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This is the first unit of the three-unit grinding train. This unit carries most all the controls and computers that set the pattern and angles of the stones to shape the rail.

*Photos by José Ubaldo*

## Wayside Systems Team Introduces Eastside Extension Rail to the Daily Grind

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Oct. 29, 2008) In another sign that the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension is getting its ducks in a row, the Wayside Systems team has been preparing the line's rails for testing with rail cars.

Although the light-rail line is not scheduled to begin carrying passengers until mid-2009, weeks of tests are run before then. This week's work involved grinding the new rails, which accomplishes three things:

- Removes any oxidation from the rails
- Shapes the rail so they fit well with the rail car wheels (reducing noise and wear)
- Ensures the electronics that link the rail with the Rail Operations Center work efficiently



The second unit of the grinding train sucks up the metal shavings created by the grinding operation. The black skirt (left) covers all the units to control dust and sparks from grinding.



Center is one of the 16 round stones (eight on each side) used to grind the rail. Here the stone is in the up position prior to grinding. The computer will lift the stone at the end of each pass.

"We're one of the few agencies in the nation that has a nice, robust grinding program," said Jeff Root, wayside systems manager. "We maintain the curve and ball of our rail to conform to the curvature of the wheel itself, which allows us to get more wheel life and more life out of our rail."

An onboard computer programmed for each location being ground determines the number of passes and the angle of the grinding stones that are needed to achieve the correct profile. With a well-fitted wheel running along a well-fitted rail, passengers feel less side-to-side action and hear less noise, according to Root.

The Wayside Systems four-person crew expects to finish work on the street-level rail by Oct. 31. Then the team begins grinding the subway section of the six-mile-long line Sunday night, Nov. 2.