



[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

- [Safety](#)
- [Pressroom](#) (web)
- [CEO Hotline](#)
- [Metro Projects](#)
- [Facts at a Glance](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Events Calendar](#)
- [Research Center/ Library](#)
- [Metro Cafe](#) (pdf)
- [Metro Classifieds](#)
- [Retirement Round-up](#)

Metro Info

- [Strategic Plan](#) (pdf)
- [Org Chart](#) (pdf)
- [Policies](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Help Desk](#)
- [Intranet Policy](#)

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at 2-4357
[E-Mail Webmaster](#)

myMetro.net archives | Articles from November 2008

Thursday, November 25

[It's official now:](#) Metro's first 'green' transit facility building is gold.
[Obituary:](#) Services are scheduled for Tommie Dunmore, 36-year Metro veteran

Thursday, November 20

[Sylmar Firestorm](#) Ravages Homes of Two Metro Employees
[Metro Makes Strides](#) in Safety Measures During the Great Shakeout
[Metro's 13th Annual](#) Holiday Gift-Giving Drive Begins Monday

Thursday, November 19

[Graduating Class](#) of New Train Operators Adds 14 to Metro Rail Ranks
[November Agendas:](#) Board Committees to review next steps for Metro Red Line Station Canopies, Meeting State Mandates to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Prop 1B Funds
[Public Transit Helps](#) Recession-Strapped Commuters Save

Thursday, November 13

[Metro Security Officer's Son](#) Shot and Killed After Altercation
[Memorial Service](#) Planned for David Duran
[Metro San Gabriel Valley](#) salutes 'All Veterans' at Traditional Veteran's Day Ceremony
[Metro Minute:](#) As a veteran, what are you thinking of this Veteran's Day?
[Appreciation Breakfast](#) Thanks Metro Volunteers for Spreading Metro Message

Thursday, November 12

[Happy Trails](#) to You, Metro – myMetro.net Editor Ned Racine departs
[Benefits Open Enrollment Ends](#) Nov. 24 for Non-Contract, AFSCME, Teamster Employees
[Division 3 Welcomes Back](#) Operator After Seven Months in Iraq

Thursday, November 6

[Scenes from a Metro Halloween](#)
[Metro Board Members](#) Thank Voters for Approving Measure R
[Transportation Summit](#) Promotes Student Dialogue With Transit Experts

Thursday, November 5

[CEO UpDate:](#) CEO Roger Snoble's Statement to Employees on Measure 'R' Approval by County Voters
[18-Year-Old Tagger](#) Arrested for \$100,000 in Damages to Metro Vehicles
[Citizen Edith:](#) First-time voter goes to the polls

Thursday, November 4

[South Bay Poll Worker](#) Rises Early to Take Part in History
[Nov. 13 Earthquake Exercise](#) Offers Record-Setting Opportunity, Life-Saving Practice
[Back to top](#)

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Citizen Edith

- It's been a longtime coming, but new citizen Edith Goff-Youngblood made it to the polls and cast her first vote in an historic election.



Edith Goff-Youngblood with Maggie Cook, customer information agent and volunteer voter registrar, share a patriotic moment. Cook registered Goff-Youngblood on her break.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Nov. 4, 2008) At 8:30 a.m. on Election Day, Nov. 4, 2008, Edith Goff-Youngblood waited in line at 116th Street Elementary School. Goff-Youngblood, who was sworn in as an American citizen on August 28, was about to cast her first vote.

A nearly 30-year employee of Metro, Edith Goff-Youngblood, a senior customer service officer, was seven years old when she and her family fled the dissipation left by Hurricane Hattie in her native county of Belize (then British Honduras.)

Her parents, maternal grandmother, three sisters and two brothers, traveled by bus all the way through Mexico and the southwestern United States to Los Angeles, where waiting relatives helped to relocate the family.

Her father, a former policeman in Belize City, and her mother established a life for their fledgling family in Central Los Angeles, residing next door to the relatives who welcomed them to California.

As the family took root in their adopted country, citizenship was prized by the siblings as a rite of passage when they reached the legal age of 21. But for the young Edith Goff, it wasn't so easy. "I took the longest route of all my family," she said.

A career, marriage and responsibilities imposed a web of commitments. And then came a snaggle of bureaucratic mishaps. Clerks couldn't verify her identification. Her legal name was the same as her mother's. Documents had to be verified. "Applying for citizenship became a series of stops and starts for the last seven years," she said.



Edith Goff-Youngblood emerges from the ceremony with a flag and an engraved certificate.

Her fortitude was rewarded Aug. 28, when Edith Goff-Youngblood stood with some 18,000 others at the Los Angeles Convention Center to be sworn in as an American citizen.

After the ceremony, the new citizens were ushered out of the arena armed with a flag and certificate of citizenship. Edith made her way up the ramp and into the Los Angeles day, where she was cheered by a contingent of co-workers, family and friends organized by her boss, David Sutton, Director of Metro Commute Services.



Edith Goff-Youngblood took this photo at her citizenship ceremony at the Los Angeles Convention Center, where 18,000 new citizens were sworn in Aug. 28.

Among them in spirit was her friend and co-worker, Maggie Cook, who was waiting for the new citizen back at Metro Headquarters. Maggie, who just happens to be a volunteer voter registrar, had already enlisted Edith to sign on the dotted line as soon she became eligible to vote.

"I wanted to cry, I was so proud of her," said Cook. "One hurdle after another, she stuck through it."

It was on Sept.11 that Edith actually registered to vote. A group of friends and supporters, including Edith's sister Alice Goff, gathered in the Metro Café where Maggie Cook was set to register the new citizen.

Maggie Cook registers Edith Goff-Youngblood to vote cheered on by sister Alice Goff, at left, supportive boss David Sutton,



and friends
Marie Tervalon
and Bertha
Bruner.

It was as big a triumph for Cook as it was for Edith. "I've been wanting to register Edith ever since we met," said Cook. "I've been waiting for this moment." So intent was Cook's mission that she even beat out Edith's sister, another active volunteer voter registrar and president of AFSCME Local 3090, for the honor.

Cook, who has registered hundreds over the years in her volunteer work for a number of civic and union organizations, shares the eager anticipation of the freedom to vote with the new citizens she registers. "More than 90 percent of new citizens vote the first opportunity they can," she said. Although she didn't personally register everyone in the region, she proudly points out that Los Angeles County has more registered voters than 30 U.S. states.

Asked if citizenship has changed her life, Edith points to the small details, such as filling out applications that ask if one is a citizen. "I can finally check the 'yes' box!" And, she is applying for a U.S. passport, another feat most of us take for granted.

But first and foremost is voting. "I've never voted before, anywhere. I was a child when I moved here so this is thrilling," she said, adding, "I'm excited about the candidate I'm voting for!"



Intern Julio Nunez and Edith Goff-Youngblood rally around the flag after voting for the first time on Election Day.

For Goff-Youngblood, issues of the economy, health care, education were motivating factors in the voting booth. "It's the ability to make a difference," she said.

Back in the office, Edith shared this moment with intern Julio Nunez, a native of El Salvador, who became a citizen some three months prior to Edith.

The two had promised to vote in the morning and share what each

experienced at the polling place. Nunez, pleased and proud, congratulated

Goff-Youngblood. "We compared notes before we voted and checked on each other afterwards," he said. "I am happy to be voting."

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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South Bay Poll Worker Rises Early to Take Part in History

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Nov. 4, 2008) Lynda Reed, executive secretary, South Bay Service Sector, has already been at work for hours today, forgoing her Metro job as an executive secretary for the South Bay Service Sector. She's helping her neighbors vote.

Lynda, who recently celebrated her 30th anniversary working for Metro, is one of the poll clerks at Precinct 2 in Rancho Dominguez (near Cal State Dominguez), where she will be working from 5:45 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

"I decided I wanted to be part of history, part of change, and this is my contribution," said Lynda, who will be serving as a poll worker for the first time.

Is she excited? "Yes, yes, yes. Because I've always been an absentee voter. I'm going to be in bed by 9 p.m. [Monday night] to be ready for tomorrow."

As part of her contribution to this voting season, Lynda has spent the last three weeks staffing a phone bank in Carson for one of the presidential candidates. And, in part because she always voted by absentee ballot, she finds herself answering questions she had never needed to ask herself.

Today, Lynda will be one of seven polling clerks. Because poll workers rotate tasks during their long day, Lynda may serve as a line clerk (if the line grows long), ballot box clerk, roster clerk, street clerk (checking voters' addresses), provisional clerk and curbside clerk (who takes a locked ballot box to voters unable to reach the polling place). There is also a supervising clerk, who has served as a poll worker before.

Lynda, who was the South Bay Sector's Employee of the Month in September 2008, reminds voters to avoid wearing campaign paraphernalia. They likely will be asked to remove it before they enter the polling place.

Lynda, also reminds voters that if they are in line at a polling place by 8 p.m., the polling place will remain open to allow them to vote.

To learn to be a poll worker, Lynda received two hours of training at the Carson Community Center. Training included a video and two study-guide books. She even learned how to assemble a ballot box.

She also learned about the four types of voters likely to arrive at Precinct



Lynda Reed is spending the day in a Precinct 2 voting place. Photo by Myrine White

2 today: active, inactive, provisional and new.

Besides her pride at performing her civic duty, Lynda's mother and sister support her commitment. Lynda mother, in fact, has become a fan of day-to-day presidential campaign news on television.

"They were just proud and excited that I wanted to be part of it," Lynda said of her sister and mother.

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Nov. 13 Earthquake Exercise Offers Record-Setting Opportunity, Life-Saving Practice

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Nov. 4, 2008) If you've always wanted to set a record—something that would make the *Guinness Book of World Records*—your chance arrives on Nov. 13.

You won't have to swallow goldfish or join your friends squeezing into a Volkswagen Beetle. And you might end up saving your own life.

On Nov. 13, 10 a.m. to be exact, Metro will ask Gateway Tower employees to join in the [Great Southern California Shake Out](#), billed as the largest earthquake preparedness activity in U.S. history!

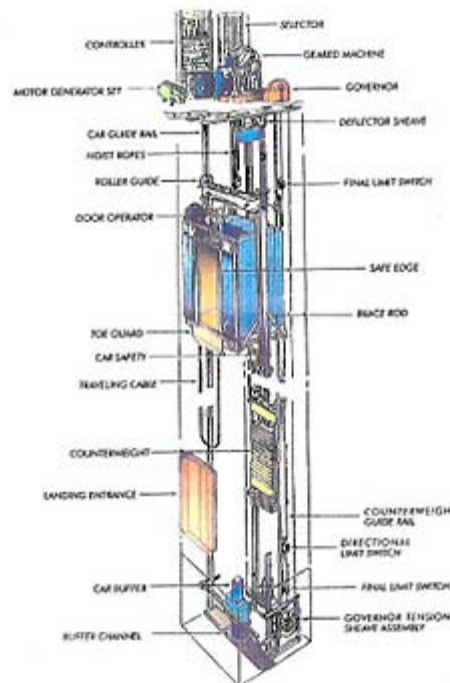
According to the Shake Out website, "millions of people in homes, schools, businesses, government offices, and public places all over Southern California will [Drop, Cover, and Hold On](#)," the standard exercise for protecting oneself from falling objects released by a temblor.

"It's very important for employees to participate because in a stressful situation, such as a seismic event, staff may begin to panic and forget something that hasn't been practiced," said Brian Soto, DEO, general services. "Practicing for emergency events will train the employees in what to do during and following the event."

One thing to do may involve staying put. "During an earthquake, many people are injured by falling building pieces," Soto said. "Often the safest place to be is inside a high-rise, particularly near the core of the building."

With predictions of The Big One seemingly on the lips of all geologists, the Great Southern California Shake Out hopes to encourage Southern California residents to cover and protect themselves at the first jolt of a quake, without waiting to learn if the earthquake is large. By the time of that realization, it might be too late to protect yourself.

Phyllis Meng, facilities maintenance supervisor, reminds Gateway Tower employees to Drop, Cover and Hold On whenever they feel an earthquake. She also reminds employees to move away from windows, even though



There is often a delay bringing elevators back in service after an earthquake because the equipment must be inspected before they can run.

the Gateway Tower windows hold safety glass designed to crumble rather than fragment.

“If you are in an elevator, sit down and hang on,” she adds. “Sometimes that’s all you can do.”

And following an earthquake in the Gateway Tower, Meng recommends a little patience.

Even though your area might seem unaffected, Building Services must inspect each floor and all the equipment throughout the building, including equipment on the roof. Elevators must be inspected before they can begin carrying passengers again. Those inspections take time.

Scott Norwood, emergency & homeland security preparedness manager, has other [earthquake tips](#) for home and business.

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Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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TSB investigators found these tagging tools and practice samples in an Inglewood home on Oct. 23. *Photo: LASD*

18-Year-Old Tagger Arrested for \$100,000 in Damages to Metro Vehicles

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Nov. 4, 2008) Transit Services Bureau (TSB) deputies arrested a prolific tagger on Oct. 23 and charged the 18-year-old with causing approximately \$100,000 in damage to Metro property.

Filed in Inglewood Juvenile Court (because the suspect committed the vandalism while a minor), the felony vandalism charge names Giovanni Gomez as the tagger using the moniker of "Hate."

Gomez was arrested at his Inglewood home. His mother was arrested at the home as well, and both were charged with contributing to the delinquency of a minor, Gomez' 11-year-old brother.

According to TSB Sgt. Chris Meadows, the suspect etched and painted the seats of buses and rail cars, prolifically damaging vehicles from multiple divisions.

"I saw his moniker on a high percentage of the buses I walked onto," said Meadows, recalling a particular tagged bus in the Walnut Park area. "Everywhere we went we saw this fellow's moniker."

Ironically, towering over the suspect's home, rising from a narrow yard beside the house, is a large billboard. Displayed on the billboard at the time of the arrest was an image from Metro's "opposites" advertising campaign.

Deputies suspect that Gomez is a member of the ECM tagging team, which has targeted the Harbor Gateway area.

Gomez was released on his own recognizance. According to Meadows, Gomez next appears in court on Nov. 21.



An 18-year-old tagging suspect was arrested at this Inglewood home for causing \$100,000 damage to Metro property. A billboard, which includes a Metro advertisement, sits n the property's side yard. Photo: LASD

[Home](#)[CEO Hotline](#)[Viewpoint](#)[Classified Ads](#)[Archives](#)[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

[Safety](#)[Pressroom](#) (web)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)[Policies](#)[Training](#)[Help Desk](#)[Intranet Policy](#)

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CEO UpDate

• CEO Roger Snoble's Statement to Employees on Measure 'R' Approval by County Voters



CEO Roger Snoble

Great news to report this morning following yesterday's election.

Measure "R", the half-cent sales tax to fund a myriad of public transportation projects across Los Angeles County, has been approved by the voters.

With 100 percent of precincts reporting, Measure "R" has the approval of 67.41 percent of voters, pushing it slightly over the two-thirds majority vote it needed to pass.

Congratulations to all of those who worked long and hard to see that this important measure appeared on the ballot for the voters to decide.

Special kudos to Matt Raymond and his communications team, to Michael Turner and our government relations staff, and Carol Inge and the planning department for their outstanding work on the measure.

This is great news for Metro and in light of its passage; we will be going back to the Board in January with an updated financial plan that will address multiple transportation improvement projects that will be funded through this important half-cent sales tax.

The voters of Los Angeles County have put their trust in us to deliver these important transportation projects and by their vote, they are confident that we can deliver. We must not let them down.

Passage of Measure "R" will truly get Los Angeles County moving again.

November 5, 2008



[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Accounting Zombies, Witches and Devils Move Oct. 31 into the Scary Column

(Nov. 6, 2008) Twenty employees participated in the frightening costume contest and 11 competed in the cubicle decoration contest. This was the first time Accounting had held either. -- *From Ned Racine*



Edina Pagadora (left), accounting supervisor, won 1st Place in the Accounting department's Halloween costume competition on Friday, October 31. Meline Nazarbegian, accounting manager, was one of the competition's judges. Beside her is Jo Ann Bartolome, senior accountant, and the leader of the team that organized the frightening costume competition.



The terrifying Cubicle Decoration Contest was won by the Accounts Payable group. Here are (from left) Nancy Untalan, document

image specialist; Angelica Aceves, document image specialist; and Luz García, accounting assistant. Jessica Smith, accounting assistant, was chasing goblins and unavailable for photographs.

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Pandemonium that nearly breaks out when the trick or treaters arrive at the Customer Service Call Center is quieted by the secret signal led by Director Gail Harvey in cahoots with Gateway Child Care Development Center Director Kimberly Tang.

Customer Service Annual Halloween Party Caps Traditional Parade of Goblins, Power Rangers and Cuddly Bears from the Gateway Child Care Development Center

- [Slide Show](#): First the parade in the lobby of Metro Headquarters, then the Call Center Party, where busy Customer Service agents get 15-minutes to hand out unbelievable amounts of candy.

By Gail M. Harvey
Special to myMetro.net

(Nov. 6, 2008) "The Pirates are coming! The Pirates are coming!" was the cry from Gail M. Harvey, Director, Customer Relations, during the Fourth Annual Halloween Party in the Customer Service Call Center, which was attended by some 40 costumed trick or treaters from the Gateway Child Care Development Center.

The special guests, for whom the annual bash is given, brought along their new director, Kimberly Tang, teachers, and some 20 parents.

The kids had more than 28 decorated cubicles to view before making their final decision and presenting the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes to Regina Ramirez, Jorja Jones and the team of cubicle-mates Jessica Ortega and Vanessa Hernandez, respectively. This year a "consolation" prize was given to Jackie Exeart, whose cubicle best depicted the theme.



Best-decorated and scariest cubicles awards went to Regina Ramirez, at left, Jorja Jones, third from left, and cubicle mates Jessica Ortega and Vanessa Hernandez, at right, who teamed up to decorate their side-by-side stations. Communications Manager Alonzo Williams is second from left.

There was also a costume contest and the “impartial” judges were Bertha Bruner, Karen Kern and Ron Jue, who had a tough job of selecting the winners from 12 participants.

Debbie Coddington, who won this same category last year, was the most original in a pirate costume; the most creative/unique was won by Meryiel Massey in a ‘fully loaded’ customer information agent costume and the scariest was Millie Acosta as the grim reaper. Prizes were presented by Tom Horne to the winners.



Debbie Coddington, who won this same category last year, was the most original in a pirate costume; the most creative/unique was won by Meryiel Massey, at right, in a ‘fully loaded’ customer information agent costume and the scariest was Millie Acosta, center, as the grim reaper.

All staff participants were included in a raffle and the kids pulled names of 15 agents, who selected their “treat or treat” gifts. Then the Morale Committee led the kids around the Call Center to ensure they visited the cubicles of about 50 agents, who brought many different treats for them.

Additionally, Department staff made “100” special goodie bags for each child along with a soft ball toy. The remaining goodie bags and treats were taken to the Child Care Center to share with the little ones who

could not join us.

"We are the only department that gives 'this party' for the Metro Kids and they seem to really look forward to visiting us each year", said Gail Harvey. When Matt Raymond, Chief Communications, walked through the Call Center he was truly impressed with all the creative decorations that were displayed throughout.

Alonzo Williams, Communications Manager, said, "This year the Pirates of Metro theme really seemed to spark a lot of interest and more staff was involved and enthusiastic about making this a great experience for our Metro Kids."



Pirates of Metro! Halloween "theme" contest participants include, from left, customer service agents Natalie Walters, Catherine Prado, theme winner Virginia Sanchez and Frank Sahlem. The agents are joined by Alonzo Williams, center, and Customer Relations Director Gail M. Harvey, at right.

Department staff was totally surprised and overwhelmed when the kids "treated" us to a special song. Several parents, whose kids will not be at the Child Care Center next year, expressed their total appreciation for our efforts.

"The Halloween party keeps getting bigger and better each year and we truly enjoy the smiles from the little ones, their families and friends and we welcomed them back next year," Gail said.

The event was coordinated by the Morale Committee, which is comprised of Patricia Diaz, Jackie Exeart, Harriet Petitt, Virginia Sanchez, Steven Texado, Paula Grigsby, Alonzo Williams and Gail M. Harvey.



- [Metro.net \(web\)](#)
- Resources**
- ▶ [Safety](#)
- ▶ [Pressroom \(web\)](#)
- ▶ [Ask the CEO](#)
- ▶ [CEO Forum](#)
- ▶ [Employee Recognition](#)
- ▶ [Employee Activities](#)
- ▶ [Metro Projects](#)
- ▶ [Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
- ▶ [Archives](#)
- ▶ [Events Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Research Center/Library](#)
- ▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)

- Metro Info**
- ▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)
- ▶ [Policies](#)
- ▶ [Training](#)
- ▶ [Help Desk](#)
- ▶ [Intranet Policy](#)

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Central City Division 1 Hosts a Halloween party for Children from the Para Los Niño's Day Care Center

• **Photos by Chris Doan**

Chris Doan, transit operations supervisor, has obviously worked a few too many hours this month. Bus Operators Patricia Garcia, Miguel Gonzales and Martha Sampang organized this year's event, as well as preparing and serving the food for the children.



As it has for 15 years, Central City Division 1 hosted a Halloween party for children from the Para Los Niño's day care center. Division 1 will also host the Para Los Niño's children for a Holiday party in December.

After lunch, songs, photos and a costume parade, children leave Division 1.



[Home](#)[CEO Hotline](#)[Viewpoint](#)[Classified Ads](#)[Archives](#)[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)[Pressroom \(web\)](#)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)[Policies](#)[Training](#)[Help Desk](#)[Intranet Policy](#)

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Transportation Summit Promotes Student Dialogue With Transit Experts

- Tomorrow's event looks at transportation's future

(Nov. 6, 2008) Offering a glimpse into the future of transportation and the chance for dialogue with many of the experts who will shape that future, the First Annual Student Transportation Summit will be held tomorrow, Nov. 7, at [Los Angeles Trade-Technical College](#)

The free event seeks to draw college students and faculty into the discussion of Los Angeles County's transportation future. Metro sponsors the summit in partnership with the Los Angeles Community College District.

"We designed the event for college students who hate traffic and smog and want to join in shaping the solutions," said Ann Kerman, constituent program manager. "Students interested in politics or government will have a great opportunity to talk to local policy and opinion leaders."

After registration and a continental breakfast, the morning will feature an industrial funk band, prizes, giveaways and booths offering information on internships and careers in transportation.

"Today's college students will be our customers, our constituents, our decision-makers and leaders," added Kerman. "Some become Metro employees. We want to provide them with the tools and information to become active participants in their transportation future."

Here is a schedule for tomorrow's event:

- 8:30 – 9:00 Registration, continental breakfast, exhibitors' tables and music by the group "Department of Real Estate"
- 9:00 – 9:35 Welcoming Remarks and Keynote: Emcee Marc Haefele, Roger Snoble (Metro), Larry Eisenberg (LACCD) and David Sutton (Metro)
- 9:35 – 10:15 Students Speak Out: Grading LA's Transit System – What Works, What Doesn't: Moderated by Rita Robinson (LA Department of Transportation) and featuring Sirinya Tritipeskul (UCLA/Bruins for Traffic Relief), Quirina Mitchell (Claremont McKenna College student), Rose Bustos (LACCD Student Trustee/East Los Angeles College) and Allison Reid (LATTC Associated Student Organization President)

- 10:15 – 11:00 The Future of Transportation in LA County: Moderated by Marc Haefele and featuring Richard Katz (Metro Board Member) and Metro CEO Roger Snoble
- 11:00 – 11:40 Town Hall With Elected Officials, on Involvement in the Political Process: Moderated by Marc Haefele and featuring Assemblymember Mike Feuer, Assemblymember Mike Eng and Jennifer Cohen (transportation legislative deputy for LA City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel)
- 11:40 – 11:45 Closing Remarks
- 11:45 – 12:00 Visit the exhibitors' tables

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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At a news conference assembled in response to the passage of Measure R, Metro Board Chair Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa thanked voters and elected officials who enabled the passage of Measure R, the half-cent sales tax proposal to build public transportation projects across Los Angeles County. The officials staged the news conference at the Metro Rail Wilshire/Western Station. *Photo by Ned Racine*

Metro Board Members Thank Voters for Approving Measure R

- Villaraigosa, Yaroslavsky commit to promises made to reduce congestion and gridlock
- [Statement](#): CEO Roger Snoble's Statement to Employees on Measure 'R' Approval by County Voters
- [VIDEO](#): Supervisor Yaroslavsky praises Metro for hard work

By NED RACINE, Editor

Broad smiles brightened an already sunny post-election morning as Metro Board Chair Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa thanked voters and elected officials who enabled the passage of Measure R, the half-cent sales tax proposal to build public transportation projects across Los Angeles County.

With 100 percent of precincts reporting, [Measure R](#) was approved by voters by a margin of 67.4 percent to 32.6 percent (some mailed-in ballots are still being counted). Because it increases Los Angeles County sales tax, the measure needed a two-thirds supermajority to pass.

^CLICK 'PLAY' TO VIEW ADJUST 'SLIDER' FOR SOUND^

Video: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky praises Metro in remarks on the passage of Measure R by Los Angeles County voters.

"We voted to end gridlock in Los Angeles; we voted to begin the comprehensive and smart investments that we need in this county to address the congestion, the gridlock, the poor air quality in this region," said Villaraigosa at a press event near the entrance to the Wilshire/Western Metro Red Line station.

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.

In a [statement](#) to Metro employees this morning, CEO Roger Snoble wrote "This is great news for Metro and in light of its passage, we will be going back to the Board in January with an updated financial plan that will address multiple transportation improvement projects that will be funded through this important half-cent sales tax."

Joined by Metro Board members Zev Yaroslavsky, Richard Katz and Doug Failing, as well as Assemblyman Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles), who authored legislation paving the way for the sales tax measure, and members of the Los Angeles City Council, Villaraigosa noted that Los Angeles County drivers spend approximately two workweeks each year sitting in traffic.

Villaraigosa spoke about Measure R allowing the county to pursue the Subway to the Sea along Wilshire Blvd., improving bus service, extending the Expo Line, extending the Metro Gold Line farther into the San Gabriel Valley and synchronizing traffic lights in the City of Los Angeles and across the county.

"This is the most important thing that we can do locally for the people of Los Angeles County," said Yaroslavsky. "They have given us their votes, they have given us their confidence, and we intend to deliver on their expectations, beginning immediately."

Several speakers emphasized the importance of the projects funded by Measure R creating jobs within the county during difficult economic times.

Yaroslavsky predicted that when voting numbers are analyzed, every precinct in the county will have voted for Measure R because of the county's universal congestion and gridlock. "It's not only uneconomical and inefficient, it's a very serious diminution of the quality of life."

"I think this is a vote of confidence in Metro," Yaroslavsky added. "People know this is an agency that delivers."


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

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Benefits Open Enrollment Ends Nov. 24 for Non-Contract, AFSCME, Teamster Employees

- Signup period is Nov. 10 through Nov. 24, 2007
- **LINK>** Go to <http://benefits.metro.net> from any computer to access the new 2009 Benefits Open Enrollment system.
- This link is located in the right-hand column of the *myMetro.net* home page on the Intranet. This system is available online from any location at <http://benefits.metro.net>.

By JANICE OLSEN

(Nov. 12, 2008) The Annual Benefits Open Enrollment period for Non-Contract, AFSCME, and Teamster employees is scheduled to end at the close of business on Monday, Nov. 24.

Employees can access the [2009 Benefits Online Enrollment System](#) through Nov. 24.

Here are the two steps you need to take:

1. Access the Online Enrollment System from any computer at <http://benefits.metro.net>.

There you will find easy-to-follow instructions explaining your unique ID, password, brochures and forms. Links to insurance carrier websites are posted on the Online Enrollment System as well—provided here as a convenience—but the addresses are not required to complete your enrollment.

The online system will allow you to review your current enrollment choices, add, delete, or update dependent information and make changes to your benefit plans for calendar year 2009. Please pay particular attention to instructions (printed in red), which will assist you in successfully completing your enrollment.

If no changes are made, current plans will remain in effect during calendar year 2009, with the exception of the Flex Spending Accounts and the Non-Tobacco Users Life Insurance, both of which require an election each year.

2. Print a copy of your Confirmation Statement and retain for your records.

Please contact the Pension and Benefits staff if you have any questions or need assistance completing your Open Enrollment. We are located on the 21st floor of the Gateway Building. Your primary contacts are:

- Jodi Stewart: 213.922.7186

- Judi Cline: 213.922.1244
- Beth Geary: 213.922.1260

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)



- Metro.net (web)
- Resources
- [Safety](#)
- [Pressroom](#) (web)
- [Ask the CEO](#)
- [CEO Forum](#)
- [Employee Recognition](#)
- [Employee Activities](#)
- [Metro Projects](#)
- [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)
- [Archives](#)
- [Events Calendar](#)
- [Research Center/Library](#)
- [Metro Classifieds](#)
- [Bazaar](#)

- Metro Info
- [30/10 Initiative](#)
- [Policies](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Help Desk](#)
- [Intranet Policy](#)

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Division 3 Welcomes Back Operator After Seven Months in Iraq



(Nov. 12, 2008) On Nov. 6, Central City Division 1 welcomed back Bus Operator Guillermo Celaya after his seven-month tour of duty in Iraq. Division employees and management contributed to present Celaya with a plaque, a cake and lunch. From left are Transportation Operations Supervisor Chris Doan, Bus Operator and Roy Orbison look-alike Guillermo Celaya and Assistant Transportation Manager Rosa Graciano.

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Scenes from a Metro Halloween

- [Gateway Child Care Development Center](#) Goblins, Power Rangers, Pirates and Cuddly Bears Make the Rounds at Metro **PLUS!** [Slide show](#)
- [Central City Division 1](#) Hosts a Halloween party for children from the Para Los Niño's day care center
- [Accounting Zombies, Witches and Devils](#) Move Oct. 31 into the Scary Column



Great Pumpkin Goes Metro!

Ta-Da! Winner of the Great Pumpkin contest, Ray Dang, an intern in Creative Services, enlisted fellow designers to help him carve the 62-inch, 100+ -pound prize into a prize-winning jack-o-lantern. The result is shown below. Go Metro!




[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

Need e-Help?

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Happy Trails to You, Metro

- *myMetro.net* Editor Ned Racine Rides into the Sunset

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Nov. 12, 2008) Thank you.

On this, my last day at Metro, I want to thank all the people who have shared their stories with me during the months I have worked with *myMetro.net*.

With its original stories describing the people and activities of Metro, our agency intranet is rare among large organizations. Most organizations only post memos on their intranet site. We, however, cover exceptional employees and notable events.

None of that would be possible without the help of hundreds of people who answered my questions and helped me understand—sometimes not an easy thing—what they did and why it was important. Multiple managers directed me to knowledgeable employees and helped me meet insistent deadlines.

I was fortunate to meet inspired mechanics and dedicated operators and innovative technicians and creative administrators. I was given a view of the breadth of Metro's daily life and I was impressed. Metro is a collection of experts moving hundreds of thousands of people each day. I was lucky to see up close the tremendous effort that daily commitment requires.

To those whose stories I could not get to, I ask you to send your ideas and suggestions to Vivian Tran, the web content manager. Besides Vivian, I would like to acknowledge Warren Morse and Bill Heard for their commitment to a quality publication, even though it is a digital one. Thanks also to my partner in crime, Gayle Anderson, who has shaped *myMetro.net* more than anyone else.

I will be watching Metro's progress as it grapples with a growing population and challenging economic times.

Go Metro!



Metro icons Ralph Kramden and *myMetro.net* editor Ned Racine meet up at 2007 Night of Stars Awards Banquet. Photo: Gayle Anderson

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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The volunteer appreciation breakfast on Nov. 6 recognized more than 100 Metro volunteers.
Photos by Ned Racine

Appreciation Breakfast Thanks Metro Volunteers for Spreading Metro Message

- 'Metro Speaks' volunteers also praised
- Honor Roll: Volunteer roster

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Nov. 12, 2008) Praised by CEO Roger Snoble and Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers, over 100 Metro volunteers were acknowledged for their work enhancing the agency's image during a breakfast and awards ceremony Nov. 6.



Marilyn Archie, herself a Metro Volunteer, sang for the Metro volunteers in the Board Room on Nov. 6.

Flowers noted that in the last year, Metro Volunteers have reached out to 275,000 county residents at 60 different community functions. Eighty-five Metro volunteers, both within and without the agency, received gifts of appreciation.

The morning event also acknowledged the 27 Metro Speaks' volunteers who have given presentations, who represent Metro through the increasing popular speakers bureau. Metro Speaks volunteers, drawn from every segment of the Metro family, gave 41 talks this year.

Helen Ortiz Gilstrap, who directs the [Metro Speaks](#) program, believes Metro Speaks presenters are often the first Metro employee

that some groups hear face-to-face.

"Not only do these experts talk about their role in Metro, they are also living, breathing advocates for public transportation," Gilstrap said. "Their dedication and commitment shines through."

Snoble, who is one of the Metro Speaks volunteers, complimented the Metro Speaks contributors for the variety of audiences they address: "Service clubs, professional organizations, and chambers of commerce, senior centers and neighborhood community groups. Your effort in communicating with these groups is also greatly appreciated."



Marc Littman and Reynard Price indicate the closeness of the Metro Speaks' volunteers.

"You go everywhere," Flowers told the Metro Volunteers in the audience, pointing out venues as diverse as the Los Angeles Marathon in downtown Los Angeles, 20 pit stops throughout the county during Bike to Work Day and the X-Games at the Carson Home Depot Center.

"It's hard to put a price on the value of the one-to-one contacts the Metro Volunteers make," said Rich Morallo. "Very often visitors to our information tables agree to try public transportation because of the enthusiastic presence of these volunteers."

"Of course their time is valuable for Metro, but the Metro Volunteers also enjoy what they do," said Morallo. "Come join us."

'Metro Speaks' Volunteers

Barbara Burns * Jaime Carrington * Marion Colston * Jack Gabig * Jennifer Gill * Raffi Hamparian * Chip Hazen * David Hershenson * Bill Hesser * Richard Hunt * Alex Kalamarcos * Mike Kalustian * Pauline Lee * Cris Liban * Tim Lindholm * Richard Lucas * Scott McConnell * Dennis Mori * Krishniah Murthy * Tim Papandreou * Raynard Price * Michelle Smith * Elizabeth Streegan * Roger Snoble * Dave Sotero * David Yale

Metro Volunteers

Oscar Ayala * Ananda Arachchige * Lt. Jenny Bethune * Wajeha Bilal * Roz Brown * Rey Coutts * Inez Duarte * Lilian Ford * Regina Howard * Fred Origel * Jessica Gil * Reynard Price * Kathy Drayton * Marco Garcia * Julio Nunez * Becky Quinteros * Patrick Pendilla * Elizabeth Streegan * Tej Kharbanda * Henry Wielandt * Tess Fitzpatrick * Yvonne Price * Sergio Ibarra * Elizabeth Palacios * Belford Gaines * Robert Vasquez * Marie Alamilla * Robert Mills * Virginia Ward * Claire Fitzgerald * Caroline Howard * Edith Goff-Youngblood * Eugene Villacorta * Evelina Del Castillo * William Moore * Joanne Harper * Norman Ward * Ryan Milanio * Sherie Ayers * Doris Brown * Deputy Albert Calibet * Alonzo Williams * Gail Harvey * Marie Tervalon * Jacqueline Exeart * Anthony Lawson * Kymberleigh Richards * Letty Lawenko * Sal Buenrosto * Veronica Hargrove * Jerard Wright * Jose Melendez * Gail Harvey * Loretta Ferem * Tony Banash * Marilyn Archie * Crystal Fairley * Wally Shidler * Dan Colonello * Fe Alcid-Little * Mel Mills * Arlene Mills * Crystal Crockett * Harold Brown * Debbie Brown * Pheel Wang * Richard Yaussi * Behzad Yassan * John Zeigler * Berthania Caswell * Elizabeth Palacios * Jennifer Victorin * Jodi

Levine * C.Raymond Ledsworth



| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)

[Home](#)[CEO Hotline](#)[Viewpoint](#)[Classified Ads](#)[Archives](#)[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)[Pressroom \(web\)](#)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)[Policies](#)[Training](#)[Help Desk](#)[Intranet Policy](#)

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[Metro Minute]

As a veteran, what are you thinking of this Veteran's Day?

Leonard Skinner
San Gabriel Valley Division
Mechanic "A"
United States Army, 1974-1976

"I'm looking forward to the day when we won't need veterans, when we don't need soldiers to solve the world's problems."



Javier Castro
San Gabriel Valley Division
Mechanic 'A' Leader
United States Army 1975-1978

"We shouldn't have so many troops outside the United States. I'm very proud of our troops defending our future. [But] we should use our troops wisely."

(Nov. 13, 2008) Photos and text by Ned Racine



[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Memorial Service Planned for David Duran

- Risk Management Senior Analyst joined Metro in 2006
- Services will be held Saturday at 1 p.m. at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, located at 532 S. Atlantic Blvd. in Los Angeles.



David Duran

(Nov. 13, 2008) David Duran, a Metro Senior Workers' Compensation Analyst in Risk Management, died Nov. 9 after a sudden illness.

He was 48 years old.

Duran joined Metro in June 2006 as a consultant and became a full-time employee of the agency in the following October.

Duran worked in the Workers' Compensation Division of the Risk Management Department where he adjusted workers' compensation claims for the Rail Transportation Department, the Regional Rebuilt Center, and the Gateway Divisions, said Mary Talbert, Workers' Compensation Claims Supervisor.

"David was a team player and a joy to work with. He was a great family man and a great friend to many," said Talbert. "Now that his voice is silent, he will be deeply missed by all that knew him."

Duran, a resident of Los Angeles at the time of his sudden death, is survived by his wife, children and parents.

Memorial services will be held this Saturday, Nov. 15, at 1 p.m. at St. Alphonsus Catholic Church, located at 532 S. Atlantic Blvd., in Los Angeles.

His wife has requested no flowers, said Talbert. Donations may be made to the Diabetes Association or Heart Association in care of David Duran.


[Home](#)
[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
[Intranet Policy](#)

Need e-Help?

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Metro Security Officer's Son Shot and Killed After Altercation

By NED RACINE, Editor

(Nov. 13, 2008) The Metro Security extended family lost a young member in an urban tragedy on Friday when Metro Transit Security Sgt. John Davis' son was shot and killed near his home.



John Jamel Davis

John Jamel Davis, Sgt. Davis' youngest son, was shot November 7 between 1:30 and 1:45 p.m. and died several hours later after vigorous attempts to revive him failed, reported Ty Henderson, Metro Security Sgt.

John Jamel Davis, 26, was walking to a store near his home in the West Adams section of Los Angeles when he became involved in an altercation. Davis was reportedly shot with a .22 caliber handgun.

Born in February 1982 at Centinela Hospital in Inglewood, Davis was widely recruited in basketball when he graduated from Los Angeles High School, according to Metro Transit Security Lt. James Cook.

Sgt. Davis said that his family has received over 3,000 phone calls from across the nation regarding John Jamel's death. Davis describes his son as a caring person and a loving father to his son, Jamel Jr.

Sgt. Davis believes the outpouring of love and concern from friends and neighbors has galvanized the community more than any event in recent memory.

Services for John Jamel Davis will be held in Alabama. Los Angeles services are pending.

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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Metro San Gabriel Valley tops off traditional Veteran's Day ceremony with a birthday cake for the United States Marine Corps, which turned 233 years old on Nov. 10. Cutting the cake with the official sword is, from left, Metro Gateway Cities GM Alex Clifford, Metro San Gabriel Valley GM Jack Gabig, Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers, event organizer John McBryan, Division 15 Maintenance Manager Sal Llamas and Division 9 Assistant Transportation Manager David Castillo. *Photos by Ned Racine*

Metro San Gabriel Valley salutes 'All Veterans' at Traditional Veteran's Day Ceremony

Speaking up for Veterans



Metro San Gabriel Valley GM

(Nov. 13, 2008) Metro employees, 19 veterans among them, along with families and friends, presented a spirited and patriotic gathering at the traditional Veteran's Day celebration, held Nov. 6 at Metro San Gabriel Valley.

The hour-long ceremony included special guest speakers and a birthday party for the United States Marine Corps, which celebrated its 233rd birthday on Nov. 10.

Hailed by Metro San Gabriel Valley GM Jack Gabig as the "driving force" behind the annual San Gabriel Valley Division's Veteran's Day event, Maintenance Manager John McBryan, a Marine Corps veteran who served in Vietnam, welcomed all veterans in the spirit of the day.

Jack Gabig



Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers



Division 9 Maintenance Manager John McBryan



Metro Gateway Cities GM Alex Clifford

The purpose of the event, said McBryan, is to "respect and honor all veterans, some of those who have lost their lives."

Inviting the veterans attending the ceremony to be recognized, some 19 rose from their seats and were greeted with an appreciative round of applause.

Ceremony highlights

McBryan handed out red poppy pins, traditionally used to honor veterans killed in war. The tradition became standard during World War I, said McBryan. Wearing the poppy, he said, symbolizes the fields of poppies that grew over the graves of Napoleon's soldiers.

Speakers included Metro Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers, whose father was a veteran. She spoke of her recent trip to Washington, D.C., where she visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Vietnam War Memorial and the World War II Memorial. "I felt very, very humble," she said.

Metro SGV GM Jack Gabig and Metro Gateway Cities GM Alex Clifford, a Marine veteran, also gave patriotic remarks.

Bruce Crum, asst. maintenance manager at Central City Division, set the tone for the event. Crum, who has worked for Metro nearly 30 years, is a U.S. Army veteran.

He quoted an unknown writer's words: "A veteran is someone who one time in his life wrote a check to his country and his flag, payment up to and including his life."

-- from Ned Racine



Division 1 Asst. Maintenance
Manager Bruce Crum

| [Home](#) | [Phone Directory](#) | [Forms Online](#) | [FIS Online](#)

[Metro.net](#) (web)

Resources

► [Safety](#)

► [Pressroom](#) (web)

► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

► [Help Desk](#)

► [Intranet Policy](#)

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A well-trained class of new train operators take the reins Oct. 3. Front row, from left, Carmelo C. Villareal, Edward D. Dove, Erick W. Lemus, Latasha R. Sheridan, Shametha L. Wallace, Willie L. Barnett. Back row, from left, Ernesto C. Garcia, William Vander Ploeg, James Sherman, Tracie L. Anderson, Cathy R. Garcia, Andres J. Campos, Edward E. Gomez, Jr., and Timothy M. Valdes. Photos by Luis Inzunza.

Graduating Class of New Train Operators Adds 14 to Metro Rail Ranks

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Nov. 17, 2008) When Metro Rail GM Mike Cannell took the podium Oct. 3 to welcome the new graduating class of Metro Train Operators, he opened with a smile, telling the 14 new graduates about the number of times he smiles on his daily trip on the Metro Gold Line and how the whole world smiles with him.

Noting that Los Angeles is the second most diversified city in the country and that Metro Rail averages a ridership of some 300,000 passengers a day, Cannell came to the conclusion that the celebrated diversity on board could very well represent the whole world.

So, along with a framed graduation certificate, Cannell handed out a poster of a campaign inspired by those global smiles: an illustration of a smiling Metro train carrying a globe of the world and smiling passengers on board framed by the slogan "Metro moves the world, with a smile."

Director of Transportation Duane Martin talked about the eight-week intensive course: "I told you on day one it wasn't going to be easy. But you persevered as a group and that really works. I'm proud of all of you. Now, take the training and make it your process."

The training consists of an overview of the rail system and



The class surprised lead instructor Arnold 'A.J.' Johnson with a special gift in appreciation of the quality of the training.

concentrated instruction on rules and procedures followed by hands-on yard operation, mainline operation and procedures specific to operation of each rail line, said Linda Leone, rail instruction manager. In this class, the graduates trained specifically on

either the Metro Blue Line or the Metro Gold Line.

In making the transition from bus to train, the new train operators will be responsible for handling vehicles with more weight, with much faster speeds and many times more passengers.

"When the Expo Line opens, we can expect 30,000 to board in one hour at the Coliseum," Cannell pointed out.

The instructors encouraged the students to work as a team, helping each other learn standard operating procedures, rail safety, mainline and yard operation and vehicle troubleshooting.

All heaped equal helpings of praise and gratitude upon their instructors, especially lead instructor Arnold "A.J." Johnson, who was presented with a gift by his appreciative students.

Directed by Rail Instruction Manager Linda Leone, the class was conducted by rail training instructors Arnold Johnson, Gerald Harper, Willard Johnson, Frank Hooks, Esther Pippins, Luis Canel, Ricardo Perez, Cristobal Medina.



The graduates and their instructors are joined by Director of Transportation Duane Martin, back row far left, Rail Instruction Manager Linda Leone, center, and Metro Rail GM Mike Cannell, far right, with UTU Local 1565 Chairman Tim Del Cambre and Shop Steward Ruben Ramirez. Instructors pictured here, seated, are Arnold Johnson, Willard Johnson, Hector Gutierrez, Frank Hooks, Luis Canel, Ricardo Perez. Not pictured: Gerald Harper, Esther Pippins.

UTU Local 1565 Chairman Tim Del Cambre and Shop Steward Ruben

Ramirez joined the family and friends at the graduation ceremony and luncheon.

The new operators are Tracie L. Anderson, Willie L. Barnett, Andres J. Campos, Edward D. Dove, Cathy R. Garcia, Ernesto C. Garcia, Edward E. Gomez, Jr., Erick W. Lemus, Latasha R. Sheridan, James Sherman, Timothy M. Valdes, William Vander Ploeg, Carmelo C. Villareal, and Shametha L. Wallace.

Five of the graduates take up operator duties at the Metro Blue Line. The remaining graduates transferring from Bus Operations will rotate into Rail Operations when positions become available.

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Resources

[► Safety](#)[► Pressroom \(web\)](#)[► Ask the CEO](#)[► CEO Forum](#)[► Employee Recognition](#)[► Employee Activities](#)[► Metro Projects](#)[► Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)[► Archives](#)[► Events Calendar](#)[► Research Center/Library](#)[► Metro Classifieds](#)[► Bazaar](#)

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[► 30/10 Initiative](#)[► Policies](#)[► Training](#)[► Help Desk](#)[► Intranet Policy](#)

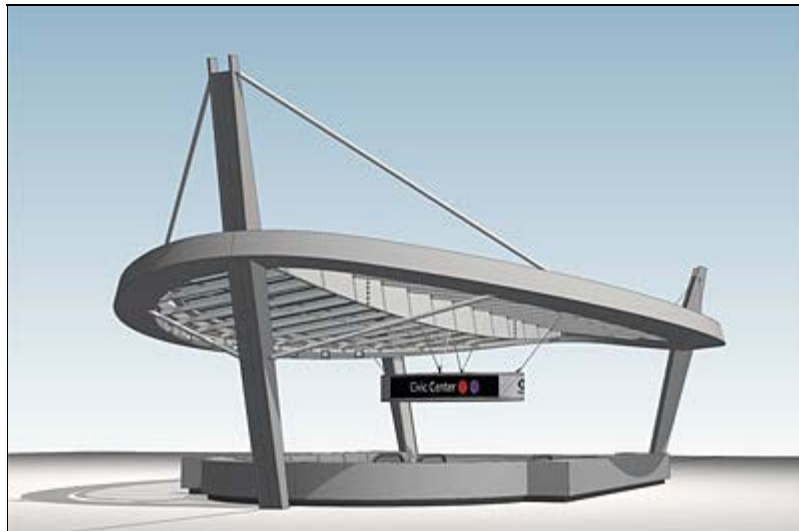
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November Agendas

Board Committees to review next steps for Metro Red Line Station Canopies, Meeting State Mandates to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Prop 1B Funds



Stainless steel canopies with overhead glass panels are planned for the entrances to 14 Metro Red/Purple Line stations.

In this report:

- [Item 6:](#) Bicycle Locker Rental Program
- [Items 7, 8:](#) Programming recommendations for State Proposition 1B
- [Item 10:](#) Motion to Join the Los Angeles Regional Climate Change Collaborative
- [Item 16:](#) Discussion of Structural Deficit
- [Item 18, 43:](#) Dual Hub Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- [Item 35:](#) Metro Red Line Station Canopies contract modification
- [Item 42:](#) Eastside Extension Bus/Rail Interface

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Nov. 18, 2008) During their November meetings, Board committees review programming recommendations for State Proposition 1B State and Local Transportation Partnership Programs (SLTPP) and Transit Modernization Funds, amend a contract to allow for construction of 14 new canopies for the Metro Red Line and line up the Bus/Rail interface in anticipation of the opening of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension among some 43 items up for consideration.

On the Planning and Programming committee agenda is Item 10, a motion by Directors Yvonne Burke, Pam O'Connor and Zev

November Committee Meetings

Wednesday, Nov. 19
1 p.m. – Planning and Programming

Yaroslavsky to join the Los Angeles Regional Climate Change Collaborative.

The collaborative of local public agencies, businesses and utilities is a culmination of efforts spurred by State mandates to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by more than 25 percent by 2020. Through the collaborative, agencies and organizations can join together to develop, share and communicate best practices in reaching sustainability goals.

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

Thursday, Nov. 20

9:00 a.m. – Executive Management and Audit
10:30 a.m. – Construction
12 noon – Operations

Thursday, Dec. 4

9:30 a.m. – Regular Board Meeting

Item 6: Bicycle Locker Rental Program

The Planning and Programming Committee will weigh recommending that the Board increase bicycle locker rental fees and delegate to the CEO the authority to set bicycle locker rates.

At issue is utilization of lockers at locations where the lockers may be fully leased, but also remain empty when commuters use other means of transportation.

Higher pricing and shorter lease terms may help to encourage greater use of lockers now at premium demand due to increased rail ridership and the need for more secure bicycle parking.

Items 7, 8: Programming recommendations for State Proposition 1B

It is anticipated that Los Angeles County will receive \$275.5 million for eligible regional transportation projects from the voter-approved Proposition 1B State and Local Partnership Program (SLTPP).

The Planning and Programming Committee will consider recommending \$130 million for highway capital projects, \$145.5 million for transit capital and safety projects, including the San Fernando Valley Canoga Project, various bus and rail projects, proposed Metrolink safety improvements, and the 2009 Countywide Call for Projects.

Also up for review is programming recommendations for \$90.2 million in State Proposition 1B Transit Modernization Funds for miscellaneous transit projects, including purchase of buses, rebuilding buses and rail rehabilitation.

The recommendation would implement bus and rail priorities already identified as necessary to maintain equipment and facilities for regional transit services in a state of good repair.

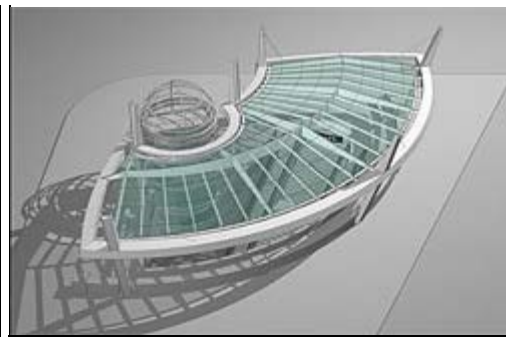
Item 16: Discussion of Structural Deficit

The Finance and Budget Committee is slated to discuss a projected \$2.4 billion operating deficit in light of the 10-year financial forecast.

Item 18, 43: Dual Hub Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

The Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Committee and the Operations Committee will hear a report on service changes under consideration for June 2009 to establish a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along the Harbor Transitway and El Monte Busway. The changes are expected to be cost neutral and serve as the basis for transit enhancements for the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project.

The Dual Hub BRT is recommended as an effort to improve frequencies along both corridors, reduce unproductive service, eliminate downtown layover requirements and connect to the Metro Gold Line Little Tokyo Station.



The familiar 'observatory' dome of the Metro Rail Vermont/Sunset Station remains a landmark element of the sweeping canopy designed to enhance and protect the graceful entrance to the subway station.

Item 35: Metro Red Line Station Canopies contract modification

The Operations Committee will consider authorizing construction of 14 new canopies over exposed escalators and stairs and entrances to Metro Red/Purple Line subway stations.

If approved by the full Board, the action would increase the current contract modification included in the FY09 budget by \$804,364.

The modifications adhere to the established goals of the Entrance Canopy Program and include design, lighting, drainage and weather protection criteria.

Item 42: Eastside Extension Bus/Rail Interface

The Operations Committee will consider service changes to coincide with the opening of the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension in 2009.

The plan calls for restructuring Line 30 which currently follows the alignment between Little Tokyo Station and Indiana Street. Lines 287, 68, 254 and 620 are to be re-routed to provide more direct access to Metro Gold Line Stations.

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Resources

[Safety](#)[Pressroom \(web\)](#)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

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Metro makes gains beyond the pump.

Public Transit Helps Recession-Strapped Commuters Save

- L.A. Metro Ridership on Upswing Despite Falling Gas Prices

By MARC LITTMAN

(Nov. 18, 2008) In a press release issued Monday, Metro announced that bus and rail ridership has increased on a year-over-year basis despite plunging gas prices.

Average weekday boardings on Metro Rail jumped 16.62 percent in October 2008 compared with the same period last year while Metro Bus ridership is up 4 percent. October weekday ridership on the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley is up 6.72 percent compared to last year.

Overall, there were 301,262 average weekday boardings on the Metro Red, Purple, Blue, Gold, and Green lines last month compared to 258,333 boardings a year earlier.

Subway ridership on the Metro Red and Purple lines between downtown Los Angeles and North Hollywood with a spur to Wilshire and Western led the way with 154,935 boardings, up 20.87 percent.

The Metro Blue Line from downtown Los Angeles to Long Beach followed with 80,577 boardings, up 9.34 percent. Next came the Metro Green Line between Norwalk and El Segundo, averaging 41,746 weekday boardings, up 9.93 percent. The Metro Gold Line linking downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena had 24,004 boardings, up 29.87 percent.

Directly operated Metro Bus ridership in October 2008 averaged 1,222,589 boardings compared to 1,175, 256 in October 2007. That's up 4.03 percent. The Metro Orange Line transitway averaged 25,428 boardings last month, up 6.72 percent over last year.

The ridership increases come in spite of the sharp drop in gasoline prices and is a strong indication that L.A.'s public transit system continues to be a low-cost transportation solution for more Angelenos faced with a troubled economy. The fare to ride Metro bus and rail lines is only \$62 a month, or \$744 a year.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) recently reported that a person living in Los Angeles could save \$856 per month, or \$10,268 per year by taking public transit instead of driving based on current gas prices and parking rates. APTA's report reveals how much a person can save by taking public transportation and living with one less car in his or her household. Metro also offers vanpool and carpool programs that, likewise, save commuters significant transportation dollars.

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[CEO Hotline](#)
[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
[Archives](#)
[Metro.net \(web\)](#)

Resources

[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

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[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
[Help Desk](#)
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Metro's 13th Annual Holiday Gift-Giving Drive Begins Monday

- Metro hopes to send 5,000 gifts to Fred Jordan Mission

By TASHAI R. SMITH
Coordinator

(Nov. 20, 2008) The road to smiles on the faces of thousands of often overlooked children begins Nov. 24 with the start of Metro's 13th annual gift-giving drive for the Fred Jordan Mission for Skid Row Kids.

To celebrate the annual launch of the event, gift tags will be distributed Nov. 24 and Nov. 25 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the 3rd floor lobby. Light refreshments will be served.

Additional tag distribution days have been added for Dec. 1 and Dec. 2.

Gift tags also will be available for employees at the Metro Support Services Center (MSSC) and at participating divisions. Gift-giving drive coordinators at each location will have information about the toy drive. Jim Montoya is the contact at the MSSC and other divisions. Amador Silva is the contact at the Rail Operations Center and the Rail Divisions.

In addition to toys, donations of new unwrapped gifts can include blankets, games, backpacks, pencils and paper, soccer balls, basketballs, rain gear and even canned goods.

The success of the 13th annual event depends on the number of Metro employees who donate an unwrapped toy. Organizers have a goal of distributing gifts to 5,000 children this year, including more gifts for middle-school children.

Metro will present the collected gifts to the Fred Jordan Mission on Dec. 15 in the Metro Headquarters plaza.

Employees can drop off the gifts Dec. 1 through Dec. 11 (no later than 4 p.m. on the last day) at the Diversity and Economic Opportunity Department on the 13th floor.

Volunteers are needed to help with distribution of toys, Sunday, Dec. 21, at the Fred Jordan Mission. In prior years, toys and food bags were prepared for up to 10,000 children and their parents.

For more information, contact Barbara Thomasson at 922-4526.



Sign up starting Monday: Gift tags come with instructions.

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[Safety](#)[Pressroom \(web\)](#)[Ask the CEO](#)[CEO Forum](#)[Employee Recognition](#)[Employee Activities](#)[Metro Projects](#)[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/Library](#)[Metro Classifieds](#)[Bazaar](#)

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Transit Security Officer Willie Miles helps to evacuate children from the Gateway Child Care Center during the 'Great Shakeout' evacuation drill. The children were relocated to the MSSC cafeteria across the street from Metro Headquarters for the duration of the exercise. *Photo by Transit Security Sgt. Arthur Grant.*

Metro Makes Strides in Safety Measures During the Great Shakeout

By SCOTT R. NORWOOD

Emergency and Homeland Security Preparedness Manager

(Nov. 20, 2008) Metro employees, guests, and visitors participated in The Southern California Great Shakeout on Nov. 13.

Metro held drills at various locations throughout the agency involving both the rail and bus systems. Drills included a "Duck, Cover, and Hold" procedure and an evacuation of Metro Headquarters.

During a "Duck, Cover, and Hold" exercise, employees are encouraged to "duck" to seek shelter under a sturdy piece of furniture, "cover" to protect their heads from falling objects, and "hold" on to the furniture overhead. The exercise teaches employees how to protect themselves from falling debris during an earthquake.

Employing an internal safety mechanism, organizers designated "missing" people during the drill to make sure that the floor wardens who "sweep" the floors and those doing the head counts can account for everyone.

Immediately following the earthquake drill, employees, guests, visitors, and Metro contractors were instructed to evacuate the building.

Evacuation drills are necessary to prepare anyone who is in the building from potential harm in the event that the building is unsafe.

The exercise also permits Metro Security, Floor Wardens, General Services, and the LASD Transit Services Bureau to verify that equipment and procedures work during an actual emergency.

The overall consensus noted improvements in response time and performance of Metro employees.

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- ▶ [Pressroom](#) (web)
- ▶ [Ask the CEO](#)
- ▶ [CEO Forum](#)
- ▶ [Employee Recognition](#)
- ▶ [Employee Activities](#)
- ▶ [Metro Projects](#)
- ▶ [Facts at a Glance](#) (web)
- ▶ [Archives](#)
- ▶ [Events Calendar](#)
- ▶ [Research Center/Library](#)
- ▶ [Metro Classifieds](#)

Metro Info

- ▶ [30/10 Initiative](#)
- ▶ [Policies](#)
- ▶ [Training](#)
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Oakridge residents Mark and Dixie Pattison sent this cellphone photo of what remains of their 1834-square-foot home destroyed in the Sayre Fire in Sylmar.

Sylmar Firestorm Ravages Homes of Two Metro Employees

- East Valley Division Bus Operators shuttle residents to view homes destroyed in the fire.
- Monday: East Valley Division "Good Fellas" club and Operator Mia Perry are putting together a luncheon and clothing drive to benefit fire victims, including one of their own.

By GAYLE ANDERSON
— East Valley Division Stenographer Darlene Blake contributed to this report.

(Nov 20, 2008) Under skies swept clean by yet another round of Santa Ana winds, Friday, Nov. 14, bore the usual red flag of fire-warning anxiety. But for the residents of Oakridge Mobile Home Park, it was business as usual. With the Porter Ranch Fire nipping at their heels only a month before, it was the second time the residents were to be evacuated this year.

But this time, the residents returned to the smoldering rubble, after the Sayre Fire destroyed 477 of its 608 homes in twenty minutes in the early morning hours of Nov. 15.



Dixie Pattison, left, an assistant administrative analyst in Communications, and East Valley Division Bus Operator Robert Lutz, at right, lost homes in the Sayre Fire that destroyed the Oakridge Mobile Home Park, an iconic community of landscaped modular homes Pattison once called 'the best kept secret in the Valley.'



Two of those homes in Oakridge, an iconic community nestled in the slope of a hill at the end of Glenoaks Boulevard in Sylmar, belonged to Metro families.

East Valley Division Operator Bob Lutz, who joined Metro in 1990 and has operated out of Division 15 since 1992, was on vacation when the Sayre Fire took hold on Friday evening.

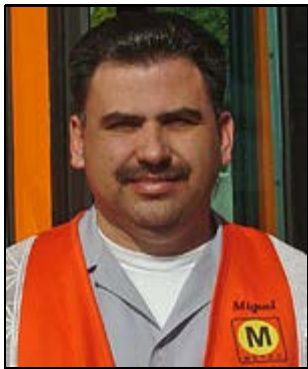
When the order came to evacuate, Lutz and his wife had only minutes to get out, piling their three dogs into the car and leaving practically everything else, even Bob's Metro Operator uniforms.

The couple took refuge in the Mission Hills home of Lutz' brother, reported Darlene Blake, Division 15 stenographer, who met with Lutz when he returned to the division to arrange for more uniforms.

Blake said Lutz told her he saw the "wall of flames," which he described as 50 feet high transformed by intense winds into a horizontal front 50 feet wide. So intense were the winds, he said, that firefighters couldn't get near the base. The only thing to do was evacuate.

Residents were allowed back in the area in their own vehicles beginning Tuesday. Lutz sifted through rubble and came back with nothing, he told Blake. "His fireproof safe wasn't so fireproof," said Blake. The safe contained important papers and savings bonds.

East Valley Division Operators relayed residents to the scene



Metro Bus Operator Miguel Contreras was one of four transporting Oakridge Park residents from the shelter to the scene of the fire. *Photo by Darlene Blake.*

Blake said the eeriest thing of all for Operator Lutz may have been the ride from the makeshift shelter at Sylmar High School to discover what was left of his Oakridge home. The ride was on a Metro Bus, one of four provided by Division 15 at the request of the Los Angeles Police Department, who had organized a shuttle to transport Oakridge residents into the fire-ravaged area to survey the damage and take photos of their property.

Operator Miguel Contreras' 40-foot Local was the first bus out. His passengers were Oakridge residents, a grief counselor, and a police escort.

"We weren't allowed to let anybody off of the bus," he said, "but we stopped for anybody who needed to take pictures. The bus was full. Some were anxious at first; some got depressed when they saw what was gone. But, they came back a little comforted – at least, they could know and picture what had happened," said Contreras. On board the bus was an Oakridge manager who helped people find their property. "The street signs were gone, nothing was recognizable, really," said Contreras.

Operators Luis Monje, Edgar Montes-Castro, and Rita Durkee also transported residents in the shuttle, said Blake. Durkee spoke of being apprehensive at first, expecting inconsolable passengers to be confronting a tragic loss and fearful she would not be able to comfort them. "But they were joyful," she said, "laughing even, comforting one another. People who had lost everything were supporting people who had lost everything. It's the human spirit. You can't put it down."

"To see these people with their houses burned down," said Operator Luis Monje, "sharing whatever they have left with each other ... I'll never forget it." When a police officer boarded to announce that no bodies were

discovered and not even any injuries were reported, the passengers cheered wildly, said Monje. "That was everyone's concern," he said, "a great relief for everyone."

The last run of the day, in the late afternoon, was for residents who had not lost their homes. With embers still dying out, the residents were allowed ten minutes to enter their homes and grab some necessities, such as prescriptions or a change of clothing.

Pattisons moved their world in ten short hours

From the first sound of alarm, delivered by neighbors, to a short and frantic 10 hours later, Mark and Dixie Pattison managed to grab what they could from their home, organize the swift retreat of Mark's 81- and 83-year-old parents and their puppy from their nearby home, help pack up Mark's son Danny and fiancée Adela, and move their extended family and all that remained of their belongings into a beautiful four-bedroom home owned by a friend in Santa Clarita, who just happened to be looking for ideal renters.



Mark Pattison with his prized motorcycle.

Both Pattisons are members of the Metro family. Dixie, an assistant administrative analyst in Communications, returned to employment at Metro in February, after working in previous assignments from 1994 to 2002. Her husband, Mark, joined Metro's Public Affairs Department in 1994 and retired from his position as assistant communications manager on the last day of 2004.



Neighbors pounding on the door woke the sleeping couple about 10:30 that Friday evening, relatively long before the helicopters roared overhead blaring evacuation orders in the middle of the night.

"I had a feeling this was big," said Dixie. "It looked a lot closer than last time; the winds were worse." (A month previous, the park had been evacuated in response to the October fire in Porter Ranch. That had felt more like a drill – that time the quaint homes with rustic gardens welcomed the residents back home.)

In a "fight or flight" response mode, the Pattisons grabbed jewelry, important papers, computers, some clothing and shoes, photos, and five of Mark's guitars from his collection of many.

"Our street was the first to go"

"We thought we were coming back," said Dixie. Firefighters beating back the flames had told the couple that the fire would likely pass though the brush and back over the hill away from the homes. The scenario proved true until about 5 a.m. That was when the wind shifted and brought the

fire back.

"Our street was the first to go," she said.

The 1834-square-foot, two-bedroom home was burned to the ground. The couple, avid collectors and artisans both, lost generations of photos, record collections, a library-sized study full of books, and antique furniture.

The biggest loss, or perhaps, the most symbolic, was Mark's prized motorcycle, said Dixie. "I broke down and just lost it when I saw the burnt-out, blackened shape." The motorcycle was parked at the end of the park alongside Dixie's new Volkswagon convertible bug. The VW, with its cloth top that could have burst into flames at the sight of an ember, remained untouched by the fire.

The Oakridge Mobile Home Park is far from what its name implies. Tucked under the 210 freeway at the end of Glenoaks Boulevard at Foothill, the park of manufactured pre-fabricated homes, not trailers, some historic, all landscaped, is populated by young and old alike.

"It was the best kept secret of the Valley," said Dixie. "I am mourning a community. We were all together – Thanksgiving dinners, bingo, lots of children, an Olympic-sized swimming pool. It's a 'paradise lost'."

But not forever, it would seem.

The residential community of Oakridge Park evolved on the grounds owned by the Stetsons, the makers of the famous hats. Although burned to the ground, or nearly so, "It still has the magic," said Dixie. "You still don't want to leave."

The Pattisons are convinced the park will return to its nestled serenity one day. "Already a property manager came by the evacuation center and was talking about 'great leads' on manufactured homes," she said.

Between sorting out a former life and starting a new one, the Pattisons are busy filling out FEMA papers and furnishing their new rental home. Somehow, Dixie is finding time to print t-shirts with a slogan to boost the family's already positive morale:

"Keep on keeping on."



Entrance to the rental home in Santa Clarita, above, where the Pattisons relocated within ten hours of the evacuation, contrasts with the entrance to their home in Oakridge Park, below, destroyed by fire. Note the patio furniture intact in the background.




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[Viewpoint](#)
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[Archives](#)
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[Safety](#)
[Pressroom \(web\)](#)
[Ask the CEO](#)
[CEO Forum](#)
[Employee Recognition](#)
[Employee Activities](#)
[Metro Projects](#)
[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)
[Archives](#)
[Events Calendar](#)
[Research Center/Library](#)
[Metro Classifieds](#)
[Bazaar](#)

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[30/10 Initiative](#)
[Policies](#)
[Training](#)
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Services are scheduled for Tommie Dunmore, 36-year Metro veteran

- Metro veteran joined Metro in 1972, retired as a bus operator in 1999, rejoined Metro the next day and became a Transit Operations Supervisor in 2002, working out of Crossroads Division.
- Services will be held Dec. 3 at Vine Life Christian Fellowship Church in Riverside.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Nov. 25, 2008) Tommie Dunmore, a 36-year Metro veteran, has died after a hard-fought battle with diabetes. Mr. Dunmore passed away Nov. 20; he was 58 years old. He had been hospitalized for eight months prior to his death.



Tommie Dunmore

Tommie Dunmore joined Metro July 21, 1972. He was hired as a bus operator and was first stationed at the former Division 16 in Pomona before moving to San Gabriel Valley Division 9, where he spent the majority of his career as an operator. He retired from that post on Oct. 24, 1999, but came back on board the very next day as a part-time operator at Division 9 and East Valley Division 15.

Dunmore became a Transit Operations Supervisor in 2002, working the 'window' at Crossroads Division 3 for Manpower, Systems & Support, said friend and co-worker TOS Ottis Hendricks.

"Tommie was sharp, very sharp," said Hendricks. As a window dispatcher, Dunmore's job was to make sure everyone got their assignments and fill in the blanks left in the schedule by sick calls or late arrivals. "He'd fuss at them but he did it with a smile or crack a joke. It definitely got their attention," said Hendricks.

"He and I were good friends," said Hendricks, "he was a lot of fun. You couldn't find anybody who didn't love Tommie."

Dunmore was born January 17, 1950, in Pickens, Arkansas. He was one of twelve siblings, including brother Curtis Dunmore, a Metro Bus Operator who works at Arthur Winston Division. He leaves behind six brothers and five sisters. He was divorced. He and wife Helen lived in Ontario during their marriage. Together, they cared for five grandchildren, who were the children of Mrs. Dunmore's daughter, said Isaiah Dunmore, a surviving brother. "He loved those kids," said Dunmore.

At the time of his death, he was sharing a home with his brother Isaiah, who lives in Los Angeles near Downtown.

Services will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 11 a.m. at the [Vine Life Christian Fellowship Church](#), 17421 Van Buren, in Riverside. For directions or information, go to the website linked here or call the Church directory

at (951) 780-5433.

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► [Safety](#)

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► [Ask the CEO](#)

► [CEO Forum](#)

► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

► [Metro Classifieds](#)

► [Bazaar](#)

Metro Info

► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

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CEO Roger Snoble, joins transit officials for the unveiling of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) plaque and medallion at Metro's new "green" building that houses Metro San Gabriel Valley offices adjacent to the El Monte Transit Center. Pictured, from left, Alex Gonzalez, City of Covina; CEO Snoble, Metro Board Members Pam O'Connor and John Fasana, Monterey Park Councilwoman Sharon Martinez and Metro Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers. *Photo: Ralph Cangialosi.*

It's official now: Metro's first 'green' transit facility building is gold.

(Nov. 26, 2008) The writing is on the wall at the Metro San Gabriel Valley transit facility. The certification engraved upon the brass plaque and gleaming glass medallion signifies gold certification rating from the U.S. Green Building Council. The impressive markers are the brightest and newest gem in Metro's crown of sustainable development.

Transit officials and civic leaders gathered Nov. 24 at the site to celebrate the installation of the glass medallion and brass plaque on an interior wall of the entrance to the Metro San Gabriel Valley transit facility adjacent to the El Monte Transit Center.

Metro was awarded the gold certification rating by the U.S. Green Building Council. The LEED certification scoring system is based on a set of required prerequisites and a variety of credits in six major categories: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality and innovation and design process.

Metro's eco-friendly three-story, 45,515 square-foot steel-frame transportation building was built to meet the LEED standards. The design objectives include protecting occupant health, improving employee productivity, and using energy, water and other resources more efficiently. "Our country is facing very serious challenges including climate change, energy independence and economic recession," said Metro CEO Roger Snoble. "It is incumbent upon Metro to help lead the way to live sustainably."

Metro's green building surpasses the State of California's strict standards for reducing energy use by 25 percent and water consumption by 50 percent. The office consumes 33 percent less electricity than a conventional structure, saving Metro more than \$75,000 in utility costs

annually.

The \$13 million facility houses the Metro San Gabriel Valley Sector offices and transportation offices, including a field office for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Transit Services Bureau. Construction of the building was completed in late 2007. Contractor for the project was E. O'Neil of Orange County. -- *from staff reports*