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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.