded 'Kids Zone,' he said.

Winners from the local event, this year hosted by Metro Westside/Central, will defend Metro's national title next May at the American Public Transportation Association's competition in Seattle, Wash.



**2007 Metro Rodeo Champion Team:** Top Operator Julio Flores from West Valley Division is joined in the winner's circle by the maintenance team from Arthur Winston Division, from left, Rommel Vargas, Frank Forde and Andrew Warren Jr. The team competed in the 2008 APTA Internationals held in Austin, Texas, where the maintenance champs placed third in a field of 47 competitors.

Preliminary competitions held last week narrowed the Bus Operator field to 36 finalists from some 183 competitors.

San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Operator Mark Holland enters the field in the number one spot. Holland's unprecedented six wins in previous Metro Rodeos make his standard the mark to beat for this year's competition. The top five eliminators include Holland and operators Juan Navarro, Sam Morales, Jose Villanueva and Maximiliano De Angelis.

The mechanics competition, which tests mechanics' abilities to troubleshoot mechanical problems and fix them quickly, will be held among three-member teams from participating operating divisions.

Mechanics Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde of Arthur Winston Division 5 have won the Metro Rodeo four years running.

The maintenance champs placed third in a field of 47 competitors last year at the 2008 International Bus Rodeo in Austin, Texas. The veteran maintenance team took home the gold in the 2007 International Bus Rodeo held in Nashville, Tennessee.

This year's event will feature a popular mini-competition between five division transportation managers: Alva Carrasco, Division 10; Diane Frazier, Division 2; Jon Hillmer, Division 9; Curley Little, Division 5, and Lorene Kelley, Division 15 assistant manager.

Returning to the original location in the vast Santa Anita arena, this year's Rodeo will be held on familiar territory at the Santa Anita Race Track parking lot, Gate 6. Directions, along with up-to-the-minute schedule of events, are online on myMetro.net at the [Bus Rodeo](#) pages.

"Those who compete in the



preliminaries will get the official Rodeo hat, the belt buckle, a T-shirt and a lapel pin,” according to Frank Cecere, assistant manager of Central Instruction, who helps coordinate the event every year.

Click on map to go to [Bus Rodeo](#) site at myMetro.net for directions and schedule of events.

Finalists will get these and an added special gift. Winners will be sponsored by Metro to represent the agency in an all-expenses-paid trip to the APTA Internationals come spring.

Previous winners of the local Rodeo have gone to the national competition and placed high in the rankings among the 90 or so transit agencies that compete every year.



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Maria Monroy, division stenographer, offers hash browns and pancakes at the Sept. 12 breakfast thanking bus operators for fewer accidents.

*Photos by  
Andrew Carrasco and  
Jonathon Leifer*

## Division 2 Provides Early (Yawn!) Breakfast for Safer Bus Operators

- Accident rate drops to 17 in August

(Sept. 18, 2008) An early—very early—breakfast at Crossroads Depot Division 2 on Sept. 12 congratulated the division's operators for a drop in accidents during August.

Diane Frazier, transportation manager, had repeatedly suggested to the operators that if their August accident rate was in the "teens," a celebratory breakfast would be in their near future.

"Over the past 13 months, the division's monthly average was 24.38," explained Andrew Carrasco, Division 2's assistant transportation manager. The division's annual goal is to reduce that average to 21 or fewer accidents per month.

"At the midway point of August, we were sitting at just six accidents," Carrasco said. "During our weekly Safety/Rap Sessions, we started to 'leak' the possibility of a breakfast. Operators were teasing managers that they were going to have to come in really earlier to cook them breakfast."

Although several accidents late in August created some nail-biting, the division logged 17 accidents and forced some pre-dawn rising times.





Alex Clifford, General Manager of Gateways Cities Sector, browns links for the Sept. 12 breakfast, which began serving Division 2 staff at 3 a.m.

Determined to be ready to feed operators as early as 3 a.m., Frazier arrived at 1:20 a.m. The breakfast's cooks were already working.

"Our operators . . . love to see us managers get up and out there early in the morning with them, and it's a signal that we entirely support them in accomplishing the overall mission of the division, sector and Metro,"

Carrasco said.

The temporary short order cooks served breakfast (yawn!) until 7 a.m., using 420 eggs, 40 pounds of bacon and sausage, 320 hash browns, 300 pancakes and 30 gallons of orange juice and coffee. Mechanics and security officers were also fed.



(From left) Maria Ramirez, bus operator; Robert Gonzales, bus operator and head cook; Sharon Bell, bus operator; Robert Rodriguez, bus operator and UTU representative; and Catherine White, bus operator, may be regretting rising so early. Photos: Andrew Carrasco and Jonathon Leifer

Besides Carrasco and Frazier, the "core team" included Maria Monroy, division stenographer; Robert Gonzales, bus operator and head cook; Robert Rodriguez, bus operator and UTU representative; and Catherine White and Sharon Bell, bus operators.

The core team arrived at 1 a.m. to set up and begin cooking with Alex Clifford, General Manager of the Gateway Cities Sector, and Tammy Rice, safety specialist. Jonathon Leifer, transitional work coordinator, slept in and arrived at 2 a.m.

"In essence, our breakfast was both a reward and an incentive for a job well done and also a kick-off to accomplish division goals for the coming year," said Frazier, noting that the breakfast was part of an ongoing incentive program to increase safety consciousness.

"Like the other downtown divisions, we have some challenges with accidents because of the area we operate through," she said, pointing to heavy traffic and narrow streets."



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**Obituary:** Services for Donna Remata will be held Sept. 25 and Sept. 26 in Simi Valley



Remembering

Donna Remata

*Metro employees share their memories of Donna Remata*

- Metro employees and friends are mourning the loss of fellow employee Donna Remata, a storekeeper at Metro Headquarters who was among the 25 passengers and train crew members killed in a Metrolink train accident September 12, 2008. *MyMetro.net* invites you to submit your thoughts and memories here. The collection of your memories of Donna will be printed and given to the Remata family in commemoration of our friend and co-worker.

[Submit your memory here](#)

Anyone you talk to will tell you that Donna's favorite catch phrase was "Marvelous"...

Ask her how her day was going and her response was always, "Marvelous. Everything was always, "Marvelous" with Donna.

She made a lot of friends riding in the first car of the Metrolink, and they always talked about books, movies, work, etc. It was like a "family on the train" that she made.

There was a deaf man that rode with them on the train, and Donna would write down the group's conversations so that he could also participate.

She was a kind, loyal, and caring woman...

— Paul Arndt

Couldn't believe my eyes when I saw her name on the news Saturday night; it couldn't be my "doll" Donna. On Monday I still wished it wasn't true, still hoping she would call me. . .

She was a great friend and an awesome worker. . . I miss her dearly, but she will always hold a place in my heart as my New Angel friend.

— Sandra Barillas

Jehovah God has promised...All those in the memorial tombs who have died can be restored to life on a earth without violence and wickedness or death. (John 5:28, 29) I hope to be there to welcome Donna. (Rev. 21:3 & 4)

— Nikki Bentley

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I will miss Donna's laughter, so genuine and happy...

I will miss her being so helpful with a smile, so contagious...

I will miss the little chitchats when I come by to pick up an item or two...

You are already missed by many, Donna!

I will always remember you!

— Elizabeth Streegan

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When they first started flashing the names of the victims, it turned out they misspelled her name to Donna Ramata. I told myself, that is not my beautiful, loving, smiling friend. So on Sunday when they once again flashed all the names that's when I realized it was my beautiful, loving and smiling friend Donna Lynn Remata who lost her life to a very tragic Metrolink train accident. I felt so lost and tears just started rolling down my cheeks. I wanted to reach to someone but I didn't know anyone as it was Sunday. If I could only make the night disappear to be Monday morning I would have, but the night turned out to be too long. Morning came and when I opened the Stationery double door, got in and saw other employees congregated by the window. I broke down and started crying that lovingly beautiful friend really was one of the victims especially when I saw the beautiful wreath with her smiling picture.

Donna was a wonderful person whose lilting voice booms in the Stationery room whenever she comes out and meets you at the window; there you will see her beautiful smile that goes all the way to her eyes. Never did I see any other emotions on her face except that beautiful smile. Never will I hear her say "Mahvelous, dahling" again.

Her children are too young to lose her but old enough to remember her wonderful memories and her husband Larry, please hold onto those precious memories. Donna is very much loved by everyone she comes in contact with. I am grieving her death.

— Fe Alcid-Little

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I met Donna about 20 years ago when she was working 3rd shift at Division 8 when I was a truck driver. I would save my lunch break at the end of my shift and take it with Donna because she was always upbeat, positive, funny and easy to talk to. When Donna and I became Storekeepers, Donna would call me every morning to check on me and crack some jokes to start the day. On Friday I was at home watching TV when I got a call from Olivia Nelson-Richard asking me if I was watching the news, because there was a major Metrolink crash by my house and that Donna left work on that train.

My stomach dropped; Olivia asked me to go over to Chatsworth High School where the friends and families gathered to find out any information. I couldn't believe what was going on and that this was really happening. When I arrived the Chaplains were holding hands praying with everyone and as passengers returned to this area I just knew that Donna would turn that corner, and I would see her to give her a big hug. I will miss Donna's hugs, smiles, her jokes and her dedication to being MTA's best employee, Donna was a very special person. God Bless You.

— Michael Winston

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Donna was very capable and proficient at her job. Additionally, she was personable and helpful in teaching MTA personnel how to order stationery items using the M3 system.

Her passing comes as a shock. She is certainly missed.

— Hal Flory

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I remember coming to this lady last year for help with a stationary order; I called Donna every week since for help, and she was always there; she became my friend.

Donna was a kind, wonderful person that will be missed greatly.

— Carla Robinson Rhames

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I didn't, unfortunately, have the privilege of knowing her personally, but from all that I have read and heard about Donna from others, she seems like a woman who enjoyed life to the fullest and was genuine in all of her dealings with everyone. This shows in all the great things that everyone has said about Donna and the impact that she no doubt made on everyone that

she interacted with. I can only hope to try to emulate her "marvelous" example (using Donna's favorite catch phrase as stated by Paul Arndt).

— *Abraham Lora*

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I'll always remember Donna laughing and asking, "Why are you ringing that buzzer when you see me sitting here?!" As always, I replied, "I just wanted to see if it worked," or I might say, "I couldn't help myself, I had to do it."

I'd get the raised eyebrow then a smile. Donna was one of the kindest persons I've ever met. I'll miss her; yet I know in my heart and between the tears that her spirit is happy and that she'll always be with us.

— *Juanita Wright*

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To share another side of Donna Remata, I recall meeting up with her one morning as I got a cup of coffee at the cafeteria. I snatched at the opportunity to ask Donna about a problem we were having with storage of marketing materials. On the one hand, we were ordering quantities that would provide price breaks and save money, but, on the other hand, the dozens and dozens of boxes that came in needed to be kept in an accessible and secure area. That had been in Stationery – when the quantities weren't so problematic. A recent reorganization of the shelves and pallets and materials at Stationery had been aimed at safety and regulatory compliance, but now there just wasn't any room for the larger quantities of materials.

In the cafeteria I appealed to Donna to store the large quantities of materials, and Donna insisted that there was no more room for them. I didn't budge. Donna held fast. I insisted that the money saved through quantity purchases was necessary, and Donna reiterated that only manageable quantities could be accommodated. I didn't want to accept these limitations and Donna didn't want to accept any more materials.

Stalemate?

We were speechless for a moment, each realizing that the other would hold firm and that neither of us would back down. Then we simultaneously broke into smiles, and merrily walked away together to our respective work. We left it at that, at least for the moment.

A few weeks later, Donna called me down to Stationery to show me that an area had been swept out for our use but pointing out some drawbacks, like exposure to elements and quantity accommodation. To help reduce the clutter, I identified some odds-and-ends and outdated items that could be set aside for recycling. I helped identify the remaining authorized stock materials, and we discussed the new quantities that would be ordered and storage possibilities. A few months later, Donna showed me new shelves that were set up for our materials. She had found room and accommodated everything we were trying to do. She did it quietly but drew me (and her manager) into the process. She didn't let the stalemate stand – she worked around the problem and then found a solution.

Since that time, I've occasionally chuckled to myself about how we handled that situation and each other. We were each adamant in our positions, yet able to set aside the impasse and remain cordial in every other way. And Donna went one step further – she saw to it that the problem was solved. It was good to be able to work with someone who possessed such strength of character. I feel like Donna brought out the best in me. I'll miss her.

— *Yvonne Price*

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There are those people you come across in your day who just make it better because of their positive outlook on everything. Donna was one of those special moments for me. Whenever I came by Stationery to pick up some item for my department, I always found myself staying a moment, just enjoying the smile she put on my face.

People like Donna are put here by God to make us aware of the good, funny, positive things in the world. My tears flow because of the loss of such a great soul too soon, but my smile and laughter come about thinking of the memories of our enjoyable moments together. Never say goodbye, just till we meet again.

— *Alicia Morales-Rodriguez*

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First of all, my deepest condolences go out to the family and friends that Donna (my sweetheart) came in contact with and touched so many of our hearts and lives. She will be missed forever by so many of us. God Bless Donna and her family at this difficult time.

When I first heard the news Saturday morning, I was in a state of shock and couldn't believe it.

I stopped what I was doing and began to cry when my son asked Dad "what is wrong," and all I could do was hug him. Always remember to tell your kids and family you love them each and every day.

I had the privilege of being Donna's supervisor when she came from Division 7 to work in Stationery. She was an awesome person and always had a positive attitude. She helped so many of us and made my job so much easier. When they transferred me, it was hard for me to say goodbye to Donna and Kenney because they were my work family. I stayed in contact with Donna just because she always made me smile.

Now I have to say goodbye to Donna again and it is so difficult. When I look up at the heavens above I know that Donna, our newest angel, is looking down on us with her smile.

Goodbye Donna for now but we will meet again. God Bless.

— Roger A. Potter

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Every morning as I step into the train at the Glendale station, the first person's face that I would see is Donna's. She always sits at the same location: on either one of the four seats—at the first row to the right—in the last car (as we head towards Union Station). Sometimes half-sleep, at times wide awake—but either way she always wears a smile. Her face is so "angelic" that one cannot miss it.

We rarely get to sit next to each other but never fail to say our "Good Morning" and "Have a good day" greetings—no matter how crowded the train was. And every time I would ask her how is she, she would always answer "marvelous"!

For some reason, when I got off at the Union Station last Friday, September 12, 2008, Donna was still "sleeping" with her head leaning towards the window. I did not want to wake her up to say "Have a good weekend" for she looked like a baby sleeping peacefully, again with a smile in her face. How I wish I did....

— Evelina Del Castillo

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To the Remata family:

Donna had such a great attitude and always had a smile to share with someone. She was always ready to help me when I was new to our new supply ordering system here at Metro, and no matter how much I bugged her; she was always patient and kind. She was also a great teacher. I had the privilege of having her as an Instructor in one of our training sessions.

I think her trademark saying was whenever anyone asked her how she was doing, she always responded back with, "Maaavelous". Donna was a truly a "Maaavelous" person who was much loved here at Metro and she will be greatly missed.

I pray that God's peace, love and grace will get you all through this difficult time.

— Deirdra M. Christian

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Donna was always cheerful, with a contagious smile that could make an old crank like me smile. She was infectious with her marvelous attitude, always ready to help, even though she already had plenty to do helping others resolve their problems for the day. She will be remembered by all.

— Ferrol Yeakle

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Donna had an upbeat personality, so kind, cheerful and pleasant. I will indeed miss her.

May the love and support of friends and co-workers provide much encouragement during this difficult time.

My prayers, thoughts and sympathy are with the family.

— Joanne Harper

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Very nice person I had the pleasure of knowing, and may God keep her close to His heart.

— David Perez



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I was saddened to hear of the untimely death of our friend, Donna. I remember her being extremely helpful when going to Stationery. My encounters with her were sporadic, but every time I went there, I felt like I was her very special customer.

It is a beautiful thing when people say such nice things about someone who briefly touches people's lives. Donna, God must've needed some storekeeper duties done to expertise in Heaven and called upon your smiling disposition and services. See you when I get home.

— Dana L. Williams

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To the Remata family,

I'm extremely saddened by this tragic event. Nobody is prepared for these types of events. I offer my deepest condolences to your family. Although I didn't know Donna personally, I remember seeing her many times. Now and forever I will always remember her.

— Bill Balter

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I worked with Donna at Division 8 on 3rd shift many times; she was our stock clerk. She was always smiling and made the long nights go by faster.

I will miss her.

Larry, please be strong, as time passes it will be easier; know that God has a plan that is hard to understand at times like these.

We are with you and your family.

God bless you.

—Tom Helliwell

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To Donna Remata Family and Friends,

May God continue to bless you and your family at this sad time in your lives. She will be greatly missed by everyone that knew her, and I will continue to pray for each and everyone that had the pleasure of calling her a loved one or a friend.

— Karen L. Floyd

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I will remember Donna Remata as a great friend and a great storekeeper.

I've worked with her side by side. This breaks my heart. She has always taken care of me. Always positive: "Annmarie, you could do it," referring to my work. I will truly miss her friendship, jokes, stories, and a shoulder to cry on.

My prayers and thought and sympathy are with the family

— Annmarie Arriola

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It seems to be much harder to get through the passing of someone whom you've just seen a day or two before. On Wednesday, just a few days before the accident, I went down to Stationary, and, as usual, I was talking and messing with Donna. I asked her where Kenny was, and she said, "Whenever Kenny's out everybody always asks where he is?"

I said, "That's because whenever you're out, we all ask where you are!" So, that means, "We love you, too."

She looked at me, smiled and said, "Oh, okay, then," and belted out a hearty laugh and so did I. Donna was very nice and had a warm and endearing smile. She never hesitated to assist anyone. When she said, she would get back to you about something, she did!

It made my heart heavy when I saw the standing red and white, heart-shaped wreath, though, it was oh so beautiful. But, my heart really goes out to her children. I lost my mother at a very young age, and there is nothing like it! It changed me forever.

Hold on to her Love and Laughter, Words and Wisdom, and her Songs and her Spirit. Keep them close because you'll always need them to help you get by. May God bless her family with comfort and endurance to walk through the roads ahead. I will remember you!

— *Wadree D-Smith*

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Donna was a thoughtful, considerate, understanding, congenial, and most obliging coworker. One would never leave her presence without receiving a cheerful, compassionate smile. She was a pleasant person, and I will miss her dearly.

— *Carrie M. Bradford*

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All I can say is, people loved you and you will be missed. Our occasional meeting at work is more than enough to say you are a good person and a mother; you will be always be remembered in our prayers. As a friend and a co-worker, you left your good words, memories and things we will cherish.

— *Mike Gaite*

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To Donna and her Family,

I remember when I was having trouble with the computer and needed to make a FAX cover sheet. Donna showed and told me how to do it and it came out perfectly. She always had a smile on her face. She was a loyal friend, and we would talk for minutes on end at Division 7, which is where I first met her. She will be missed very much.

— *Marvin Watson*

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When I first met Donna, we became fast friends, when we found out we lived around the corner from each other. She would give me a ride home from the train station whenever I would take the early train. She loved her family and loved going to Henderson, Nevada, to visit her parents and relax by the pool—that was going on vacation for her. I am going to miss her laughter and “Hi, Doll, as she would always jokingly tell me. When I grow-up I want to be like you. Our prayers are with her family.

You rest now Donna, you are in a Marvelous place now.

— *Marie Tervalon*

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I had the opportunity to really learn who Donna was this year. I went to submit a stationery order. I made the mistake of asking Donna if Kenny would be returning to assist me. She looked at me with a smile and said “You will have to deal with me until Kenny returns from vacation, take it or leave it.” From that day until her passing, we had the greatest rapport and shared a couple laughs. She will be greatly missed.

— *Angelia Watkins*

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I was not an acquaintance of Donna, but I know she was a beautiful person. My family sends condolences to the Remata family; we are very sorry for your lost, and your family will be in our prayers.

— *Sherri Adams*

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The first time I met Donna she had a big smile. Every time thereafter, she still had a smile. Truly a beautiful person to have met.

— *Paul Rankin*

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When I first started working as a storekeeper, one of the first places I worked was at Stationary with Donna. I had so many questions and every time she had an answer. Every time I had a problem she had a solution. And all the time with a smile, willing to help me learn. She was a very patient teacher, a kind and caring person. Her loss to her friends, family, and Metro is truly a tragedy. She will be missed by all that knew her.

— *Miguel Cortez*

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Hey Donna,

I met you at Division 7, and you always had a smile on your face. I was new to the division and you would always walk up to the E.R.S. window and open it with a smile and completely make my day! You were so excited when you bought your “flip” phone, you couldn’t wait to share with me the ability to make it dial with just a voice command. You are a wonderful person and will be missed as a co-worker who could light up a room with your genuine friendship and infectious smile :-)

Rest in peace as my prayers go out to your family for comfort.

— *Holly A. Lyons*





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The results are in ... Rankings, Order of Finish, Winners All



**And the winner is...** Organizer Gwen Keene with top op Juan Navarro and runner-up Mark Holland.



**Best Dressed:** San Gabriel Valley mechanics team are sharp on the circuit.

Operators

- Juan Navarro, Division 3
- Mark Holland, Division 9
- Jesus Valdez, Division 2
- Ricardo Martinez, Division 9
- Maximiliano De Angelis, Division 1
- Jose Sanchez, Division 2
- Luis A. Martinez, Division 2
- Leon Fraser, Division 7
- Herman Gavia, Division 3
- Roberto Ramirez, Division 1
- Aubry McGlory, Division 7
- Miriam L. Pereira, Division 15
- Jose Villanueva, Division 1
- Samuel Morales, Division 1
- Marcos A. Mejia-Portillo, Division 1
- Julio Flores, Division 9
- Ramiro E Mota, Division 9
- Manuel R. Guzman, Division 7
- Fabrisio A. Contreras, Division 5
- Manuel Hernandez, Division 10
- Mario Madrid, Division 9

Maintenance

1st Place - Division 05

- Andrew Warren, Jr., Master Mechanic
- Rommel Vargas, Master Mechanic
- Frank Forde, Master Mechanic

2nd Place - Division 10

- David Klinkenborg, Mechanic A
- Angel Feria, Master Mechanic
- Jose Moya, Master Mechanic

3rd Place - Division 07

- Glenn Buakong, Master Mechanic
- Craig Daniel, Mechanic A
- Mauricio Arias, Mechanic C

4th Place - Division 08

- Simon Agaronoy, Master Mechanic
- Ivan Roldan, Mechanic A
- Jeremy Lockwood, Mechanic A

5th Place - Division 01

- Sergio Barron, Mechanic A

- 22 Bernardo Soto, Division 5
- 23 Joe Gallegos, Division 9
- 24 Ruben Flores, Division 1
- 25 Ludvicio Castro, M. Division 9
- 26 Juan Alcantar, Division 10
- 27 Cain Portillo, Division 5
- 28 Leyverth Rodriguez, 15
- 29 Joe L. Barbosa, Division 9
- 30 Rahsaan Earl, Division 5
- 31 Roger Langevin, Division 2
- 32 Jeffery Wilbanks, Division 2
- 33 Oscar Jimenez, Division 10
- 34 Miguel A.Colmenares, Division 10
- 35 Javier Reynoso, Division 15

- Gustavo Sanchez, Master Mechanic
- Adam Barron, Mechanic A

6th Place - Division 09

- Armando Martinez, Mechanic A
- Eduardo Garcia, Mechanic A
- Adrian Garcia, Mechanic A

7th Place - Division 15

- Scott Hayes, Master Mechanic
- Kirk Langmayer, Mechanic A
- Tong Chan, Mechanic A

8th Place - Division 18

- Luke Logan, Mechanic A
- Mina Ros, Master Mechanic
- Raymond Phung, Mechanic A

9th Place - Division 330 MSSC

- Tim Hong, Mechanic A
- Enrique (Henry) Ochoa, Master Mechanic
- Fernando Aguilar, Mechanic A

10th Place - Division 02

- Edward Hernandez, Mechanic A
- Jaime Nava, Mechanic A
- Alfredo Cardenas, Mechanic A

11th Place - Division 06

- Narendru Desai, Mechanic A
- Leo Marin, Mechanic A
- Jose Ramirez, Mechanic A

12th Place - Division 03

- Arnold Del Toro, Mechanic A
- Victor Latorre, Mechanic B
- Tyrone Asencio, Mechanic A





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## 2008 Metro Bus Rodeo



Winner's Circle - from left, Arthur Winston Division 5 champion master mechanics Andrew Warren, Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde and North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Juan Navarro claim victory at the 2008 Metro Bus Rodeo. Photos: Gayle Anderson

### North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Juan Navarro Scores Top Op Arthur Winston Division 5 Mechanics Claim 5th Championship Trophy

- [The results are in](#) > Stats, Order of Finish, Winners All

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 23, 2008) North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Juan Navarro and Arthur Winston Division 5 mechanics Andrew Warren Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde emerged as champions in the Operators and Mechanics categories at the 2008 Metro Bus Rodeo, Sept. 20. They'll carry the agency's flag at the 2009 APTA Internationals set for next May in Seattle, Washington.

The Arthur Winston Division mechanics team took the mechanics trophy for an unprecedented fifth victory lap. It was the tenth competition for Operator Juan Navarro, who scored 639 points to beat six-time champion Mark Holland in a close race to the finish.



The competition heats up as 35 operators pound the obstacle course in the giant arena

adjacent to the Santa Anita racetrack.

Rodeo 2008 scored big in attendance, too. Metro Westside/Central General Manager Mark Maloney estimated that more than 1,000 employees, their families and guests came out to Santa Anita Park for the annual event.

The 2008 event was hosted by Metro Westside/Central and included an obstacle course for operators and a mechanic's competition where teams of three raced against the clock to diagnose and repair performance-related bus problems.

Thirty-five operators and 12 maintenance teams competed in this year's event.

"Every year gets better," said Maloney, who took the momentum to new heights with expanded arenas. "It takes an agency-wide army to do this. The reward comes from seeing everyone enjoy the event."



The Sheriff's rescue helicopter's daring landing on the obstacle-course field calls for a group photo with the San Gabriel Division 9 contingent, whose smartly uniformed mechanics team took home the "Best Dressed" trophy.

In the periphery of the main events, there were plenty of activities to keep everyone thrilled, happy and inspired: an expanded "Kid's Fun Zone," complete with snow cones, a home-cooked barbecue feast for more than 1,000 hungry race fans, a row of information booths, a spectacular visit from the Sheriff's Rescue helicopter, the traditional and very competitive car show and motorcycle exhibit and a huge tented picnic area where everyone could enjoy the barbecue and watch the events underway.

---

Metro Westside Central  
GM Mark Maloney, Top  
Operator Juan Navarro  
and Rodeo  
coordinator Frank  
Cecere, assistant  
manager of Central



Instruction, Operations, take center stage for the most anticipated moment of the day.

### **First-time champion has competed for 10 years**

In Saturday's competition, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Juan Navarro emerged victorious with a solid top score of 639 points. The new champion edged out San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Operator Mark Holland, in second place with 611 points, and Crossroads Division 2 Operator Jesus Valdez, in third place with 597 points.

It was Navarro's first championship victory lap. Navarro, who's been competing in the obstacle course for 10 years running, beat out second-place runner-up and six-time champion Mark Holland. The two entered the competition from the number one and number two slots in the preliminaries, where both scored over 600 points.



Central Instruction, Maintenance, Sr. Instructor Steve Mullaly, who puts the mechanics events together every year, is here pictured as the events get underway in tented arenas for bus inspection, ABS brake board, power train, T-King a/c module and I.O. multiplex challenges.

### **Mechanics were neck and neck to the finish**

Roadeo 2008 was the fifth Metro championship for the Arthur Winston Division team of Warren, Vargas and Forde, who inched by the close runner-up team from Division 10. The Division 5 champs racked up 1,225 points to beat out the Division 10 team of David Klinkenborg, Angel Fera and Jose Moya by 70 points. Third-place winners - the West Hollywood Division 7 team of Glenn Buakong, Craig Daniel and Mauricio Arias - were hot on the heels with a score of 1,100 points.

The Division 10 team's close second was sweetened with the coveted ABS Brake Board trophy, a replica of a brake pedal atop a walnut trophy base, signifying that the mechanics were the fastest team to correct the electrical portion of the grueling ABS Brake board event.





Flanked on the left by host GM Mark Maloney, Division 5 Maintenance Manager Alex DiNuzzo and South Bay GM Dana Coffey and, on the right, by mechanic event coordinator Steve Mullaly, the champion Division 5 mechanic's team takes a bow.

The Arthur Winston team has represented Metro at the international competitions every year since 2003, with the exception of 2004. Scoring the highest placement yet, the veteran maintenance team and Operator Mark Holland took home the Grand Championship Award in the 2007 APTA International Bus Rodeo held in Nashville, Tennessee.

Metro San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt acted as emcee (with assistance from his daughter, Jennifer), calling the play-by-play for the bus operator half of the competition as well as the popular transportation manager competition on an abbreviated obstacle course.



Metro Westside/Central Mark Maloney, at right, presents First Place title to Division 10 Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco, who wins the manager's trophy despite strong competition from Lorene Kelley of East Valley Division 15, Curley Little of Arthur Winston Division 5, Jon Hillmer of San Gabriel Valley Division 9 and (not pictured) Diane Frazier of Crossroads Division 2.

Division 10 Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco, who sailed through barrels and orange traffic cones without a bump or scrape, aced out the others to claim the championship for the second year. She was joined on the course by Diane Frazier of Crossroads Division 2, Jon Hillmer of San Gabriel Valley Division 9, Curley Little of Arthur Winston Division 5 and Lorene Kelley of East Valley Division 15.

The managers' maneuvers clearly illustrate the finer points of what it takes to operate a Metro bus and keep it on the road at the same time, quipped

emcee Richard Hunt, who counts upturned barrels and squished cones as badges of honor in a profession that demands top skills and championship valor.

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## Maintenance Technicians Receive Training on the New Car in Town

- Nine graduate from class concentrating on P2550's electronic sophistication

Graduates from the first two P2550 Light Rail Vehicle Class pose before a Breda P2550 light rail car, which will migrate to the Blue, Gold and Green lines.

*Photo by Ned Racine*



Front row: (Left to right) Maintenance Specialist Leader Steven Dang, Maintenance Specialist Joe Leung and Maintenance Specialist Johnny Ly. 2nd row: Rail Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Ruben Madrid, Maintenance Specialist John Chan and Maintenance Specialist Relief Leader Ernest Campos. 3rd row: Maintenance Specialist Riccardo Hernandez, Maintenance Specialist Joseph Pena, Maintenance Specialist Rick Seneris and Maintenance Specialist Leader Henry Ponce. 4th row: Maintenance Specialist Jesse Romero, Maintenance Specialist Suren Yeremyan, Rail Warranty Equipment Specialist John Tena and Maintenance Specialist James Anderson. Back row: Rail Equipment Maintenance Instructor Doug Witke, AnsaldoBreda Head of Technical Publications and Training Riccardo Chimenti, and Rail Equipment Maintenance Instructor Gary Dewater.

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 23, 2008) As sophisticated internally as they are sleek and modern externally, the P2550 rail cars appearing on the Metro Rail System present challenges for the maintenance technicians who keep them running.

Rising to those challenges, nine maintenance technicians from each rail line graduated, Sept. 22, from a 2-1/2-month-long class focused on the technology of the new AnsaldoBreda rail car.

"We learn everything from coupler to coupler, one end of the train to the other end and everything in between," said Douglas Witke, the Blue Line Division 11 instructor, and a participant in the class. After AnsaldoBreda, the



car's manufacturer, finishes its last training session in January, Witke himself will train maintenance specialists on the P2550 car.

"It's the next generation of electronics on these trains," said John Tena, a Gold Line warranty, QA technician, and a new graduate of the class. "There is going to be a learning curve for these specialists."



P2550 train at Union Station

*Photo by Peter Watkinson*

The new car's electronics equal faster diagnosis of problems, meaning the cars spend less time in maintenance—once the specialists understand the systems that run the P2550.

"Everything is broken down into systems," Witke said of the new car. Communications, low-voltage power, battery, propulsion, traction motors and door circuitry are a few of the systems monitored by the car's electronic watchdog.

Because the mechanical systems of the P2550 are similar to the P2000 cars, the mainstay of Metro Rail for years, the P2550 Light Rail Vehicle Class focuses more on the electronic devices that aid in troubleshooting, and less on mechanical systems.

One of those troubleshooting aids sits next to the operator's seat. By using a password, a maintenance technician can bring up an electronic report card for all the car's systems on the integrated display unit. The car has 13 computer systems.

"The screen tells you a lot," Witke said. "It'll tell you which car, what problem, what end [of the car]. Then you can take out the schematics."

As a comparison, Tena said the P2000 diagnostics were limited to some bypass switches and lights indicating whether each system was on or off.

Besides better communication among its own systems, the P2550 also communicates better with the Rail Operations Center, according to Witke.

In a first for AnsaldoBreda, the company devoted several of its employees to the training class, rather than using contracted trainers.

Riccardo Chimenti, head of the Italian company's technical publications and training, wanted to offer information directly to the technicians who will service its products. He believes it makes it easier for the technicians to find

answers and easier for AnsaldoBredo to gather feedback from its customers' service experts.

"The [technicians] were really well prepared," Chimenti said. "We're happy and proud to build a human connection between the guys. We created a team."

Feedback from Metro technicians will be important for AnsaldoBredo because the P2550—modified to meet Metro's specifications—operates nowhere else.

Currently, Metro and AnsaldoBredo are working out the bugs discovered during the six months of P2550 operation in Los Angeles. Tena expected some bugs, given the sophistication of the new machines.

The graduation of the second P2550 Light Rail Vehicle Class was a milestone for AnsaldoBredo, as well as for Metro. The manufacturer photographed the graduates for one of its in-house magazines.

"We're getting some pretty good training, so right off the bat we're feeling more comfortable, more confident, to work on these [cars]," Witke said. "Most people I've talked to like [them]."

"I think they're going to end up being a pretty good train for moving people around L.A. County," he added.

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Kevin Smith, Division 5 service attendant, asked the Army National Guard to acknowledge Metro for supporting him during his two tours of duty. The certificate recognizes Marco Pedemonte, equipment maintenance supervisor, and Smith's former supervisor, who stands to the left of Smith. *Photo by Alex Di Nuzzo*

## Appreciative Employee Brings Division 5 a Commendation from National Guard

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 24, 2008) Kevin Smith was so appreciative of the support he received from his co-workers and supervisors during his two tours of duty in the Middle East, he asked the Army National Guard to commemorate their support.

When he visited Arthur Winston Division 5 on September 11, Smith brought a certificate of appreciation for Marco Pedemonte, equipment maintenance supervisor, and the division.

Smith, who worked as a service attendant for Division 5 before his current posting, said there was concern shown him throughout his tours by both the divisions he has served: 10 and 5. Co-workers sent him care packages, cards and emails.

"I thought it was definitely something I should do," said Smith, who was stationed in Kuwait from 2004 to 2005 and Iraq from 2006 to 2008. Currently posted to Los Angeles, Smith, an Army Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> class, will return to Division 5 in February 2009.

One person who emailed him frequently was Regina Kaping, assistant administration analyst. She would inform Smith when someone from Metro had been posted to Iraq or Kuwait or when someone had returned. She also checked with him on the status of his Relief Earning Statement

(basically his pay stub).

When he brought the certificates to Division 5, Smith noticed his photo had been posted at the division as a way to keep him in its thoughts.

Smith's response? "Wow, that was pretty cool."

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## Metrolink Train Crash Claims the Life of Metro Storekeeper Donna Remata

### Metro to Offer Transportation for Employees Attending Remata Services

- Two buses will leave from Patsaouras Plaza for Friday services

(Sept. 24, 2008) Metro will provide transportation to and from Donna Remata's funeral services on Friday, Sept. 26, for all employees who wish to attend. The services will begin at 10 a.m. in Simi Valley.

Two MTA buses will be available. The first bus will leave Patsaouras Plaza at 8 a.m., and the second bus will leave at 8:30 a.m. The buses will stage at Berth 3 in the plaza. Each bus's head sign will read "Special."

If you have any questions regarding the bus transportation, please call Glendora Walker in Bus Operations Control at 2-4602.

### Services for Donna Remata will be held Sept. 25 and Sept. 26 in Simi Valley

(Sept. 19, 2008) Services have been scheduled for Donna Remata, one of 25 passengers killed in the Friday, Sept. 12, collision between a Metrolink commuter train and a Union Pacific freight train.

A memorial service for Remata will be held from 4 to 8 p.m., Sept. 25, at Reardon Mortuary, 2636 Sycamore Dr., Simi Valley, 93063 (805.526.6677). A rosary will be said at 7 p.m.

On Sept. 26, funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, 1305 Royal Ave., Simi Valley, 93065 (805.526.1732).

- Twenty-one-year Metro veteran managed Gateway Tower Stationery office
- Remembering Donna Remata - [Share your memories here](#).

By Ned Racine, Editor

(Sept. 15, 2008) The Sept. 12 Metrolink train crash tore at the Metro family with news that Donna Remata was one of 25 passengers killed in the Friday afternoon collision between the 3:35 p.m. Metrolink train and a Union Pacific freight train.

"I know I speak for the entire Metro family in mourning the death of Donna Remata, who was killed in Friday's Metrolink train crash," said CEO

Roger Snoble. "In addition to keeping her husband Larry, a mechanic for Division 8, and her two children in our thoughts and prayers, I would like to offer my condolences to all the families who lost loved ones in that terrible accident."

As usual, Remata, 49, a storekeeper in the Gateway Tower's Stationery office, was riding in the first car—facing the engine—when that car was heavily damaged in the crash of Ventura County Line 111. Her body was pulled from the wreckage on Sept. 13 at 3 a.m.



Maggie Cook, customer information agent, sits at Donna Remata's desk. Cook holds a box where employees can drop off their memories of Remata or condolences to the Remata family. The box can be found outside the Stationery office on P1.

Remata, a mother of two, began working for Metro in February 1987 and became a storekeeper in 1999.

Born in Oct. 1958 in Manhattan Beach, Calif., Remata was a resident of Simi Valley and was traveling home at the time of the crash. She planned to go out with her 17-year-old daughter Tiffany that night, while her husband Larry and son Larry II, 18, concluded a vacation in Hawaii.

**Remata spoke with sister**

According to Maggie Cook, customer information agent, Remata was speaking to her sister, Debra Nieves, until 4:20 p.m. on Friday, three minutes before the crash.

"She was happy," Cook learned from Nieves. "She was looking forward to being home with her family."

After news of the crash, Cook and other Transportation Communications Union (TCU) members began calling friends and acquaintances for information on Remata. Her co-workers reached out to contacts at Metrolink, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and West Valley Division 8.

TCU members weren't the only ones concerned.

Marie Tervalon, customer information agent, began worrying for Remata while she was on her own train home, one train behind Ventura County Line 111. One of Tervalon's "train buddies" received a cell phone call describing a train accident just outside the Chatsworth station.





Marie Tervalon grew worried when she learned the train her friend was on had crashed in Chatsworth.

"I knew immediately what train it was," Tervalon said

Thinking she had Remata's cell phone number, Tervalon called her friend. Instead, she reached the Remata home and Tiffany. Tervalon asked her friend's daughter to turn on the television to check on news of her mother's train.

Tervalon's husband picked her up at the Van Nuys Metrolink station and took her home to Simi Valley, where she lives only two blocks from the Remata home. Tervalon drove to the home and stayed with Tiffany until family arrived.

**'I've done all my crying'**

"I've done all my crying," Tervalon recalls Tiffany telling her when she arrived. "No, you haven't," Tervalon replied.

Kenny Allen heard about the accident on Friday on the radio. He called Tervalon early that evening because he remembered Tervalon and Remata sometimes took the same train. He reached Tervalon after she had left the Remata home.

"I was worried about both of them," said Allen, a stock clerk, who worked with Remata for five years in the Gateway Tower Stationery office.

As Allen and Tervalon spoke on the phone later that night, watching television coverage, Tervalon recalled that Remata always rode in the first Metrolink car—the one now swarming with urban rescue teams rescuing passengers. Then, Allen recalls, their conversation stopped.

"Marie, it doesn't look too good," he told Tervalon.

Particularly poignant for Tervalon was the fact she had planned to ride with Remata on that train. In fact, Tervalon had taken the 3:26 train the day before. But on Sept. 12 she could not finish her Friday work in time.

"I had told her that morning, 'Donna, I might be on your train this afternoon. Can I get a ride home?' She said, 'Sure, Doll [Remata's nickname for Tervalon].'" And that was the last I saw her."

Tervalon said she will remember Remata's "great personality" and her willingness to help people. Allen will remember her wide knowledge of current events and their conversations about "everything."

Kenny Allen, stock clerk, stands beside the floral arrangement Metro Support

Services Center Logistics donated to commemorate the life of Donna Remata. The arrangement sits outside the Stationery office on the P1 level.



**‘Truly dedicated worker’**

“People who didn’t know her are going to miss a truly dedicated worker,” said Allen, who describes himself as still in shock.

Elena Sanchez, records clerk, shared another example of the regard co-workers felt for Remata. On Saturday morning, Sept. 13, Sanchez wrote a retired Metro employee with news of Remata. Since then she has received 20 phone calls and emails full of sadness and praise for Remata.

“The main two things I heard over and over again were her sense of humor and her smile.”

Cook finds that Remata’s death illustrates the ties binding Metro employees. “This is our Metro family,” Cook said. “I explain that to the union members and the people I meet.”

Remata is survived by her husband and children; parents Evelyn and Tony Nieves of Henderson, Nev.; and three sisters, Debra, Terri and Jo Ann Nieves.

Services are pending.

- See myMetro.net initial report: [Metrolink Crash in Chatsworth](#) Takes a Violent Toll on Metro Family


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## Metrolink Crash Survivor Says No Horror Movie Could Capture the Scene

- Metro employee aids two injured Metrolink crash survivors before emergency workers arrive
- [See myMetro.net report Sept. 15:](#) Metrolink Crash in Chatsworth Takes a Violent Toll on Metro Family

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 24, 2008) There was no warning at 4:23 p.m.

"It sounded like a bomb went off and the train stopped," recalled Jim Hugo, who was riding in the second car of Metrolink Ventura County Line 111. "And it stopped immediately. The G forces were tremendous."



Jim Hugo called his wife Lori repeatedly through the night of the Metrolink collision. They were finally reunited at 10:30 p.m. after he was cleared to leave the temporary medical station at Chatsworth High School.



On Sept. 12, as he did Tuesdays through Fridays, Hugo, a traction power inspector, sat in the second car of Metrolink Ventura County Line 111, which left Union Station at 3:35 p.m. that Friday. As were many of the passengers, he was headed home to the Simi Valley.

He sat on the top row, his back against the train bulkhead, facing toward the rear of the train. That choice might have saved his life. Hugo didn't move when the trains collided, and he attributes that to the bulkhead.

"The whole thing was over in the blink of an eye," he remembered. "I opened my eyes and I saw people flying around me. And I blinked again and there were people lying all around me. It was quiet except for the moaning and crying."

Hugo instantly realized what had happened. "I didn't know what we'd hit, but I knew we'd hit something." Despite his relative protection, "It still felt as if someone had hit me in the back of the head with a baseball bat."

He immediately saw others were more injured, even though the second car remained upright.

"Within a few seconds all the people who had been flying toward me had fallen," he explained. Hugo noticed a man wedged under a seat, at the bottom of a pile of humans. And he saw there was blood everywhere.

Hugo remembers he was calm, calm enough to call his wife Lori and tell her he was in a train crash. He told her he was OK, but he'd need a ride home. He

remembers she wept during that cell phone conversation and during every other telephone conversation they had that day.

Hugo began trying to wake the man wedged under the seat. Then he pulled the emergency window release lever, and Hugo threw his possessions out the open window to the ground below. "I knew I'd need both hands to get this man off the train, if I could wake him," Hugo explained.

Looking for an exit, Hugo checked the stairway nearest him and discovered the area was blocked by dead bodies. How did he know they were dead? "There was gray matter coming out of their heads."

Hugo managed to wake the unconscious passenger—he later learned the man's name was Frank—gathered the man's belongings and moved him toward the rear of the car, stepping over injured passengers and around broken seats and tables.

"Anyone who could move was off the train in a couple of seconds," Hugo explained. "There weren't many people uninjured on that train."

Someone helped Hugo get Frank to the ground near the right-of-way. Frank was bleeding from a vertical cut that began between his eyes and ended at the back of his head. Once they were sitting, Hugo noticed an injured woman beside him. Her shoulder was injured, and she was bleeding from several places. He discovered her name was Judy.

While Hugo watched over Frank and Judy, he realized residents who lived along the train tracks were on the scene, helping the injured. Hugo estimated they waited for an hour until the first emergency medical technician (EMT) approached the three.

"I imagine it was an ordeal for the EMTs as well," Hugo believes. Finally, EMTs put Frank on a back board and took him to a nearby park, now a temporary triage center. The EMTs walked Judy to the same center and put her on a back board.

That was the first time Hugo had a chance to check himself out. Besides a pounding headache, he was fine. He had a small amount of blood on his clothes, but it wasn't his.

Hugo made his way to the triage center and was taken by ambulance to Chatsworth High School at approximately 9:30 p.m., to be examined by doctors. His wife was waiting at the high school, but security wouldn't allow her into the auditorium where Hugo waited.

By 10:30 p.m., he was released. He had talked to his wife several times by then, as well as his mother and friends.

"When Lori and I were reunited at Chatsworth High School, we held each other longer, tighter and more intensely than we ever had in the 12 years we've known each other and the ten years we've been married," Hugo remembers.

But they couldn't leave for home just yet. Because his wife had arrived at the scene so quickly, her car was within the road block area and couldn't be moved. It took some cajoling to get the car released and the Hugos heading home.

In 20 minutes they were home and Hugo asked himself, "What the hell

happened today?" He felt thankful to be alive, thankful he wasn't injured more than he was and struck by what he had seen.

"What I saw was horrific," he said. "Horror films don't do it justice. I quit drinking five years ago, but I drank two beers that night."

Hugo, who has worked for Metro for six years, had a sore back and neck for a couple of days and a headache for a week, but now, fortunately, he has no residual pain.

The first Wednesday after the collision—his first day back to work—Hugo took the same Metrolink train he always takes. He insists he had no problem climbing on the train again. "If you get in a car wreck, you don't start walking," he said.

Looking back on the crash, Hugo believes better safety measures need to be pursued, particularly the technology to keep two trains from entering the same space. He also believes public transportation vehicles should be outfitted with seat belts, pointing to the number of people who were thrown from their seats by flying out of their seats or being hit by flying passengers and debris.

"Mine as well as Lori's thoughts and prayers go out to those who perished and those who lost friends and family," Hugo emphasized. "We wish for a speedy and healthy recovery for those who were injured."

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Jacqueline Martinez sits before the one-room library where she taught English and Spanish.

## Metro Intern Tests Her Teaching Skills in Thin Air of Peruvian Andes

- Future English teacher practices her skills thousands of miles away

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 25, 2008) Jacqueline Martinez spent the summer in a cold, oxygen-starved city in the Peruvian Andes, teaching low-income students who often arrived to class without shoes and spoke a dialect she could not understand.

She loved it.

Martinez, an administrative intern, wants a career teaching English as a foreign language. Hoping to practice her skills—and do a little sightseeing—Martinez traveled 20 hours by airplane to Cusco, a city in the southeast Andes of [Peru](#), approximately 11,000 feet above sea level.

Martinez expected to teach English to Spanish speakers. Because many of her students spoke the local Quechua dialect, however, she spent part of her eight weeks instructing her students on reading and writing Spanish.

"They tried teaching us [Quechua], but it's not a dialect that is written or read," she said laughing. "I couldn't understand it at all."

Martinez taught in three institutions. One was an adult/trade school called Cipermum, which instructs low-income students in the skills necessary to work in the tourism industry—by far the largest source of jobs in Cusco.



Most of her students, ranging in eight to 60, were already working for various restaurants.

She also worked in the Tesoritos private preschool, where she taught colors, songs, numbers and greetings to three- to five-year-olds.



The one-room library where Jacqueline Martinez taught English and Spanish sits in the middle of this field. The Andes are in the background.

Closest to her heart, however, was teaching at a one-room, 10-foot-by-10-foot library begun by her host mother, Maria Chacon Chavez. The library—Martinez describes it as basically a shack sitting in the center of a field—is run by volunteers and features, by Martinez's estimate, approximately 50 books.

After their school day ends, students ages three to 15 go to the library to learn how to read in Spanish and English. The library also feeds them, provides toothbrushes and toothpaste so they can brush their teeth, and gives them vitamins.

Martinez was at first shocked by the number shoeless students who arrived at the library. But what touched her most deeply—besides her satisfaction from teaching—was how grateful the students were for even small items. She remembers students happily using pencils only two inches long.

"Their faces say it all," said Martinez. "They are so grateful for everything." Everything the library uses, she noted, came from donations from volunteers.



Jacqueline Martinez taught students ages three through five at this private preschool school.

Martinez believes the most important thing she brought her students was English conversation. She believes their textbooks were awful, teaching English that English speakers do not really speak.

Martinez had traveled before, although she had never been “embedded in another culture,” an experience she recommends to anyone. Even walking down the streets of Cusco enveloped her in a very different culture.

She recalls the distinct local smells: *antikucho*, basically kabobs, cooking on small grills along the streets of Cusco; the smell of mud; and the scent of insect repellent on the tourists. “That was one smell that wouldn’t go away!” she added.

She also remembers the mix of city dwellers and residents from the outlying areas, half of them dressed in traditional clothing, the other half dressed as Metro employees would dress on a casual Friday.

Even transportation was different. Sometimes, instead of walking three hours between her host home and the her schools, Martinez would take a *combi*, a mini-van that dropped her within a block of the schools or her host home. Her *combi* was named Batman and had a large Batman symbol on the vehicle’s exterior.

And Martinez found few of her favorite foods: There were no tortillas or beans or chilies. She did learn, however, that there are 400 varieties of potatoes. She suspects she ate every variety.

“I’m not going to be going near any potatoes for a while,” she said laughing.

Two things she would like to forget were the altitude and the cold—she was in Peru during the Southern Hemisphere’s winter. Residents told her she was in Peru during one of the coldest winters ever.

At night, shallow pools of water froze. Yet, during the day, she had to wear sun block because the sun’s rays were so intense.

As beautiful as the country was, its altitude was her greatest opponent, especially her first three weeks. "You'd take three steps and you'd already be practically coughing up a lung. At the end it was easier, but [even] when we were acclimated, we couldn't walk fast. We couldn't run."

Still, she found it difficult to leave, especially to leave her students. "It was more than a teacher/students relationship; it was a friendship," she said." Some of her students email her to ask her when she is coming back.

She plans a donation drive to send back basic items such as vitamins, cough medicine, medicine and toothpaste to Cusco by the end of October.

"They love life," she said, explaining her affection for the people of Cusco. "Most of the people I met came from lower-income families. They live with their parents and their uncles and their aunts all in one house. Even though they have very few things . . . they were still happy. They appreciated everything."


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## Metro Board Urges New Safety Measures for Metrolink

- [Joint motion](#) (combined items 49 and 50) by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Supervisor Michael Antonovich, Supervisor Don Knabe, Mayor Ara Najarian, and Director Richard Katz on enhanced commuter rail safety. (PDF)

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 25, 2008) The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Board today unanimously adopted a motion that recommends a series of immediate safety improvements that it wants the Metrolink Board, operator of Southern California's commuter rail system, to pursue to prevent future train accidents.

The motion's key recommendations are to immediately staff Metrolink locomotive cabs with two qualified engineers, implement "Automatic Train Stop" technology on trains already equipped to handle the technology, and install video cameras and digital video recorders or equivalent technology to monitor engineers and other staff inside locomotive cabs.

"This tragedy requires that we do everything we can to improve the safety of our commuter rail system," said L.A. City Mayor and Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, who led the motion. "We must implement as many safeguards as possible and create redundant layers of safety for the protection of transit riders throughout Southern California."

The motion calls for Metrolink to immediately establish a "Commuter Rail Safety Peer Review Panel" to evaluate Metrolink's existing safety plans and operating procedures, as well as to review such plans for freight lines. Freight rail operators will be challenged also to employ Automatic Train Stop technology for their trains that operate in the Metrolink service area.

Metro will immediately identify and program \$5 million to install a positive train control system and/or other effective collision avoidance system within Los Angeles County and report back to the Metro Board in October with cost estimates and other requirements. Metro will also work with Metrolink's other funding partners in four other counties of Southern California to secure, identify and program funds to implement a collision avoidance system in their own region served by Metrolink.

Positive train control systems prevent train collisions and over-speed accidents by using global positioning systems (GPS) and automatic control systems to override mistakes made by human operators. Positive train controls are considered particularly important in regions like Southern California where Metrolink commuter trains share the same track as freight trains.

The National Transportation Safety Board estimates that implementing positive train controls on the nation's 100,000-mile rail network would cost \$2.3 billion, or \$23,000 per mile. Locally, the Los Angeles County portion of the Metrolink service area includes nearly 186 miles. Accordingly, a positive train control system could cost approximately \$4.3

million to implement within the county.

Metrolink's CEO would also be responsible for developing a comprehensive commuter and freight rail master plan that evaluates and recommends additional safety technology and infrastructure upgrades.

The motion also asks that Metro staff report back next month on the feasibility, including implementation and costs, for installing shoulder harness/lap belts on all Metrolink trains.

Additional recommendations include official "support" positions on federal legislation to install positive train control and other collision avoidance systems nationally and to provide federal assistance to families in rail passenger accidents. The motion includes several legislative advocacy efforts intended to increase commuter train safety throughout the Metrolink network.

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## [ Web Tips 101 ] by Vivian Tran



Vivian Tran is the Communications Manager of Web Services.

Got a question about the Web? Click here to [Ask Viv!](#)

Editor's Note: Thank you for your wonderful responses to the new Web Tips 101 column we started for the first time last week on *myMetro.net*. This week we discuss how content gets updated to Metro's websites – metro.net (public) and the Intranet (internal only).

(Sept. 25, 2008) Today's column is about how to make a web request to:

- Update an existing webpage
- Create a new metro.net webpage
- Establish a new Intranet website

To update an existing webpage or to create a new metro.net webpage requires – surprise! – a Web Update Request Form. We also refer to these forms as "white sheets" for the web. Most departments work with an account executive for all web requests. Metro's five senior account executives are Jeff Ringsrud, Elizabeth McGowan, Yvonne Price, Omark Holmes and Robin O'Hara. The AEs handle quite a range of projects, including the coordination of all web materials that need to get posted online. Your AE also would help you complete the Web Update Request Form. Please contact your AE or myself if you have any web update requests.

To request for a new Intranet (internal only) website, go to <http://intranet1/> and look for the hot link called "Forms Online." When you click on the link, you'll see a category called "Intranet." Find the online form called "Creating an Intranet Web Page." Please complete this form and submit it to me.

Next week ... Copyright issues on the Web.





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For more information on Measure R, visit the Metro web site at [www.metro.net/measurer](http://www.metro.net/measurer).

Governor Signs AB 2321, Measure R Now Goes Before Voters

By DAVE SOTERO

(Sept. 26, 2008) Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed AB 2321, legislation that authorizes the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to place a half-cent sales tax increase ballot measure before voters Nov. 4, 2008.

Measure R is expected to provide the local resources to finance new transportation projects and accelerate those already in the pipeline. Over 30 years, it is projected to generate \$40 billion for traffic congestion relief projects including bus and rail expansion, street and highway improvements, commuter rail upgrades and other transportation projects and programs. According to the private nonprofit Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), Measure R would cost residents an average of \$25 per person each year.

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George B. Parks, center, was the subject of a tribute by the Metro Choir during the Black History Month celebration February 27, 2008. The Metro Choir will pay tribute to his memory at services scheduled for Tuesday.

### George B. Parks dies at 83; County Counsel legal eagle was a national figure on the basketball court and in the Court of Law.

- Funeral services will be held at 10. a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 30, in the Sanctuary of the First A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(September 26, 2008) George B. Parks, an attorney who worked in his retirement years as a paralegal and law clerk in Metro's County Counsel office, died peacefully in his sleep Tuesday night at his home in West Los Angeles. He was 83 years old. Parks joined the County Counsel office in 1992 and served in various capacities under contract and as a County employee.

Parks was born in Lebanon, Kentucky on Feb. 18, 1925. He attended North Carolina College before enrolling at Howard University School of Law, graduating in 1948. He earned his Master of Laws (LL.M) at the George Washington University School of Law in 1951.

Entering private practice at the firm of Coleman, Parks and Washington, his first law partner was Walter Washington, who later became the first African-American mayor of Washington, D.C.

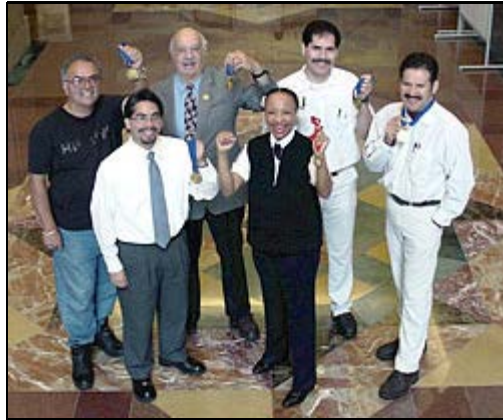
Daughter Paula Parks, a professor of English at Bakersfield College, describes her father: "He was a kind man, committed to his community and family." Growing up in Los Angeles, she recalls his playful, good-humored nature. "It was great my dad was so tall. When I was little, I would sit on his shoulders so I could see everything. And, I could always

find him in crowds. He'd raise his hand and go 'Toot! Toot!' You couldn't miss him."



George Parks with L.A. Marathon medals from 2002, at left, and 2001, below.

A lifelong athlete, Parks took on four L.A. Marathons in his later years, finishing the 2001 and 2002 marathons as a walker in under 8 hours.



Venice Division 6 Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown was Paula's roommate in college. She, too, has fond memories of her friend's father who later became a fellow employee at Metro. "He was a joy to work with. Good sense of humor! There was a lightness about him," she said. "When he knew I was in the building, he would bring me one of his roses he always brought in for everybody from his garden."

Everything is embarrassing in junior high and Parks didn't let his daughter off lightly. "Dad was driving the car pool, and there I was with all my friends in the car and he'd be playing his religious music really loud and singing along really loud," she said.

His love of gospel music and song continued throughout his life. Until his declining health held him at bay during the last few months of

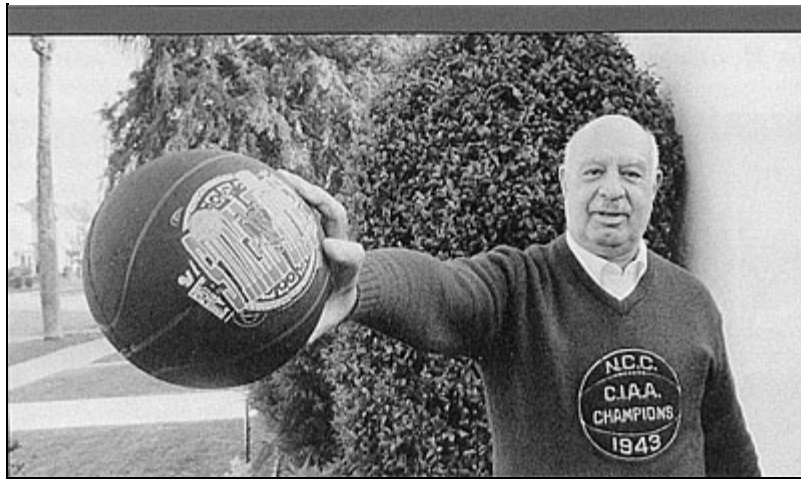
his life, he was an active member of the Metro Choir, who honored him in a special tribute at the annual Black History Month celebration in February 2008.

"Mr. George Parks was a gift to the Metro Choir," said Metro Choir director Renee Willis, appreciative of the clear baritone voice he brought to the choir. "For as long as I can remember, Mr. Parks took the time to bring us fresh roses every Monday. This weekly act of kindness made my day special."

While attending North Carolina College, Parks was a 19-year-old starting guard on the high-scoring North Carolina Eagles team. The Eagles, a basketball powerhouse in the southeast United States, was an all-Black team from a segregated college about to make history. Through a series of events that included a cultural exchange program with nearby Duke University, and against the state's Jim Crow laws that prevented contests between the races, a clandestine basketball game was arranged between the Eagles and the all-White Duke Medical School team in 1944.

The Eagles won the game — 88 to 44. But the precedent-setting event was a well-kept secret for 52 years until the story was uncovered in the *New York Times Magazine* and on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" in 1996.

George Parks  
remembers  
the historic  
1944 North  
Carolina



College basketball game against the all-White Duke Medical School team in the May 1996 issue of *MTA Family* magazine

As Scott Ellsworth, a former Smithsonian Institution historian and author of the *New York Times Magazine* article, described the game: "Henry 'Big Dog' Thomas was a top scorer, Parks was hot under the boards snagging rebound after rebound."

The Eagles-Duke game was not the only notable "first" achievement in Parks' life. He was the first African-American to enroll in the National University of Law Division of George Washington University. In the 1960s, he was the first African-American to teach Real Estate law at UCLA extension. And, he was the first African-American to be elected president of the Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce.

When Parks was elected president of the Crenshaw Chamber of Commerce, the fight against integration of the community had intensified. As president, Parks bridged the gap of racial misunderstanding and bigotry, a local newspaper reported. "He had the quality, personality, patience and understanding that brought the competing forces together."

In his capacity as chamber president, Parks organized the first Neighborhood Watch Program in Los Angeles.

Parks had a long and distinguished career in law, education, and community service. He was a law professor and assistant dean of the Glendale University College of Law and the South Bay University College of Law and was a member of the Board of Regents of California Lutheran College.

He was the founder of the New Frontier Democratic Club and served the City of Los Angeles for 10 years as a member of the Quality and Productivity Commission.

Parks is listed in four editions of Who's Who: the National Registry of Who's Who 1999; Who's Who in America – 1994 Oxford Edition; Who's Who in American Law 1985-1986 and Who's Who Among Black Americans, 1985.

Parks is survived by his son William Parks of Los Angeles, daughter Paula Parks, son-in-law Dr. Bradford Anderson and grandchildren Christopher, 21, Alexis, 19, and Nathaniel, 16, of Bakersfield, California.

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 30, at First A.M.E. Church Sanctuary, located at 2270 S. Harvard Blvd, Los Angeles, 90018. For directions and information: 323.730.7750 or [www.famechurch.org](http://www.famechurch.org).

In lieu of flowers, mourners may make a donation to the George Parks

Memorial Scholarship Fund / Howard University School of Law, 2900 Van  
Ness Street – NW, Holycross Rm. 207 / Office of Development and Alumni  
Relations, Washington, DC 20008.

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## Services Scheduled for Victor Carlucci, a 12-Year Metro Employee

(Sept. 30, 2008) Oct. 2 services are planned for Victor Carlucci, a real estate officer, who died on Saturday, Sept. 27. He was 57 and had been seeking a liver transplant.

Carlucci, a San Dimas resident, started with Metro as a real estate assistant in February 1996.

According to Duncan Robb, a retired real estate manager and Carlucci's former supervisor, Carlucci graduated from Cal Poly Pomona with a bachelor's degree in engineering.

Robb and Carlucci worked together for 10 years at Metro, having worked together with Santa Fe Railway and the Catellus Development Corporation. Robb was instrumental in bringing Carlucci to Metro.

"He operated like a mini title company," said Robb. "He was Metro's title officer." Robb described Carlucci as a conscientious and thorough expert on the property Metro owns, particularly the property Metro has purchased from railroads, such as the land used for the Metro Orange Line and the Expo Line.

Besides preparing and reviewing legal descriptions and maintaining property records, Carlucci conducted painstaking research on the history of property, some purchased in the late 1880s.

"His extensive knowledge of railroad history and details gave him a specialized craft, which will be difficult to replace," said Diane Dominguez, senior real estate officer. "Although he was very quiet, he had a sense of humor."

"He was very helpful to everyone," said Stuart Ondeck, a Metro retiree who also worked with Carlucci at Metro and Santa Fe Railway.

A passionate railroad enthusiast, Carlucci sat on the Board of Directors for the Pacific Railroad Society and served as an active volunteer at the Orange Empire Railway Museum.

Robb, who described Carlucci as "a cowboy at heart," recalled Carlucci's devotion to his quarter horses, Little Mae and Spanky.

Carlucci, who was born in Pasadena, is survived by his parents, Victor, Sr. and Kitty, as well as younger siblings Joe and Linda.

Services will be held Thursday, October 2, 2008, at Calvary Mortuary,



Victor Carlucci, who died Sept. 27, braved the elements at Allen Station as a volunteer for the Metro Gold Line's first New Year's Day operation on Jan. 1, 2004.



4201 Whittier Boulevard, Los Angeles, 90023 (323.261.3106). A viewing will be held from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. A Mass will be celebrated at 11 a.m.

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## Wellness Program Advocate Continues Shrinking Herself to a Better Life

- Checking in with Rebecca Benitez reveals a new person in the mirror

By Ned Racine, Editor

(Sept. 30, 2008). When we last checked in with Rebecca Benitez, San Gabriel Valley Division 9 bus operator, in late [June 2008](#), she had lost 160 pounds, nearly 100 of those since joining Metro's Wellness Program.



Rebecca Benitez, a San Gabriel Valley Division 9 bus operator, has lost over 100 pounds since integrating the Metro Wellness Program into her life.



It would be understandable if she had added a couple of pounds or simply maintained her weight. Understandable, but inaccurate.

After losing 30 additional pounds since June, Benitez has been getting to know the new person who looks back at her in the mirror.

Free of the blood pressure and diabetes medicine she formerly took, Benitez continues to credit Amy Lopez, Health and Wellness Program manager, with spurring her remarkable improvement in health.

"It was her dedication that made my dedication," Benitez said. "I had to give that much more to show her I was giving as much as she was. She's very persistent. Without her, I wouldn't be where I am."

When she first came to the El Monte division, however, Benitez wasn't so open to Lopez' persuasion. "I thought everything [Amy] said was hogwash," Benitez recalled.

But when a manager told her she was obese and her weight might affect her career at Metro, the comment made her think.

"That was pretty traumatic," Benitez recalled, mentioning that she still feels insulted by the remark. "I never had someone say something like

that to me.”

“I have always been extremely big, but it never has stopped me from doing something,” said the 25-year Metro veteran, recalling that she choose some activities just so she could show that a large woman could do them.

To remake herself, Benitez reshaped her life. She believes the biggest change she made was in altering her eating habits. She describes herself as a former “sugar addict” capable of eating five candy bars, one after the other. Now she is a conscientious food label reader.

“It’s a big change; it not only affects me, it affects everyone in this house,” Benitez said. For example, instead of cakes or candies, she buys fruit. For Mother’s Day her husband Peter bought her sugar-free candy.

“There is nothing in this house anymore!” her children complain, missing their snacks. Benitez turns a deaf ear.

The second half of Benitez’s reshaped life is regular exercise, something she never embraced before. During the break in her split shift, she walks, bikes, uses the elliptical machine and the treadmills at Division 9. And with less weight bearing on her artificial knees, Benitez plans on walking the upcoming Diabetes Walk 5K on Nov. 1 and the March of Dimes 5K next year.

Besides better health, her weight loss brought small pleasures, such as buying dresses off the rack. Before, she hated shopping for clothes. When she was bigger, she made her own dresses, which her daughter and son called Mu Mus, shapeless dresses Benitez wore very large. Now, she loves to buy something sleek in her current size.

In fact, Benitez currently wears the same size as her daughter Annie, 21, which has its good and bad points. Benitez recently bought a “very nice dress,” which her daughter admired and immediately wanted to wear. “Do you mind if I wear it *first*?” Benitez asked, retelling the story with a long laugh.

A recent trip to Disneyland with her husband revealed another small pleasure—Benitez rode a rollercoaster. That was the first time in years she was able to enjoy an amusement park ride. When she was larger, she could not pull down the restraining bar over her lap.

Even her work day has changed because of Benitez’s weight loss. Some of her infrequent passengers do not recognize her; she no longer needs to push her seat back to create space between her and the steering wheel.

While enjoying all the benefits her weight loss has brought her, Benitez sometimes feels she is borrowing someone else’s body. “Where did all these bones come from?” she sometimes asks herself.

And when she sees herself in the mirror, she still sometimes asks herself, “Who is that woman? I see me and I don’t know who ‘she’ is yet,” Benitez explained. “I hope my personality didn’t change; I don’t think it has.”

And while she continues to make adjustments to her diminished profile, she can take solace in her daughter’s reaction to a recent photo of her mother: “Oh, my God, my mother’s a hottie!”



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## BOARD REVIEW



### Board Recommends Metrolink Initiate Immediate Safety Improvements; Takes Steps Forward on Several Major Metro Initiatives

In this report:

- [Item 5. Authorize \\$110 Million in Advanced Funding](#)
- [Item 7. Authorize \\$290 Million To Support Congestion Reduction](#)
- [Item 28. Purchase Armored Vault Vans](#)
- [Item 31. Purchase of CNG Engines and Repair Parts](#)
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- [Item 33. Procure Light Rail Rehab and Repair Equipment](#)
- [Item 35. Approve Initial Study of Union Division](#)

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Sept. 30, 2008) The Metro Board addressed the Sept. 12 Metrolink crash at its Sept. 25 meeting by unanimously adopting a [motion](#) that recommends immediate safety improvements that it wants the Metrolink Board to pursue to prevent future train accidents.

The motion's key recommendations are to immediately staff Metrolink locomotive cabs with two qualified engineers, implement "Automatic Train Stop" technology on trains already equipped to handle the technology, and install video cameras and digital video recorders or equivalent technology to monitor engineers and other staff inside locomotive cabs.

"This tragedy requires that we do everything we can to improve the safety of our commuter rail system," said Metro Board Chair Antonio Villaraigosa, who led the motion. "We must implement as many safeguards as possible and create redundant layers of safety for the protection of transit riders throughout Southern California."

The approved motion also includes an amendment from Director Bernard Parks, asking that lessons learned from the Metrolink safety investigation that might be applied to Metro Rail operations be reported to the Board at its October meeting.

#### Item 5, Provide \$110 Million in Advance Funding.

The Board voted to provide \$110 million in advance funding for projects on Interstate 5, Interstate 10 and Interstate 405. The funding would allow the projects to proceed until the California Transportation Commission (CTC) resolves its funding shortfall.

The Interstate 5 project would add carpool and mixed-flow lanes from the Orange County line to Interstate 605. For Interstate 10, carpool lanes would be added between Interstate 605 and State Route 57.

The Board also approved a \$48 million funding commitment for the Interstate 405 Northbound Carpool Lane project and entering into an agreement with Cal Trans to use those funds for that project.

**Item 7, Provide \$290 Million to Support Congestion Reduction.**

The Board agreed to provide \$290.6 million in funding to support congestion reduction projects, part of the Los Angeles Region Congestion Reduction Demonstration Initiative. This is in keeping with a Memorandum of Understanding with the United States Department of Transportation.

Approval of this item authorizes Metro staff to negotiate and execute funding agreements with local agencies to implement demonstration projects.

These projects include enhancements to park-and-ride facilities, additional bus stops and rail stations along Interstate 10 and Interstate 110 and purchase of 57 buses for Metro and municipal operators. These buses would allow increased service along the high-occupancy toll lane corridors.

**Item 28, Purchase Armored Vault Vans.**

The Board approved purchase of six armored vault vans for a total not to exceed \$275,770, including sales tax.

The vans will be used by Revenue Collection to gather revenue from ticket vending machines throughout the Metro Rail system and the Orange Line. The new vehicles would replace current vehicles approaching six years of service or 100,000 miles while offering increased protection for Revenue Collection staff.

**Item 31, Purchase of CNG Engines and Repair Parts.**

To continue the rehabilitation of Metro's bus fleet, the Board approved purchasing 140 Cummins L10 CNG engines and the parts to repair them.

The new engines will be used to replace aging engines in the Neoplan CNG buses. In many cases, the engines have exceeded the manufacturer's warranty period.

The firm fixed-price contract for approximately \$5.4 million includes sales tax and an option to purchase up to 60 additional engines, if funding is available. The option would not exceed \$2.4 million, including sales tax.

**Item 32, Increased Contract Cost for Elevator and Escalator Repair.**

The Board increased the cost of the contract that procures elevator and escalator repair for Metro's transit facilities. The total contract value would increase by almost \$4.8 million, to approximately \$35 million.

Although Metro staff reports that "up time" rates for the elevators and escalators has risen since the five-year contract was awarded in January 2006, a high rate of vandalism to elevators and escalators has exceeded contract requirements.

**Item 33, Procurement of Light Rail Rehab and Repair Equipment.**

Focusing on repair equipment used to service the overhead power sources of Metro's light rail lines, the Board established a budget of \$4.7 million to purchase specialized maintenance trucks, if funding is available..

The firm fixed-price contract would purchase three heavy-duty high-rail



platform trucks to rehabilitate and maintain the overhead systems and would replace current equipment.

**Item 35, Approving Initial Study of Union Division.**

The Board approved the initial study for the Union Division Bus Maintenance and Operations Facility, a project that will include expansion of the existing Material Support and Services Center (MSSC) near Metro headquarters.

The project includes construction of a public facility totaling approximately 360,000 square feet. Contained in the facility would be a three-story parking structure, a vehicle bridge for ingress/egress, a fueling station, a Central Cash Counting Facility and an expanded MSSC Building 1.

As part of this action, the Board amended the Fiscal Year 2009 Facilities-Operation budget to add approximately \$9.5 million and two full-time equivalent positions (a project manager and senior engineer) for project management and engineering support.

—Dave Sotero contributed to this report