



[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](#)

Need e-Help?

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at 2-4357

[E-Mail Webmaster](#)

myMetro.net archives | Articles from March 2009

Tuesday, March 31

- [Obituary - Brian Soto](#), General Services Leader Who Died Sunday, Leaves Gateway Legacy
- [Remembering Brian Soto](#) - myMetro invites you to share your memories here
- [Board Actions](#) - Metro to buy 41 new CNG Buses for enhanced service as part of Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project

Thursday, March 26

- [CEO Snoble's last Metro Board meeting](#) is first for two new Directors
- [Employee Send-off Pays Heartfelt Tribute](#) to Departing CEO Roger Snoble
- [Tax credits](#) may increase paychecks March 27

Tuesday, March 24

- [Two Farewell Receptions](#) Planned for CEO Roger Snoble
- [Guide Dog puppies-in-training](#) take a lesson on the Metro Gold Line
- [Rooftops channel solar power](#) at the Metro Support Services Center

Thursday, March 19

- [Gateway Child Care Center](#) Repairs Underway
- [Metro's Own Marathon Man](#) Picks up the Pace for Pasadena
- [East Valley Division Service Attendant](#) trains to win in Senior Olympics

Tuesday, March 17

- [Mass Transit Ridership](#) soars to 52-year Record High
- [Committees to consider](#) increasing scope of Universal Fare System contracts, establishing budget for purchase of 41 CNG buses, increasing bicycle parking at transit stations and more.

Thursday, March 12

- [Sustainability 101](#): What is *your* Personal Initiative?
- [Another green shoot](#): Metro joins the LA Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability

Tuesday, March 10

- [PUC decision may delay](#) completion of the Expo Line to 2011
- [Metro's TAP Cards](#) to Replace Paper Day Passes Beginning March 15
- [Boyle Heights Seniors](#) learn to 'TAP' into Metro System

Friday, March 6

- UPDATE:** Services scheduled for [Metro Rail Train Operator Lamont Tucker](#), 43
- Services scheduled for [Metro Bus Operator Audran Robinson](#), 33

Thursday, March 5

- [Welcome aboard Mr. Leahy](#): Board Selects Orange County Transportation Executive Art Leahy to Head Metro
- [Etch 'n Catch](#) program tags catalytic converters to deter parking lot theft

[Metro Café](#) offers new fusion of flavors

[OBITUARY](#) Services are scheduled for R.B. Williams, Metro Bus Operator

Tuesday, March 3

[On the job](#): Systems techs rise to new heights to repair microwave antenna

[Get moving](#): TCU members get 'tough talk' about importance of exercise

Monday, March 2

[Services to be held Tuesday for State Legislator Nell Soto](#); Former employee joined SCRTD in 1986 and served as Community Relations Representative through 1993

| [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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Services to be held Tuesday for State Legislator Nell Soto

Former employee joined SCRTD in 1986 and served as Community Relations Representative through 1993

- The rosary and viewing will be held Monday evening, March 2, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1150 W. Holt Avenue, in Pomona, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Funeral services will be held Tuesday, March 3, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church at 9 a.m.
- There will be a procession immediately following the funeral mass to Queen of Heaven Cemetery, 2161 S. Fullerton Road, in Rowland Heights.
- Los Angeles Times obituary ([PDF](#))



State Legislator Nell Soto was employed at SCRTD in 1986 and served as a Community Relations Representative through November 1993. She is the mother of Metro employee Patrick Soto, senior programmer analyst.

(March 2, 2009) Funeral services for former state Sen. Nell Soto will be at 9 a.m. Tuesday at St. Joseph Catholic Church, 1150 W. Holt Ave., in Pomona.

Soto died Thursday at the age of 82.

Nell Soto, former state senator and an assembly member, joined Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) as a Community Relations Representative in September 1986 and served in that capacity through November 1993.

Soto served for 12 years on the Pomona City Council, from 1986 to 1998. She was elected to the Assembly in 1998 and served in the state Senate from 2000 to 2006. She returned to the Assembly in 2006 to represent the 61st District, which includes parts of of Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties as well as Ontario, Pomona, Chino and Montclair.

Soto will be buried at Queen of Heaven Cemetery in Rowland Heights.

A rosary and viewing are scheduled at the church on Monday from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, Soto's family suggests donations to Woods Health Services, 2600 A Street, La Verne, CA 91750.

For those who do plan on sending flowers, please send them to Custer Christiansen Mortuary, 124 S. Citrus Avenue, Covina, CA 91723.

Correspondence may be sent to: Craton Equity Partners, 11601 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 2240, Los Angeles, CA 90025.

Los Angeles Times

NELL SOTO, 1926 - 2009

State senator was environmentalist

SAM QUINONES

Nell Soto, who worked in citrus groves as a Depression-era child and rose to become a California state senator and among the first Latino officials to fight for environmental protection, died Thursday. She was 82.

Soto, one of the first Latino women elected to statewide office from the Inland Empire, died at Woods Health Services in La Verne of complications from a stroke suffered in December.

She retired from public office last year after months of failing health.

In a statement Thursday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger called Soto "a devoted public servant who committed her life to improving the lives of others in her community."

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa called her "a passionate leader and a principled voice."

She followed her late husband, Phil, a pioneer in California Latino politics who served as an assemblyman in the mid-1960s.

Nell Soto served on the Pomona City Council from 1987 to 1998. But in 1993, she took the step that would characterize her career when she was appointed to the Air Quality Management District board.

Few Latino politicians had made a career of championing environmental protection. But Soto had watched Pomona Valley air pollution grow increasingly severe.

"She always reminded me, the first real environmentalists were Latinos because they were exposed ... to all the chemicals" while working in the fields, said her son Tom.

In 2004, as a Democratic state senator, she formed a task force to help water districts in Fontana, Rialto and Colton address perchlorate contamination of groundwater.

"She was able to get Sen. [Dianne] Feinstein to deliver \$20 million to [the] Inland Empire to buy replacement water" and clean up the pollution, her son said. "That was probably one of her last great efforts."

For many years, her political career was spent in the shadow of her husband.

He died in 1997. The next



Los Angeles Times

TRAILBLAZER

Nell Soto was one of the Inland Empire's first Latinas elected to statewide office.

year, at 72, she won a seat in the state Assembly. Before the middle of her first term, Rep. George Brown died. State Sen. Joe Baca ran to replace him. She, in turn, won a special election to replace Baca.

Although her son Tom is a gay Democratic activist, she earned the gay community's ire in 1999 when, under attack from conservative and pro-family groups, she switched her vote on a proposal that would have protected gay students from harassment. The measure failed in the state Assembly by one vote.

Soto was born in Pomona on June 16, 1926, to a family that had lived in the area for six generations.

During World War II, she worked in a factory that made crates for bombs and another that made parachutes.

Also during the war, she met Phil Soto, a soldier on leave from Okinawa, Japan. They were married in 1946.

The couple ran television repair businesses in the city of Commerce and in an unincorporated area of Los Angeles County. They organized a campaign to incorporate the area, which is now the city of La Puente. Phil Soto became the town's first mayor.

In 1977, the family moved to Nell Soto's hometown of Pomona.

In addition to her son Tom, Soto is survived by three other sons, Michael, Patrick and Philip; a daughter, Anna; 11 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. Another son, Robert, died in 2004.

Services were pending.

sam.quinones@latimes.com

[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 Roger Snoble welcomes transit official Art Leahy, who will take the reins as Metro's chief executive April 6. *Photos by Gary Leonard*

Board Selects Orange County Transportation Executive Art Leahy to Head Metro

By LAURA KLOTH
myMetro.net

(March 5, 2009) Arriving aboard a shiny new hybrid Metro bus that aptly displayed: "Welcome Aboard Mr. Leahy," Metro's newly hired CEO Art Leahy joined Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Metro board members at a news conference Thursday in front of the Metro Headquarters.

"It is great to be here with you," Leahy told the crowd of media and spectators under a cool sunny sky.

"Let me thank the chair, Mr. Villaraigosa and board members for asking me to undertake this task. It's a great one. I appreciate the confidence of the board," Leahy continued and then added: "I look forward to doing everything I can to earn their trust and to deliver great projects and services for the taxpayers and travelers of Los Angeles County."

Leahy, 60, who heads the Orange County Transportation Authority, smiled as he signed a nine-page contract to become Metro's new CEO on April 6 after Metro's current and popular CEO Roger Snoble steps down to retire.



At left, newly hired chief executive Art Leahy signs on the dotted line. At right, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa replaces OCTA pin with a Metro one.

And to further punctuate Leahy's new role, the mayor even provided Leahy with a new Metro lapel pin to replace the OCTA pin he arrived with.

"Under Art's stewardship, the MTA is set to enter another era of progress building on the steady efforts in recent years to restore credibility to this agency, and improve the lives of Los Angeles County's commuter," the mayor said, "Today, let me be the first to say, welcome home."

Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Vice Chair Don Knabe said Leahy's hiring was a great opportunity for Metro because of Leahy's history with Metro would allow him to "jump right in."

Metro Board member Ara Najarian said, "We've got a great CEO that's leaving the agency, and a great one that's coming in. We've got transportation projects, subways, light rails, freeway improvements. It's a great day for the county of Los Angeles and for all our residents."

Snoble said he was confident in turning over the helm to Leahy. "When you get ready to leave, you don't want to kind of just leave it in anybody's hands. You want to leave it in the best hands possible," Snoble said.



Metro Board of Directors and CEO Roger Snoble witness contract signing: from left, CEO Roger Snoble, Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, Glendale Mayor Ara Najarian, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Art Leahy, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Director David Fleming and Santa Monica City Councilwoman Pam O'Connor.

"I'm really very proud that he will be able to go forward without skipping a beat and be able to make Metro everything that we all think it would be," said Snoble.

Board member Mark Ridley-Thomas welcomed Leahy and said he looked forward to working on a long list of projects with him and then added: "We welcome you back and I'll see you on Crenshaw Boulevard soon."

Board member Pam O'Connor said Leahy would bring that "regional connection" from Orange County to help Metro's system work with sister counties.



Art Leahy began his transit career as a bus operator in 1971.

While Leahy wasn't driving the bus he arrived in, he probably could have — driving a bus was the first job he held some 38 years ago when he worked for the Southern California Rapid Transit District before it became Metro. Leahy eventually took a top position in bus operations and was instrumental in getting the Metro Blue Line off the ground before he left to take a job out of state.

Leahy's hiring came after a nationwide search netting 12 finalists, said mayor-appointed Director Art Fleming. "I'm very happy to say in Art Leahy, we got the best of the best. It's going to be a great new day for the MTA. And, Roger, you've done a fabulous job over the years. Let's hear it for Roger Snoble."

Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board member Zev Yaroslavsky said,

"Whoever said you can't go home again was wrong. Art, you can go home again. And we welcome you home."

[Online:](#) Metro issues press release "Top Transit Official Picked to Head Metro in Los Angeles County"

[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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Aramark Chef Corey Jay Miller serves complimentary ice cream shakes at Grand Reopening March 2.

Metro Café offers new fusion of flavors

(March 5, 2009) Metro Café has reopened, and if you haven't eaten there in a while, you may be in for a few surprises.

On Monday, hungry café patrons were lining up for a fresh Mexican roasted lobster meal complete with cheese enchiladas, rice and beans for \$15.99. And patrons who purchased the lobster were happy to receive a coupon to purchase a second complete meal next week at \$3.99.

The lobster meal was part of a promotional event to show off the café's new menu choices, said Aramark District Manager Richard Masi.

Some additions include freshly made tortillas, a signature banana split shake and a choice of one-pound "Big O" sandwiches, which resemble mini-football balls and are stuffed with pastrami, roast beef and meatballs or a combination thereof.

"What we've really done here is gone crazy with our sandwiches," said Masi, adding that five custom-made Angus burgers will also be offered along with ¾-inch onion rings.

Mario
Arzapalo,
Jr., of



FreshPoint Produce, replenishes new 'Farmer's Market' stand.

Fresh produce will be available daily for \$1 apiece and breakfast patrons will get a choice of stuffed pancakes complete with fruit and cream cheese, a waffle bar, chilaquiles, omelettes or pastries from local bakeries.

Pizza lovers could choose from a slice or personal-size pizza while salad lovers could eat from the expanded salad bar or get a bowl full of stir-fry veggies with chicken or beef.

And for those who are really hungry, the 4 1/2 pound burrito is still free if you finish it, Masi said.

A new system is planned that would allow the 600 to 800 daily patrons to order meals first and get a number. "While you're waiting, you could get your drink and then listen for your number," Masi said. "We think it will be a little faster."

Upcoming promotions include a performance by the Blue Liners and Friends on March 11 from noon to 1 p.m. — *from Laura Kloth*

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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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Sheriff's deputy etches license plate number onto catalytic converter. If the item is stolen, there's a much greater chance of catching the criminal, as the officer can enter the license plate number into a law enforcement database and possibly recover it.



To catch a thief:

Etch 'n Catch Program tags catalytic converters to deter parking lot theft

By RICH MARTIN
Web Content Editor

(March 5, 2009) The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department "Etch N Catch" program aimed at preventing the theft of catalytic converters and truck tailgates should help ease the mind of those who park at Metro lots.

Transit Bureau Detective Frank Richter, assisted by a team of volunteers, supervised the program at the Green Line Lakewood Station recently. What they did was etch the license plate numbers of 16 vehicles onto their catalytic converters or tailgates, both to help deter would-be criminals and to make it easier to find and prosecute thieves.

Richter said the theft of the two items has become a national epidemic, and parking lots where trucks and SUVs are unattended for a long period of time – such as Metro lots – are the target. This is a big problem at Metro lots in South Los Angeles such as those in Lakewood, Norwalk, Willow and the Long Beach Transit Center.

He said stealing those parts is a "fast way to make a quick buck," as it takes only three to six minutes to remove catalytic converters or truck tailgates, which are then sold to auto-parts stores. Catalytic converters can be sold for \$20-\$100 and truck tailpipes for \$50-\$150, he said.

Usually the theft is done by two-man teams, Richter said, with trucks and SUVs the likeliest targets.

Catalytic converters and truck tailgates are unmarked, so a car or truck owner has little recourse if it happens to them. But if the license plate is etched on, that can help in two ways.

“Our idea is prevention,” Richter said, as thieves might look for easier targets if they see the etching. If the item is stolen, there’s a much greater chance of catching the criminal, as the officer can enter the license plate number into a law enforcement database and possibly recover it. Without that identification, it’s very difficult to catch the thief, he said.

Richter said he hoped the agencies involved could repeat the program, which was well-received by the 16 people who had etching done at the station for free.

“Whatever we can do to help customers, we should do it,” he said.

Two years ago, Richter and Transit Services Bureau officers conducted a sting operation selling purportedly stolen catalytic converters to an auto-parts store, and two were arrested.



- [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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Services are scheduled for R. B. Williams, Metro Bus Operator

- Popular operator joined Metro in 1999; he received many commendations from customers, including one on his last day of service.
- Viewing will be held Sunday, March 8, from 12:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Harrison and Ross Mortuary, 4601 Crenshaw Blvd. (323) 584 -1230.
- Funeral services will be held Monday, March 9, at 11 a.m. at the Baldwin Hills Baptist Church, 4700 W. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. in Los Angeles. Repast will be held at the church following the service.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(March 5, 2009) R. B. Williams, a Metro bus operator who joined Metro in 1999, died unexpectedly at his home in Los Angeles on the weekend of Feb. 28. Mr. Williams was 65 years old.

Mr. Williams was hired by Metro as a part-time operator in 1999, and advance to full-time in May 2002. He began his current assignment at Venice Division 6 in 2004 and had previously been assigned to Divisions 1, 3, 5, and 10.

Venice Division Transportation Manager Cheryl Brown tells of numerous customer commendations generated by his cheerful nature and customer service. "He was so high-spirited and personable," she said.

Typical and quite poignantly, a final commendation arrived at her office on Feb. 27, Mr. William's last day on the job.

"The customer who was visiting from Toronto, Canada, called our customer service department exclaiming that Operator R.B. Williams 'greeted every single passenger getting on the bus with a smile and a cheerful *hello!*' The patron also stated that in his opinion this was the 'finest customer service' that he had witnessed in a vehicle operator," said Brown.

Mr. Williams was born Feb. 23, 1944, in Shreveport, Louisiana. He was single and lived in Los Angeles at the time of his death. He leaves behind two brothers, said Brown.



R. B. Williams

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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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Systems techs rise to new heights to repair microwave antenna



Systems Electronic Communications Technicians Dennis Johnson, at left, and Raul Naranjo, above, work at dizzying heights to replace the cover of a microwave dish antenna at Metro's 65-foot Mt. Washington communications relay tower. *Photos courtesy of Norman Ward.*

- **Field SECTs maintain backbone radio, microwave and telephone systems for bus and rail operations and support services.**

By Michael D. White
Web Content Editor

(March 3, 2009) Most Metro employees' connection with the Information Technology Services (ITS) Department is usually limited to getting a quirky desktop computer back on-line or unraveling the mysteries of a malfunctioning telephone answering system.

But there's much more to it than that...

One of the most critical of Metro's infrastructural components that allows us to send and receive information anywhere within Metro's many locations, is its wide area network or WAN. Of the many services ITS provides, one of them is keeping the WAN working and secure.

The ITS Systems shop is on call seven days-a-week to cover Metro's operational communications needs, rain or shine, wherever there's a problem, be it on the 15th floor of the Gateway Building or atop a 65-



Dennis Johnson scales the 65-foot relay tower as heights draw the service vehicle on the ground below.

foot microwave tower like the one that sits atop Mt. Washington which serves as the primary relay connection between Metro Division 7 and the agency's main communications network

Systems Electronic Communication Technicians (SECT), including Johnson and Naranjo, repair and maintain the microwave

components of Metro's WAN. They are on hand to maintain the 23 microwave communications towers that act as the primary communications link relaying radio and telephone traffic between Metro Gateway, its various service sectors and divisions.



The ripped and shredded microwave dish cover was a neighborhood eyesore.

The towers - which average 45 to 65 feet in height - are strategically located at several points throughout Metro's operational region, including microwave antennae at Sierra Peak, Rio Hondo, San Pedro Hill, Mt. Lukens (near Mt. Wilson) and Verdugo Peak. Each tower supports 2 or more dish antennas with most towers shared with other companies.



The task was complicated by communications and power cables in the area.

Metro's ITS Department has two trainers for tower work, Project Manager Daniel Bigno and SECT Leader Abel Saucedo. Both are certified by NATE, the South Dakota-based National Association of Tower Erectors.

Both Johnson and Naranjo underwent extensive training to prepare them for their high-level maintenance tasks.

"On-going, on-the-job training is conducted by them [Bigno and Saucedo] and safety equipment is inspected annually and immediately prior to its use," said Norman Ward, ITS Systems Maintenance Manager.

[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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Dr. Frank Meza, center wearing tie, presented daunting statistics to more than 30 members during the first TCU- and Kaiser Permanente-sponsored health fair. TCU vice president Michael Winston, standing, third from right, partnered with Kaiser Permanente to offer monthly sessions of invigorating health lessons.

TCU members get 'tough talk' about importance of exercise

- [Don't miss a word of this:](#) *Transcript of Dr. Frank Meza's complete discussion*

By LAURA KLOTH
myMetro.net

Members of the Metro's Transportation Communications Union (TCU) listened to an informative discussion about how chronic illness could be prevented or mitigated by exercising.

Dr. Frank Meza, assistant director of Kaiser's Los Angeles Medical Center, presented daunting statistics to more than 30 members during the first TCU- and Kaiser Permanente-sponsored health fair this month.

He said 63 percent of Americans are now overweight and 32 percent suffer from high blood pressure, and that children and pets are following the same unhealthy trends.

"Here's the tragedy," Meza said. "Your children today will not live as long as you do. We already know that. This is the first time in five generations this is going to happen in the United States.

"It's almost too late already. It's kind of sad. We're almost thinking of that next group behind them because this group is already too far gone," referring to children who can't climb trees or run 100 yards.

Quote

Exercise prevents
depression,

cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, dementia. It leads to increased energy and improved sleep. You name it. The list is getting bigger and bigger.

Unquote

See [transcript](#)



Meza says researchers believe the obesity trends began in the mid-1960s when Americans first began trading balanced meals for frozen TV dinners and going to fast-food restaurants. The obesity rates continued to climb into the '90s as more chronic diseases began to spring up such as hypertension, diabetes and heart disease, particularly among Latinos and African-Americans.

He said the research has shown that the sources of these chronic illnesses center on lack of exercise, poor nutrition and smoking. And while medicine can prolong the lives of those with chronic conditions, the only prevention is exercise.

Meza encouraged his audience to exercise five times a week, about 30 minutes a day, and he suggested hiring a personal trainer even for one session to learn how to exercise properly without using gym equipment.

The good news, he noted, is that most adults can begin an exercise program at any point in their lives. He gave many instances where chronic illness is alleviated or eliminated after a patient begins to exercise.

Those who attended the health fair asked about ways to exercise, and all received a certificate of completion from Kaiser.

Michael Winston, Metro storekeeper and TCU vice president, said the health fair took some time to coordinate, but it was well worth the effort. He said, "This is the first step toward a monthly session for our members to participate ... to have preventive methods toward living healthier and eating healthier."

Debbie Smith-Walker, labor account manager for Kaiser, said more employers are providing health fairs to educate employees.

The next topic, "Women's Health – Heart Disease," will be held March 18 for TCU employees and Kaiser members.

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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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The following is a transcript of Dr. Frank Meza's discussion about how exercise prevents and alleviates chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Dr. Meza spoke to Metro employees who are members of the Transportation Communications Union at TCU's first health fair this month hosted by the union and Kaiser Permanente. Dr. Meza, MD, is the assistant medical director of Kaiser Permanente's Los Angeles Medical Center. The transcript is not verbatim, nor is it arranged in the order of the discussion.



State of health care and chronic illness in the United States

According to Circulation Magazine, the most prominent causes of death begin with poor dietary habits, smoking and inactivity.

We are spending a lot of money on diabetes and hypertension. When you bring new members to us, we monitor every record of diabetes and hypertension on a daily basis. We're doing a great job. However, we're going to run out of resources. Why? Because we keep getting more diabetics and more hypertensives.

Our bad habits and our children's health

Here's the tragedy. Your children today will not live as long as you do. We already know that. This is the first time in five generations this is going to happen in the United States. It's almost too late already. It's kind of sad. We're almost thinking of that next group behind them because this group is already too far gone. Why is that? Look at children in schoolyards today. Kids are not able to climb a tree or even run 100 yards -- they run out of breath.

You want your children safe so you don't let them go out, and they end up in front of the TV for an incredible amount of time. Genetically, this is bad because our bodies were designed to wake up when the sun comes up, and chase food or try to avoid from being eaten.

What do we do? We sit down all day. In fact, we avoid physical activity. We go to drive-throughs and park as close as possible to food places.

Researchers have pinpointed when the obesity rate began -- in 1966 when TV dinners were invented. Think of the concept. Before 1965, you guys actually cooked your own food. The idea was that you didn't have to cook and you could sit in front of the TV and eat your food, and that spawned other fast-food meals and restaurants.

The epidemic rates of obesity started skyrocketing. Other countries are now going through similar changes, such as China, where they have embraced fast-food lifestyles.

If we don't deal with this bottom tier (major causes of death), we don't have enough money to take care of diabetics.

The tragedy is that your children will have blindness and renal disease at age 40, where historically such diseases began at age 70. They will be having heart attacks at age 35 and 40. Why? Because they are starting the negative process at age 12. Does that make sense to you?

Our body was designed a certain way, whether you believe in God or not. We're violating the rules. We can't violate these rules. It's just how we were designed.

Overall 7 percent of the country's population is diabetic, while Latinos are nearly 15 percent, and African-Americans are higher than that.

The two groups being hit the hardest with diabetes are Latinos and African-Americans. And we're seeing younger and younger patients. Unfortunately, Asians and Caucasians are following right behind. All the bad habits, we're all kind of doing it together.

Studies have shown that there are more fast-food restaurants in poor communities, while at the same time there are fewer locations to purchase fresh produce.

We have to recognize the problem because if you depend on me as a physician to help solve the problem, I can't. I'm really good at managing diabetes and hypertension. But what about when it leads to more serious complications?

The ramifications are daunting. What happens when you have a whole bunch of people at 35 and 40 who can't work? Who is going to support them? That's very expensive. That's what we're starting to see. So it's a tragedy.



Exercise is the solution

So what if I told you that there was a pill that could cure 80 percent of cancer, 90 percent of diabetes, 90 percent of hypertension, cut heart attacks by 70 percent, make you more productive, decrease depression by 70 percent? If there was such a pill, you would take it. It's exercise.

We already know that.

Sixty-three percent of adults age 20 and above are overweight or obese -- that is two out of three.

People don't even know what normal is. We've lost sight of it. Normal is very little fat. We've studied the people who have lived to 130, 140. There are a few of them in Japan, some in Mexico. People who live to 120 to 130 around the world, they all have one thing in common. The reason they live that old is that they are that close to starvation and they exercise all day.

High blood pressure rates are now in 32 percent of the population. We're spending a fortune on high blood pressure. And what are we doing? Are we really saving your life? No, we're just prolonging it.

Exercise prevents depression, cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, dementia. It leads to increased energy and improved sleep. You name it. The list is getting bigger and bigger.

Apparently, you could fudge on nutrition if you exercise the way the body is supposed to. When you're sedentary, it doesn't seem to know what to do with food. It stores it. We always think that we're different from animals. Somehow we've convinced ourselves.

Humans can be likened to bears who gorge all year waiting for winter. Something in their brain decreases their metabolic rate because they have to survive a winter with no food. They drop their metabolic rate really low so they could make it through three or four months of snow. We do that every day. So what are you doing when you're storing food? When you're eating all the time what is happening? Your metabolic rate is dropping because it thinks that you're getting ready to store. If you're exercising a lot, there's something in our brain that says, "We're OK, we're still moving, we're OK so we could burn fuel." When you stop moving, the brain goes, "OK, conserve because we're about to go into winter." Does that make sense to you?

So what do we do? We eat all the time and sit down. So your body is saying: store, store, store. So that's why when even you decrease the amount you're eating, you won't lose weight. You won't lose weight because your body is trying to save it because it thinks, "I'm not going to eat for the next three months." That's why you can't get around the exercise. You can't because it won't work.

If you're fit, the chance of developing diabetes drops dramatically.

If you exercise 180 minutes a week, your depression goes away. It was actually shown by mental-health institutions that people who did this got better and once they stopped, they got sick again. Why is that? Because the brain and body are connected.

You will say, "I'm too old to exercise." I'm here to tell you there are a group of people at age 60, 70 and 80 that are so fit that it is no big deal to run a marathon, no big deal to ride their bike 100 miles, no big deal to do a triathlon.

California's governor has instituted a program to get elementary school children fit. He agreed to provide \$100,000 per school for children to exercise three times a week for 30 minutes. The school must have 100 percent participation. It's a good investment. If you can invest that kind of

money and people really do it, you save a lot of money. You save really big bucks. Has it been working? Not quite yet, but that's what we're trying to do right now.

Our poor health conditions are spilling over to our pets. Now you're seeing that 25 to 40 percent of dogs are overweight.

The paradigm is that people think large and bulky and curvy is healthy, but it isn't. We're going to have to start switching that.

Ideally, everyone should exercise 30 minutes, five times a week.

If time is limited, you have to figure out how to maximize your time. Other tactics would be to get some of the exercise by parking far away from your destination or riding your bike to work.

If you keep saying "This is why I won't do it," you won't do it because you have a lot of reasons you can't do it.

When is the last time you even stretched for 10 minutes? The best investment you could make is to spend about \$125 for one hour to have a personal trainer give you a plan to follow so that you don't injure yourself.

Hopefully that trainer will be able to show you how to work out at home without buying any equipment. You could do all the strength exercises without equipment.

People have a tendency to skip days when they don't follow a daily regimen.

When it's every day, it's part of your life, the chances are you will continue.

Dr. Meza's regimen

I have a rule that if I don't run an hour a day, I don't eat that day. I have maintained this regimen for 35 years.

As you get older, you start gaining weight. People who become sedentary totally degenerate. People who sit home and watch TV get dementia quickly. Here's the scary thing. What about kids sitting in front of the TV? What about 12- and 15-year-olds just watching TV? What's happening to their brain? What if they start getting dementia at age 40? Right now we could get dementia at age 60 or 70. What happens at age 40? That's going to be a frightening thought. How do you get your metabolic rate up? Exercise.

If you depend on me to give you pills to prevent it, it won't. I can only put it off, but eventually you're going to get in trouble. The only way is exercising, stretching, exercise.

When you are in an active mode your brain thinks, "We need to work hard." So when you get to high levels of exercise, you'll forget to eat. It's part of the brain mechanism.

First step

Teach yourself to eat half of what you normally eat because I guarantee you it's enough. If you're going to go to McDonald's, cut the portion you're eating in half.

In my family, when three go to dinner, it's one plate with three salads.

We can make any restaurant family-style. My kids were born and raised under this. To them it's no big deal.

Kaiser Permanente's History

I will be talking about health disparities because the bottom line is when I'm talking about health, we might be talking about a different discussion here. Most people, let's say, before 1950, what people considered preventive health care was if you had an earache they took their child to the doctor. He gave them an antibiotic.

Why did Kaiser come into existence? In 1938 Henry J. Kaiser, world industrialist, was building an aqueduct to bring water to Los Angeles. He had thousands of workers who were there and they were getting sick. All he cared about was that his workers get back on the line to build a dam.

In doing so, he hired a few doctors who said, "I'll pay you if you keep my workers working. Later I'll pay for their children and their wives because if their families are sick, they won't be able to come and work either." He was doing it from a very pragmatic point of view. It worked really well. He was paying them like a quarter a week for the workers and another 10 cents for the kids and for their wives.

The project was over, everyone went home. The war broke out. All of a sudden Kaiser got shipyards and the war effort began. Women went to work and men went to fight. Kaiser got all the contracts for shipyards -- in Richmond, Calif., the shipyards, in Fontana the steel mills. All of a sudden, unionized labor had a friend -- a big industrialist who said he needed health care for his workers. He did invent prepaid health care to keep working-class people healthy so they could work.

This was considered communism at that time. In the 1940s, 1950s, this was considered creeping socialism by most people in the medical establishment. Kaiser doctors were banned from getting privileges at any hospital. And that's the only reason we built our own hospitals.

Things have changed now. All the people that didn't like us, the AMA (American Medical Assn.), the CMA (California Medical Assn.) now like us because we're pretty big. In California, we have 8,000 doctors, and in Southern California about 3,600 -- 12 major medical centers controlling about 20 percent of the market share. Kaiser has the only integrated health-care record (system) in the United States. Only the VA (Veteran's Affairs) is somewhat as integrated.

Currently, 15 percent of the gross national product in the United States is spent on health care. It's heading toward 18 percent very quickly. Of that, one-third of the money goes nowhere because it's redundant -- doctors and facilities are not talking to each other. One-third of the money goes nowhere. You have a fragmented health-care system here in the U.S. Specialist, primary care, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology and hospice. No one's really talking to each other. It's not their fault. How can you talk to each other if everyone has their own record (system)? And you're depending on people faxing or emailing or mailing each other information -- it's very inefficient. One-third of what we spend is totally wasted. We didn't talk about administration fees either. How much of that money is just totally wasted? So we're paying a lot of money and getting very little back.



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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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Services are scheduled for Metro Bus Operator Audran Robinson

- Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m. Friday, March 13, at New Antioch Church, 7825 S. Vermont Ave., (between Florence and Manchester) in Los Angeles.

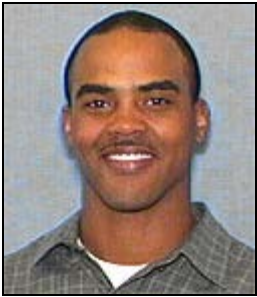
(March 6, 2009) Audran Robinson, a Metro Bus Operator since 1998, died unexpectedly Feb. 28 in a motorcycle accident.

Mr. Robinson joined Metro Nov. 16, 1998, as a part-time bus operator and became full-time in July 25, 1999, at Division 10.

During his career, Mr. Robinson worked out of Divisions 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 18. He was currently assigned to Crossroads Division 2, an assignment he began Oct. 15, 2007. Recently, he operated Line 55 on mid-day runs.

"He was a fun-loving person, and well-liked by his co-workers," said Diane Frazier, Transportation Manager at Division 2. He had recently completed a business degree and intended to pursue a master's degree, she said.

Born June 24, 1975, he was 33 years old. He was married with children and resided in Apple Valley. He is survived by his wife, Evelyn, and four children and his mother, Audrey Johnson, and a sister.



Audran Robinson



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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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Updated notice:

Services are scheduled for Lamont Tucker, Metro Rail Train Operator

- A viewing will be held Tuesday, March 10 at the Rose Hills Mortuary in Whittier from 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Information, directions: [Rose Hills Memorial Park and Mortuary](#) is located at 3888 Workman Mill Road in Whittier.
- Funeral arrangements have been set for Wednesday, March 11, at 1 p.m. at the Rose Hill Hillside Chapel (enter through Gate 17).

(March 6, 2009) Lamont Tucker, 43, a Metro Rail train operator who joined Metro in 1999 as a part-time bus operator, died after a short illness at his home in Corona on March 3. Mr. Tucker would have been 44 years old on March 13.

Mr. Tucker began his career with Metro as a part-time bus operator in March 1999. In October 1999, he became a full-time bus operator at West Valley Division 15.

While an operator at Division 15, he received a commendation for assisting passengers during a bus bridge in the aftermath of a tragic Metrolink accident in 2005. In June 2005, he transferred to Rail Operations as a train operator.

"Lamont was a valued member of the Metro Red Line Division where he helped to serve our customers by transporting them safely to their destinations with a smile," said Esther Pippins, Rail Transportation Operations Supervisor who was the basic rail operations instructor for Mr. Tucker.

"To put it into rail terms, he was our little engine that could. His goal was to work hard everyday to be a better operator and to share his experiences with other new operators who struggled along the way so that they could make their way up that hill," she said.

Mr. Tucker is survived by his sister Sherry Tucker and two nieces, Bria and Ashley Pye. He also leaves behind a host of friends and relatives.



Lamont Tucker

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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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Photos by Gayle Anderson



Metro Speaks volunteer Rosemarie Ordenes, who works in Mail Services, displays oversized TAP card to familiarize seniors with the card that will replace their current Metro ID card.

Boyle Heights Seniors learn to 'TAP' into Metro System

[MORE>](#) Metro's TAP Cards to Replace Paper Day Passes Beginning March 15

By LAURA KLOTH
myMetro.net

As they prepared to eat pasta and play bingo, some 80 seniors at the Boyle Heights Senior Center on March 6 listened attentively to a Spanish-language presentation about the transition to the regional TAP program presented by Metro Speaks, Metro speakers bureau managed by Community Relations Manager Helen Ortiz Gilstrap.

Ortiz Gilstrap began her discussion as Systems Project Manager Vanessa Smith projected PowerPoint slides on a large stage curtain detailing the important points about program.

"We're here to explain the change that will be occurring with your Metro senior bus passes," said Ortiz Gilstrap.



Vanessa Smith, Helen Ortiz Gilstrap and Rosemarie Ordenes prepare to begin meeting.

As she discussed the program in detail, some of the seniors watched the slides while others studied the application distributed by Rosemarie Ordenes, a Metro Speaks volunteer, who was also on hand to help inform the seniors about TAP.

The seniors learned that beginning March 15, Metro paper day passes would be sold only on TAP cards. Seniors who want to continue riding Metro at the senior discounted rate would need to complete an application for a Metro senior TAP card, which will replace their current yellow Metro senior ID card.

As part of the application process, the seniors were told, they would have to provide a copy of their California identification card, a driver's license or a passport, along with a passport size photo.



Vanessa Smith and Helen Ortiz Gilstrap answer a senior's question about registration.

"Please don't send in your original ID," Ortiz Gilstrap told the group, "And don't forget to sign your application."

During the transition, seniors would be able to get a temporary TAP card to purchase a day pass from Metro bus operators through April 11. Seniors

would be able to use the temporary card beginning March 15 through June 30, and afterward, seniors who want the discount fare would be expected to have their permanent TAP card.

As she fielded questions, Ordenes said some seniors were happy to hear that they could replace their pass if their card were lost or stolen.

"They love it," she said. "They feel more secure because if they lose the card ... they could get their TAP card replaced."

Smith said the seniors would get the cards replaced for \$5 with their remaining pass product replaced for free.

So far, Metro has processed more than 15,000 senior applications with only a few delays. Smith said some of the applications have been incomplete or do not contain the proper sized photo or the applicant isn't 62, which is Metro's required age to receive a senior discount.

With some 80,000 applications anticipated, Smith said, Metro is actively working to get the word out. "The seniors are really getting on board with this," she added.

Senior Paulina Velazquez listened attentively and afterward smiled, noting that she had already applied. "I think I'm going to get my new card in about four or five weeks," she said.

Her friend, Raul Guillen, 63, said he was happy to get the information, because he was a little confused about how the TAP cards would work.

Lizet Olmos, program coordinator of the Pico Rivera Senior Center, said she wanted to listen to the presentation to prepare seniors at her center for the changes. Metro Speaks volunteers are expected to be at the Pico Rivera center on April 28.



Helen Ortiz Gilstrap visits each table to field individual questions.



Seniors Raul Guillen and Paulina Velazquez are anxious to trade in their senior ID card for the new TAP card.



Vanessa Smith runs the PowerPoint for information-hungry seniors.

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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](#)

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PREVIEW: Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Board Member John Fasana and Real Property Management and Development Chief Roger Moliere lead news conference Dec. 15 at Union Station to launch awareness campaign for the switch to TAP cards.

Metro's TAP Cards to Replace Paper Day Passes Beginning March 15

- [MORE>](#) Boyle Heights Seniors learn to 'TAP' into Metro System

By RICH MARTIN
Web Content Editor

(March 10, 2009) A multi-front campaign is under way by Metro staff to get the word out that, beginning March 15, day passes will only be sold on TAP cards.

The campaign starts in the most obvious place. "Most of the individuals who get these types of passes get them aboard the bus," said Metro TAP Technology Director James Pachan. "Most of the marketing is focused on the bus itself."

From now through March 15, posters on fare boxes will inform riders of the new policy, while riders boarding Metro buses will be given flyers explaining the change.

The message is also being spread via bus card advertising, signage, and "take one" brochures providing additional information on the need to get a TAP card, then keep and reuse the same card for future day pass purchases, Pachan said.

The news is also being disseminated with radio and newspaper interviews and advertising, and a "vigorous outreach" effort is under way to get the word out to senior citizens.

Metro Community Relations has created a PowerPoint presentation in several languages, and it is being shown at more than 20 senior centers throughout the county. This effort started in mid-February and is scheduled to continue through June with Metro volunteers explaining the TAP changes to senior citizens attending the presentations.

The presentation is available in several languages including Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Russian, Armenian and Japanese, and English with translators accompanying speakers to some locations. The PowerPoint presentation is available as a handout in all seven languages.

"We're really personalizing the senior outreach," said Metro Communications Manager Helen Ortiz-Gilstrap, who's in charge of Metro's outreach effort to senior citizens.

That group, she said, is drawing added attention for a special reason.

"Seniors are going to have to reapply for the pass," she said, and will have to take two extra steps. They will have to supply proof of age and provide a photo.

Students enrolling in the new TAP program will have to reapply for their passes, but those with disabled passes will not be required to do so, Ortiz-Gilstrap said.

Metro bus operators are providing seniors who pay for a day pass temporary TAP cards that will expire June 30. That pass will provide the seniors with ample time to obtain their permanent TAP cards. Operators will have TAP cards available during the transition period.

New TAP cards will cost \$2 after June 30, but will be free until April 11 while quantities last when a regular day pass is purchased.

Metro's TAP campaign material is now colored blue, but starting March 15 all TAP materials will be colored green. Also, there will be a new poster on bus fare boxes, which will remind riders that they need to *"keep and re-use their TAP cards"* and that *"day passes are being sold only on TAP cards."*

The campaign's focus is on Metro bus riders as people riding Metro's light rail network will still be able to acquire passes from Metro ticket vending machines until later this year. Metro Rail riders who buy one-way passes are not affected by the change with TAP cards being made available soon at Metro Rail stations.

Ticket vending machines will continue to sell paper day passes for both buses and trains until later this year.

Metro.net is also highlighting the TAP card change, with TAP information among the rotating images that appear on the agency's home page banner.

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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](#)

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Another Green Shoot:

Metro joins the LA Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability



Board member Pam O'Connor hosts first meeting of the LA Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability at Metro in January. The group is gearing up to develop a framework for regional action. *Photos by Gayle Anderson*

(March 12, 2009) The LA Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability held its hallmark meeting in January to begin the discussion on the future of climate change planning for Los Angeles. In the meeting, members discussed a collaborative-style funding and next steps in implementing a framework plan.

The Collaborative is made up of public, private and community stakeholders, including the County of Los Angeles, Metro, the Southern California Association of Governments and the sub-regional council of governments and cities, the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Metropolitan Water District, the Community Redevelopment Agency and environmental and community groups. The meetings are coordinated by Jennifer Smith Crubb of NEXT 10, a non-profit organization dedicated to a sustainable California.

The next meeting of the LA Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability Vision Team will be held April 17. On the agenda are progress reports on potential partnerships, formalized structure, short- and long-term strategies, sponsorships and membership opportunities.

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.

The Metro Board of Directors passed a motion by directors Yvonne Burke,

Pam O'Connor and Zev Yaroslavsky to join the LA Regional Collaborative for Climate Action and Sustainability in the Board meeting held Dec. 4.
--from Gayle Anderson



Tim Papandreou, formerly of Metro planning, presented a framework on how to implement the Los Angeles Region Climate Change Action Plan.

[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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Cris Liban, Manager of Metro's Environmental Compliance and Services Department, challenges Metro employees to be 'champions of change' during Metro's awareness training pilot program developed by Organizational Development and Training Department.

Sustainability 101: What is *your* Personal Initiative?

By Rich Martin
Web Content Editor

(March 12, 2009) Sustainability efforts are in overdrive at Metro, with a vigorous campaign underway to educate workers about ways to rethink old habits and limit activities potentially harmful to the environment.

A recent meeting, featuring a presentation by Brendon Sher of Santa Monica College and the Los Angeles Community College District, focused on the potential effects of man-made environmental problems and the critical need to act to alleviate their impact.

More than 30 representatives from various departments participated in an "awareness training session" during which Sher urged people to be "champions for change."



Consultant Brendon Sher led the class in exercises to develop a Personal Sustainability Initiative (PSI) in the workplace.

Citing recent legislation mandating energy efficiency, Sher noted that Metro is making great strides in moving towards sustainability.

Sustainability, defined as “meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to not deplete the Earth’s resources at a rate that the Earth cannot replenish.”

The “three Rs” of the campaign, he said, are to reduce consumption as well as reuse and recycle materials with the benefits sustaining humanity, health and wellness, and saving money because of enhanced efficiency.

Cris Liban, Manager of Metro’s Environmental Compliance and Services Department, said, “This is the campaign from the bottom up - making sure the word gets out about sustainability.”

It’s important that Metro is “recognizing that we can contribute a lot to clean air,” Liban said, adding the agency has been doing that for some time now.



Organizers teamed up to present compelling lessons in good practices for the workplace. From left, OD&T Director Marion Colston, OD&T Training Specialist Cynthia Shavers, Brendon Sher and Cris Liban.

Metro’s sustainability effort formally started with the December 2006 formation of the Clean Air Task Force. That group has continued its work with the approval of the Metro Sustainability and Energy Policy in June 2007 and the support of the Board of the Ad Hoc Sustainability and Climate Change Committee that first convened in September 2007. “It’s just snowballed from there,” said Liban.

Another major component of the sustainability effort flows from the top down, Liban said, as managers “think within their own departments” about changes they can implement with their own

staffs.

Metro has been involved in green efforts for several years and has gained a well-deserved place as a transportation industry leader in implementing efficient and cost-effective sustainability projects and programs.

Metro was the first transit agency in the country to use compressed natural gas (CNG) buses, and operates one of the largest – 2,500 and growing – CNG-powered fleets in the nation.

Construction of the landmark Metro San Gabriel Valley headquarters exceeded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Gold Standard for “green” compliance, while the Metro Bus yards in Sun Valley, Chatsworth and Carson have impressive solar panel arrays that significantly reduce energy waste and expense.

Other sustainability efforts underway throughout the agency include utilizing recycled materials such as paper and ink cartridges, lessening the use of copiers, turning off computers and other equipment at days end, and the purchase of fixtures that lessen the use of electricity and water.

What happens next on the sustainability front?

Liban also said training of Metro workers is ongoing. “We are going to reach out to at least 300 of our employees” for sustainability education with Sustainability Summit planned for May 6-7.

Last year, the Metro Board of Directors mandated a baseline carbon footprint report, a document that was released in December. A follow-up report, planned for completion at the end of June, will show what Metro has accomplished in terms of achieving its sustainability goals and include a list of sustainability indicators that can be used to measure progress.

A survey will also soon be rolled out to “look at how we have progressed as a region,” said Liban. The new survey is a follow-up to one conducted in the spring of 2008 that established sustainability baselines for all 88 cities and other municipalities in Los Angeles County.

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► [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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The Exposition Light Rail Transit Line (Expo Line) will travel along the Exposition railroad right-of-way between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City. Nine new stations will be constructed along the 8.6-mile Expo Line route. Click on image for larger view.

PUC decision may delay completion of the Expo Line to 2011

By RICH MARTIN
Web Content Editor

A recent decision by the state Public Utilities Commission to deny the application for a grade crossing at Farmdale will delay the completion of the Exposition Light Rail Transit Line between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City, but transit officials breathed a sign of relief that the news wasn't worse.

The PUC, on a 4-1 vote, rejected an at-grade crossing for Farmdale Avenue next to Dorsey High School because of safety concerns. The PUC did find that a pedestrian overcrossing with Farmdale closed to through traffic was "practicable."

Expo Line Construction Authority Chief Operating Officer Samantha Bricker said that means that a new environmental review on that option will have to be conducted and the crossing application will have to be amended. The PUC will be the lead agency for environmental review under CEQA.

If Farmdale was closed and a pedestrian overcrossing is approved by the PUC, the cost would be approximately \$7 million. Bricker said, but that doesn't include the cost of possible delays.

Bricker said, however, that the decision wasn't a surprise and that environmental studies were already underway, adding that the PUC believes that the pedestrian overcrossing was practicable. "At least we've gotten to a point, after more than two years, of having a better idea of what we're building," said Richard Thorpe, Chief Executive Officer of the Expo Authority.

Bricker said the Expo Line completion date may be delayed and that the Expo Line may open in segments. The first half of the line to Crenshaw, might open in 2010, with the portion from there to Culver City opening the

following year.

The \$862 million Expo Line broke ground in 2006, and 36 of 38 crossings were approved by the PUC. But construction next to Dorsey and Foshay Learning Center delayed when the PUC delayed a decision on the crossings. "This has been going on for quite some time," Bricker said, with the PUC approval process taking two years.



Construction next to Foshay Learning Center near the Western Station site was delayed when the the PUC delayed a decision on the crossings.

The PUC, also on a 4-1 vote, approved the crossing at Harvard near Foshay, giving permission for train tracks to be built directly above an existing pedestrian tunnel under Exposition Boulevard next to Foshay Learning Center.

A PUC administrative judge had originally said pedestrian bridges would be needed at both schools, but the PUC Commission ruled that one at Foshay wasn't necessary. The Los Angeles Unified School District was unhappy with the decision on Foshay, and the school board has 30 days to petition the PUC for a rehearing. The board could appeal that decision through the court system if that were rejected.

Bricker said she thought it was unlikely the PUC would reverse course on the Harvard crossing, adding that an appeal would be difficult as it would have to be appealed to the State Supreme Court.

"The decision was definitely better than what had originally been proposed," Bricker said.


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[Viewpoint](#)
[Classified Ads](#)
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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](#)
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Mass Transit Ridership soars to 52-year Record High

By Rich Martin

Metro is riding the wave of increased public transit use, gaining an estimated 2.39 percent during the fourth quarter of 2008 over the same quarter in 2007 after a 7.53 percent gain from 3Q 2008 over 3Q 2007.

The American Public Transportation Association released figures Monday that showed that mass transit ridership across the country rose 4 percent last year, hitting a 52-year record high.

About 10.7 billion trips were taken on public transportation in 2008, a 4 percent increase from 2007. More than 10.4 billion rides were taken in 1957, the APTA said.

Overall, rail ridership rose an estimated 13.66 percent during the third quarter of 2008 compared with the same quarter in 2007, and increased 7.15 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008 over the same quarter in 2007.

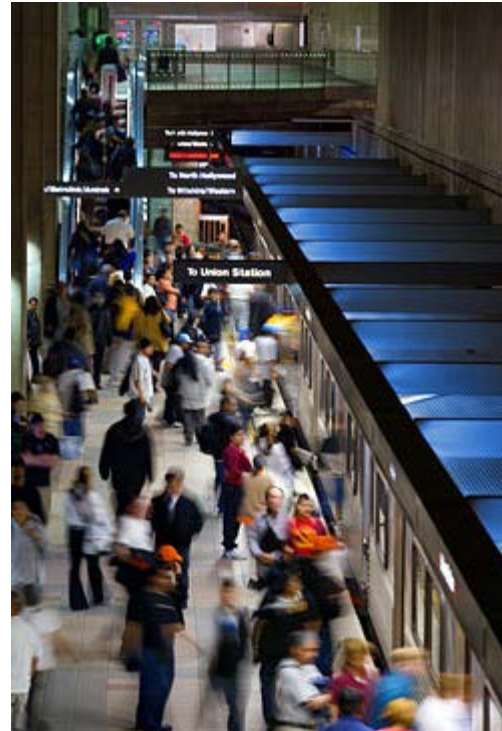
Systemwide bus ridership – not counting the Orange Line, which is counted separately – gained an estimated 6.52 percent in the third quarter of 2008 compared with the same period in 2007, and 1.35 percent in the fourth quarter of last year over the previous year.

Metro's latest estimated monthly figures show the effect of the recent economic downturn.

Overall bus and rail boardings dipped 4.7 percent in February to 35,593,649 from 37,343,078 the same month in 2008. The figure was 37,961,130 in February 2007.

Director of Service Performance and Analysis Dan Nguyen said, "Metro's ridership corresponds with national trends of increased usage in the last two calendar quarters of 2008. Unfortunately, Metro has felt the impact of the economy on ridership starting January 2009 with decreased bus ridership."

Estimated systemwide bus boardings totaled 28,260,396 in February, a



Red Line boardings, which include the Purple Line, rose 4.2 percent to 3,502,293 in February from 3,361,425 the previous year.

6.1 percent drop from 30,093,689 in February 2008. The number was 31,161,456 in February 2007.

Orange Line boardings totaled 518,520 in February, down 9.6 percent from 573,630 the previous February. The figure was 520,535 in February 2007.

Total estimated calendar month rail boardings were 6,814,733 in February, up 2.1 percent from 6,675,759 the same month in 2008. A total of 6,279,139 boarded in February 2007.

Red Line boardings, which include the Purple Line, rose 4.2 percent to 3,502,293 in February from 3,361,425 in February 2008. The figure was 3,097,693 in February 2007.

Boardings on the Blue Line rose 0.27 percent from 1,917,664 in February from 1,912,432 in the same month in 2008. The number was 1,873,672 in February 2007.

Estimated Green Line ridership saw a 4 percent decrease, with 848,650 boardings in February after 900,230 the same month in 2008. Ridership totaled 865,645 in February 2007.

Gold Line ridership increased 8.9 percent to 546,125 boardings in February from 501,672 the same month in 2008. The figure was 442,129 in February 2007.

Other local transit agencies saw a spike in ridership. The Orange County Transportation Association – overseen by incoming Metro CEO Art Leahy -- saw a gain of 5 percent last year, and Metrolink ridership rose 9.1 percent.

Mass transit use in the U.S. peaked in 1946 with almost 23.5 billion rides and then began a long descent, bottoming in 1972 with about 6.6 billion rides. Transit use then began to rise again.

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(web)[Archives](#)[Events Calendar](#)[Research Center/
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Item 5 on the Planning and Programming Committee agenda recommends adding 224 bicycle lockers to high-demand transit stations. Photo from 2005 shows bicycle locker installed at Woodley Station on the yet-to-be-opened Metro Orange Line. *Photo by Gary Leonard.*

On the committee agendas for March:

Increasing scope of Universal Fare System contracts; establishing budget for purchase of 41 CNG buses; increasing bicycle parking at transit stations

Items to watch

- **Planning and Programming Item 5:** Purchase 224 bicycle lockers and 150 racks for bicycle parking at transit stations.
- **Planning and Programming Item 6:** Award \$1.25 mil contract for system-wide, on-board, origin-destination survey required by FTA.
- **Finance and Budget Item 11:** Report on closing the enterprise fund structural deficit without the use of Measure R funds by 2011.
- **Ad Hoc Congestion Pricing Item 15:** Establish life-of-project budget for purchase of 41 CNG buses for Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project
- **EMAC Item 21:** Motion for a one-month extension to MOU with LASD for transit community policing services while negotiations for a new contract continue.
- **Operations Item 35:** Modify Universal Fare System contract in an amount not to exceed \$23 mil for on-going systems support services, adding Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, EXPO Line and the TAP Regional Computer Center. Modify Booz Allen Hamilton contract to support regional integration of full implementation of UFS automated fare collection equipment and the TAP smart card electronic fare system in an amount not to exceed \$2.95 mil.

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(March 17, 2009) The Operations Committee will review a recommendation to approve Universal Fare System (UFS) contract modifications for Cubic Transportation Services in an amount not-to-exceed \$23 million and another contract with Booz Allen Hamilton for ongoing systems support services in an amount not-to-exceed \$2.95 million.

Ticket vending machines (TVMs) and stand-alone validators are now ready to be installed at the seven Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension stations for field testing, which is expected to start as early as April. In item 35, the recommendation requests that the board add all TAP rail equipment services needed to support new rail operations coming online to the current UFS contracts.

In another recommendation up for review at the Planning and Programming Committee meeting on Wednesday, staff is reporting a dramatic increase in bicycle locker use at rail stations in 2008, noting the the waiting list for bicycle lockers has doubled in five months, from 98 to 199. In item 5, staff is requesting board authorization to award a contract (not-to-exceed \$420,479) to build, assemble and install 224 bicycle lockers at 13 rail and bus stations and to purchase 150 bicycle racks at stations where rack usage is high.

Notably, next steps are proposed in item 15 to establish budget authority necessary to proceed with the purchase of 41 CNG buses to be included in the FY10 capital program in the amount of \$28.4 million. The purchase of the 41 buses will be the first to be awarded under the fixed-unit rate contract with North American Bus Industries for the purchase of 260 CNG high-capacity buses.

March Committee Meetings

Wednesday, March 18

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

Thursday, March 19

- CANCELLED 9 a.m. – Executive Management and Audit
- CANCELLED 10:30 a.m. – Construction
- CANCELLED 12 noon – Measure R Project Delivery Committee
- 1 p.m. – Operations Committee
- 2 p.m. – Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee

Thursday, March 26

- 9:30 a.m. – Regular Board Meeting

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► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/
Library](#)

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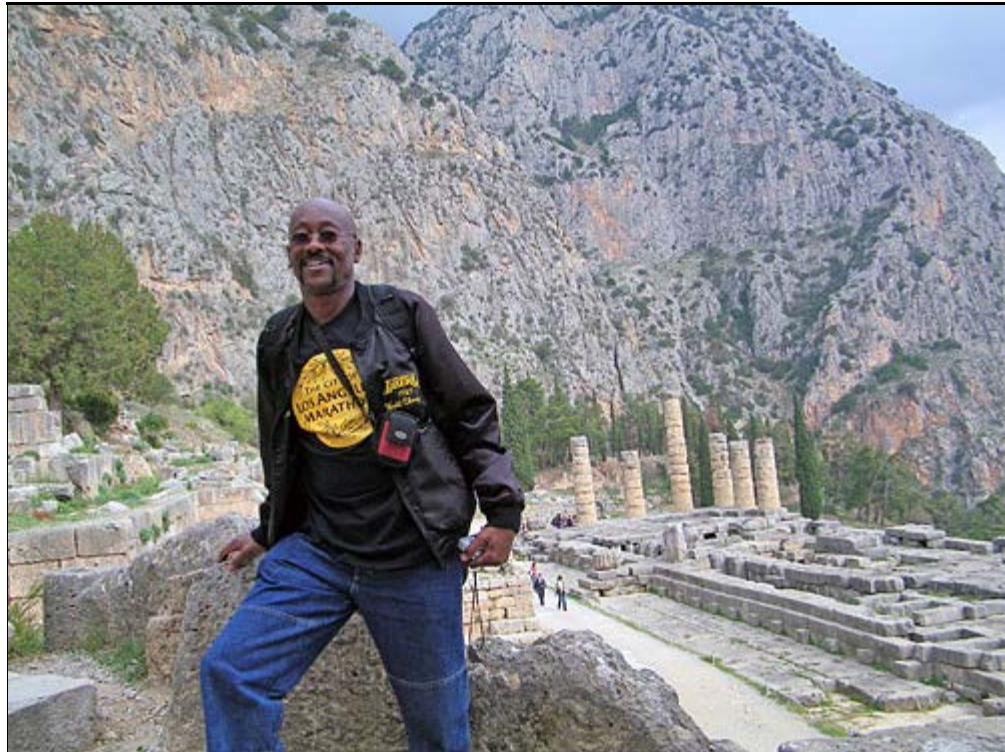
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MILESTONES: From L.A. to Athens and back again, marathon runner Everett Wilson adds the 2008 Athens Classic Marathon medal to his collection of completing 77 marathons. The marathon on the legendary fields of Greece was a dream come true for the Los Angeles Marathon Legacy Runner.

Metro's Marathon Man Aims to Collect 78th Medal in Sunday Race

- Running the legendary field of ancient Greece, Legacy Runner Everett Wilson reached a milestone at the Athens Marathon last November. He's set to collect his 78th medal at the first-ever Pasadena Marathon this Sunday.

By Michael D. White
Web Content Editor

(March 19, 2009) It's fairly safe to say that grass doesn't grow under Everett Wilson's feet. The fact is that he'd never stand still long enough for anything like that to happen.

Wilson, an assistant auditor in Metro's Revenue Compliance Department, is

a member of the ultra-exclusive Marathon Legacy Club – an elite group of about 250 dedicated, long-distance runners who have the distinction of starting – and finishing – every Los Angeles Marathon since the gun was fired to start the very first race back in 1986.

His inspiration to become a marathoner came when the Olympic games came to Los Angeles in 1984 and he had the opportunity to see some of the greatest runners in the world compete.



Superhero: Wrapped in a gold thermal blanket that lowers body temperature after a heated 26-mile run, Everett Wilson cools his heels after finishing the Athens Classic.

"It seems like I've always been on the move," says Wilson. "I'd run track in high school in Newark and I'd done a lot of running to stay in shape when I was playing basketball at East Los Angeles College. But it was the Olympics that really got me interested. Soon after the Games, I competed in a 10K run in Altadena and took second place," he recalls. "After that, I was hooked. I've come to love it."

The 62-year old, U.S. Marine Corps veteran has competed in marathons in Canada, Alaska, Oregon, Washington State, New Mexico, and, of course, California with events in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Long Beach and Palos Verdes. His best time for a 26.2-mile marathon was three hours and 15 minutes when he was in his early 40s.

He is credited with inspiring numerous fellow Metro employees to start running and is now in training for the Pasadena Marathon on March 22.

With 77 marathons and thousands of competitive and practice miles under his belt, Wilson participated last November in the Athens Marathon in Greece, which was run where the legendary ancient precursor to the modern marathon was run more than 2,400 years ago.

Tradition says that a Greek soldier named Pheidippides was sent to Sparta request help when the Persians landed at Marathon, Greece. He covered the 150 miles in two days only to be rebuffed by the Spartans. Retracing his route, Pheidippides – without rest, it's said – then ran the 26 miles from the battlefield near Marathon to Athens to announce the Greek victory over the invading Persians. Arriving in Athens, it's said he shouted "We have won" before dying on the spot of exhaustion.

History hasn't recorded the regimen that gave the Greek hero the wherewithal to accomplish his epic feat, but Wilson, who now averages about three or four marathons a year, is the first to say that runners "win the race in practice. You learn with experience that you're not going to run too much faster than you did in practice. I've never participated in a race that was more difficult than the practice before the event."

Did Wilson ever feel as if he was going to "die on the spot" after finishing one of his grueling competitions? No, he says chuckling, but his car almost did, before a race even started. "I got to the start of the San Francisco

Marathon 30 minutes late because of some serious car trouble," he recalls, shaking his head. "That was a tough one."

And then there was the day that a spectator ran across the street in front of the pack just as the marathon was starting. Wilson and several other runners collided and fell to the pavement. "I got to my feet and ran the rest of the race with my legs bleeding pretty badly. Nothing really worse than that."

On the other side of the coin, Wilson's performance in the Lompoc Marathon is one that he remembers as one of his best. "I'd trained fairly intensely for that race," he said. "I remember I crossed the finish line with so much left that I wanted to turn around and run it all over again." This, despite a case of shin splints that, he says, didn't flare-up until mile 23 or 24. "I just said to myself, 'Hey, I can do this' and I did."

A marathoner, Wilson says, "competes with himself both mentally and physically, but the most difficult thing he has to accept is the fact that his body is changing and that he has to adapt to his limitations. It's simple: you last longer if you tweak your training to adjust. If you don't, all the practice in the world won't help."

Will the day ever come when he hangs up his well-worn running shoes and call it a day?

"No, there'll never be a time when I say enough is enough. On my last day, I hope to be able to say that I've had a fairly decent run."

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► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

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► [Bazaar](#)

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► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

► [Training](#)

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Service attendant Horace Wooten, on the job at East Valley Division 15, is a top competitor in track and field.

East Valley Division Service Attendant trains to win in Senior Olympics

- 71-year-old Horace Wooten goes for the gold in track and field competitions

By Laura Kloth
myMetro.net

(March 20, 2009) If Rocky Balboa were a little bit older and working as a service attendant at East Valley Division 15, he might be mistaken for Horace Wooten. The similarities are obvious between the boxer and Wooten, a 71-year-old Metro employee who is training to win a gold medal in the Senior Olympics in Pasadena.

Once a sprinter and cross-country runner at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, Wooten began training again in 2008 to compete in track and field events.

"I tried to run in June in Pasadena at a meet but I pulled my Achilles tendon and so they scratched me. I went to San Diego in September and pulled another muscle and they scratched me," he said with a quiet chuckle.

Then in February, Wooten participated in the Senior Olympics in Palm Desert and brought home silver medals for the 100- and 200-meter events, and the bronze for the 50- meter run.

"We went through a lot of rain trying to get there but when the meet started, it was beautiful, clouds and sunshine," he said. "It was just like high school. We got on our starting blocks and runners took their mark and they shot the gun and we took off."

Wooten's medals caught the attention of his supervisor, Salvador Llamas, maintenance manager at Division 15.



Wooten puts in hefty 40-hour weeks servicing and cleaning buses at East Valley Division 15.

"I told him 'Wow, this is awesome. This is amazing. You have the energy to do that after being here for 40 hours cleaning and servicing buses?' I just saw the pride in his eyes and I knew I had to mention it and try to get him some recognition for that, and share the story," Llamas said.

"There are people that do tremendous things and a lot of times they go above and beyond for Metro because they take a lot of pride in their work," he said.

Wooten trains twice a week at Palmdale High School and plans to compete in the Pasadena Senior Olympics in June. He has posted flyers around work to get co-workers to join him and benefit from the exercise as he has. As a bonus, Wooten says, his workouts have improved his blood pressure and blood sugar levels.

"If they could see me do it, I'm sure they'll get out there and try it too," he said.

His ultimate goal is to make it to the National Senior Olympics in San Francisco perhaps by 2010. But right now he said his focus is on Pasadena. "I'm going to bring home the gold this time," he adds.

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► [Employee Recognition](#)

► [Employee Activities](#)

► [Metro Projects](#)

► [Facts at a Glance](#)
(web)

► [Archives](#)

► [Events Calendar](#)

► [Research Center/ Library](#)

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► [Bazaar](#)

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► [30/10 Initiative](#)

► [Policies](#)

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The Gateway Child Care Center is undergoing repairs for water damage to the first floor.

Gateway Child Care Center Repairs Underway

- Board Overflow Room doubles as temporary classroom for 30 children

(March 19, 2009) Children from the Gateway Child Care Center were relocated Friday after water damage caused partial flooding, closing the first floor.

The first floor has been closed to ensure safety of all children and teachers. Children are now on the center's second floor and the Board Overflow Room while repairs are under way.

Younger children have been taking classes on the second floor at the center, while older ones have been at a conference room at Gateway Plaza.

Ninety-four children are part-time and full time at the center, but lately the numbers have been lower than that. About 50 of the younger children, three months to three years old, are on the second floor, while 30 of the older ones, 4- and 5-year-olds, are in the Board Overflow Room.

General Services staff are working quickly with all appropriate parties to conduct repairs. Parents are being briefed on a regular basis.

Human Resources Analyst Mary Nugent, of Standards & Employee Programs, said it appears likely that there will be a partial opening of the facility Tuesday. -- from Rich Martin

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► [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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Guide dogs in training assemble their caretakers for a ride on the Metro Gold Line.

Guide Dog puppies-in-training take a lesson on the Metro Gold Line

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(March 24, 2009) In just a few years, 9-year-old Christopher Serrano, who lost his eyesight to cancer, hopes to get his very own guide dog.



Guide Dog Tyson accompanies Christopher Serrano, 9, and dad Juan, to Pasadena on the Metro Gold Line.

To prepare for this life-changing event, Christopher and his father Juan Serrano joined members of the Guide Dogs of America's (GDA) West Side Chapter aboard Metro's Gold Line on March 8.

Christopher's objective was to play with as many dogs as possible and ride a Metro rail car for the very first time, while the GDA members and trainers' planned to expose their dogs to public transportation to make them better working companions for handlers like Christopher.

The Serranos were invited to ride along on the trip organized annually by GDA Area Manager Glyn Judson in conjunction with Metro's ADA Compliance Administrator Chip Hazen with assistance from Rail Transit Operations Supervisor Ricardo

Perez. The Metro-arranged trip would take the group to Pasadena to have lunch at the Cheesecake Factory.

Yvonne Martin, a licensed puppy trainer with the GDA, said the organization has 375 working dogs, and 250 that are undergoing training by volunteers. She said the exercise on the Metro trains is helpful for the trainers, dogs and particularly the future handlers, who will depend on them.



GDA Director Glyn Judson, at right, assembles a group of handlers and some 25 Guide Dogs puppies-in-training at Union Station for a public transportation outing to Pasadena.

“This is new to us and I think it’s a wonderful thing” Serrano said noting that his son was very excited about the whole experience.

“We’re trying to get him a puppy as soon as we can, a working dog,” he said, “Christopher is very independent, but having a working dog will give him that much more.”

Young Christopher was born with retinoblastoma, a type of eye cancer that forced doctors to remove his eyes a few years ago. Fitted with prosthetic eyes, Christopher is now cancer free. School officials have approved a plan that will allow him to bring a guide dog to school when he turns 12. That news is very exciting to Christopher who loves dogs and treats his own dog, Rascal, like a little brother, his father said.

As the group prepares to board the Gold Line, the Serranos pose for pictures with the group of trainers and dogs in the Union Station courtyard as Judson greets and jokes with the trainers before boarding the train. “Everyone will get a turn. One at time,” Judson instructs eager photographers.

The group makes their way to the train, and dogs follow while passengers watch with awe and smiles.

Trainer
Naomi
Jost
enjoys the
outing
while
Guide Dog
Tyson
joins a
friend for
a nap.



Riding along with Christopher is Naomi Jost who is training Tyson, a 14-month-old black Labrador Retriever. Throughout the ride, Tyson and his brothers Tully and Tanner, who are being handled by other trainers, seem relaxed despite the train noise and passenger chatter.

Jost says she has trained one other dog for the GDA over the past four years, and has enjoyed it tremendously. "We do the house manners, obedience training, basic obedience training. We also do socialization which is what we're doing today socializing them, getting them use to being in places that people go that dogs usually don't go," she said.

In about 15 to 18 months, Tyson will be returned to GDA trainers to get more work-related training and become a dependable guide dog to a future handler.



Augustin Moreno and Guide Dog Shadow, at left, and TOS Ricardo Perez, right, flank event organizer Glyn Judson, GDA Area Manager.

Another rider, Agustin Moreno, who is legally blind says he depends on his trusty dog, Shadow, to ride the Metro every day. Moreno, who is heavily involved with GDA, also works as a Metro scheduling system project leader and talks like a proud father when he explains how smart and intuitive Shadow is.

"She usually looks for her seat, the ones facing each other or the two extremes. She almost asks people to get up so I can have a seat, and then she can turn around and be on that little spot. She doesn't like to be squished in-between the other seats," Moreno explains.

He points out that Shadow, like all guide dogs, are trained to stay behind the yellow line on the train platform to keep their handler



TOS Ricardo Perez, a popular rail instructor, takes a walk in the park with two of his special guests.

safe.

As he navigates the group from the train to the platform, through the a park and then toward the busy restaurant, team leader Judson, encourages trainers to focus on the task at hand, keeping their dogs in check as they file through the streets of Pasadena.

At the restaurant, the group is treated to VIP seating as restaurant-goers smile and stare at the dogs weaving around the tables before settling down

beneath the booths and chairs. Judson explains that patrons typically are happy to see the dogs, and he's only been asked once to leave from a restaurant when a patron complained about his dog.

Judson's stories continue as he recalls an email from a friend who said one guide dog saved a person's life by blocking him from crossing a busy intersection. The dog was killed by oncoming traffic, but became a hero for following his training and saving his master.

Judson shares another story where he wore a blindfold while handling a guide dog through city street. After that experience, Judson said he took the blindfold off and "bawled like a baby" because he realized just how dependent he'd been on his canine companion, and also how important guide dog training really is.

The training is the key, and while many trainers like Judson and Jost bond with their dogs as they teach them to follow directions, their focus is always to get them ready to work.

"You really want them to get to the point where you could turn them in because that's the whole goal. Of course you're sad because you've gotten attached to them, but we always know that they're going back in. And when we see them assigned to a blind person and changing their life — making them independent, there's just no greater reward than that," Jost said.

We can sleep anywhere: On the train, on the sidewalk, and even under the table at the Cheesecake Factory where everything smells delicious.



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

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One by one, 6,720 solar panels make the rooftops of Metro Support Services Center the largest solar installation in the City of Los Angeles.

'Watts Happening' at the Metro Support Services Center

By Michael D. White
Staff Writer

(March 24, 2009) Metro will take another giant leap forward in its effort to become energy-efficient with the completion in late April of a solar power panel array at the agency's Support Services Center (MSSC).

When fully functional, the 6,720 individual solar panels will generate 1 megawatt of power, or 1,000 kilowatts, and compose the largest solar installation ever constructed by a transit property in the nation, and also the largest solar installation in the City of Los Angeles.

In addition, the energy conservation measures at the MSSC shop include the installation of new HVAC, energy management and compressed air systems and the replacement of about 4,000 lighting fixtures. All in all, the new solar panel array and the capital improvements will cut the MSSC's annual \$1.1 million energy bill by almost 50 percent.

"The MSSC is the mother ship of Metro's maintenance operations," said Tim Lindholm, Metro director of capital projects. "Due to the nature of heavy maintenance work and other functions at the facility, the MSSC shops use a huge amount of electricity every year and its complete transformation into one relying on solar-generated power sets a real benchmark for Metro reaching its goals of utilizing new technologies to reduce carbon emissions and cutting operating costs."

The project is a public/private partnership among Metro, Chevron Energy

Solutions and the Bank of America, which financed the project. In addition, the project will receive about \$6 million in incentives from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the Gas Company, and the Southern California Air Quality Management District.

San Francisco-based Chevron Energy Solutions, which designed and installed the panels, will also provide long-term oversight of the MSSC solar array and the new equipment and, in addition, will guarantee the energy savings and the level of energy generated by the panel array for the next 10 years.

The MSSC covers about 27 acres and consists of five separate buildings used primarily for the central maintenance of Metro's bus fleet, the rebuilding of engines, transmissions, and general bus repair. The facility also houses Metro's central parts warehouse, as well as its Stops and Zones, vehicle technology, warranty and administrative functions. The highly trained and certified employees, technicians and mechanics at the 400,000-square-foot facility are responsible for keeping the fleet of Metro buses operating in all of the agency's 11 operating divisions in top roadworthy condition.

Efficiency of solar panels lowers cost of utilities

Using the power of the sun to enhance efficiency and minimize cost is nothing new for Metro.

Over the past several years, the agency has firmly established itself as a world-class leader in adopting new solar technologies that generate energy without harming the region's air quality.

In 2005, Metro made national headlines when it completed the largest solar energy project to date in the transportation industry – the installation of 1,648 solar energy panels at its Metro Bus Divisions 8 and 15 in the San Fernando Valley.

The panels there produce about 425 kilowatts of clean, renewable electricity – more than enough to provide up to 20 percent of each bus division's total energy requirements or enough to provide power to more than 100 homes annually for 25 years.

The panel array, completed at a cost of \$3.3 million, has saved Metro an average of \$300,000 annually in electrical costs since they became operational.

Two years later, Metro Bus Division 18 in Carson was outfitted with 1,632 solar panels as the agency committed to even greater levels of operational energy efficiency and sustainability. The 498-kilowatt system, comprising 1,632 individual solar panels, was installed on the roof of the Carson bus division's maintenance facility and six parking lot carport structures.

Metro estimates that the Carson solar panel system – designed and installed, like the MSSC project, by Chevron Energy Systems – generates 600,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year.

"Combining the three arrays installed at Divisions 8, 15 and 18, Metro has firmly established itself as a world-class leader in adopting new solar technologies that generate energy without harming the region's air quality," said Lindstrom.

More recently, Metro's new San Gabriel Valley Sector office is "ecologically

green,” built to the specifications of a silver rating by the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

The San Gabriel structure consumes 33% less electricity than a conventional structure and surpasses the State of California’s already strict standards for building energy use by 25% and water consumption standards by 50%.

The upshot? An additional saving for Metro of more than \$75,000 in annual utility costs.

Metro’s FY09 budget takes the agency’s green goals one step further with the inclusion of funding for the installation of 750 solar-power enhanced lighting fixtures at selected Metro bus stops. The light fixtures provide illumination for dark bus stops and flashing beacons to notify bus operators of waiting passengers.

“The Board saw the need to make sustainability a critical part of Metro’s overall growth plan and a key part of that is the utilization of solar power,” said Lindholm, “It’s clean and it’s efficient and I can see Metro doing a lot more with it in the future.”



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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](#)
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Tax credits may increase paychecks March 27

(March 26, 2009) Paychecks may look different for many employees this week because of new tax withholding tables from the IRS — a result of the recently signed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

Eligible taxpayers will receive a tax credit that will automatically be applied in paychecks beginning March 27 and throughout the remainder of 2009.

For many employees, the reduced tax withholding will lead to an increase in the net amount of the paycheck, said Dave Wakeling, Accounting Manager.

A memo included in your paycheck envelope and distributed to e-mail boxes on Thursday provides details on the refundable income tax credit for 2009 and 2010.

Individuals will receive \$400 extra over the course of the year, while couples filing jointly will receive \$800. Once your income moves above \$75,000 (single) or \$150,000 (joint), the credit begins to phase out. Individuals with modified adjusted gross income (AGI) over \$95,000 (\$190,000 for joint filers) are ineligible for the credit.

For 2009, the tax credit will be implemented through revised income tax withholding tables designed to reduce withholding so that the full amount of the credit will be implemented during the remainder of this year.

President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law on Feb. 17, 2009. The centerpiece of this legislation, which is aimed at jump-starting the American economy, is a \$400 individual "Making Work Pay" income tax credit for 2009 and 2010. The income tax credit for joint filers is \$800.

Rather than issuing individual checks, the tax credit will be distributed through reduced withholding from workers' paychecks.



President Obama signs American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law Feb. 17 in Denver. The tax credit it provides will be distributed through reduced withholding from workers' paychecks beginning March 27.

— from Gayle Anderson



Time to say goodbye.

After seven and 1/2 years of Going Metro, Roger Snoble is retiring. Please join him for a special reception to celebrate the agency's accomplishments and toast the future.

Thursday, March 26, 2009

2:00pm

Gateway Plaza

Patio area outside Customer Relations

Light refreshments will be served.



Metro



Farewell to the Chief.

You are cordially invited to a reception honoring Roger Snoble on his retirement.

Thursday, April 2 from 5:30pm – 8:00pm

*Walt Disney Concert Hall's Blue Ribbon Garden
141 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012*

During his 7 ½ years at Metro, Roger has guided the agency through the successful openings of the Metro Gold Line and Metro Orange Line, introduced scores of popular Metro Rapid lines and seen Metro named "America's Best" large transit agency. He also co-founded the Mobility 21 coalition and was instrumental in the passage of the Measure R ½-cent sales tax that will fund a comprehensive package of new transit, street and highway improvements in LA County for the next 30 years.

Cost per person is \$40, (no-host bar). Please reply by March 27 to Irma Rivera at 213.922.4738 or riverair@metro.net.

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► [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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CEO Roger Snoble stayed the course of Metro for seven and a half years. Get in the picture for a photo op at the employee reception this Thursday.

Two Farewell Receptions Planned for CEO Roger Snoble

- **Time to say goodbye:** Employee reception is Thursday afternoon at 2 p.m. Be there for "The Big Picture." ([PDF](#))
- **Farewell to the Chief:** Public reception at Walt Disney Concert Hall Blue Ribbon Garden on April 2 at 5:30 p.m. celebrates 45-year career of Roger Snoble ([PDF](#))

(March 24, 2009) Two farewell events for departing CEO Roger Snoble will be held during the next two weeks.

The employee reception – themed "Time to say goodbye" – is scheduled at 2 p.m., Thursday, March 26, on the Patsaouras Plaza patio next to the entrance to Customer Relations. Light refreshments, featuring a giant farewell cake decorated with the CEO's photo, will be served.

Get in the Picture!

Of special note, employees will gather with CEO Snoble for a giant photo op at the beginning of a brief program.

A public reception is set for 5:30 to 8 p.m., Thursday, April 2, in the Walt Disney Concert Hall Blue Ribbon Garden on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. The cost to attend is \$40. RSVP at the Metro Store by March 27. The Metro Store is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays. Information: [Irma Rivera](#), 922-4738.

CEO Snoble takes a bow

CEO Snoble announced, Dec. 17, he would retire once his successor was selected. The Metro Board of Directors announced, March 5, the selection of Arthur T. Leahy, currently the head of Orange County Transportation

Authority, to serve as Metro's chief executive effective April 6.

Under the leadership of Roger Snoble, who has led the agency since Oct. 1, 2001, the agency garnered top national awards for excellence, most notably "America's Best" in 2006, when APTA crowned Metro as the nation's "Outstanding Public Transportation System."

CEO Snoble played a key role in securing last fall's passage of Measure R, a new half-cent sales tax that will fund a comprehensive package of new rail and bus and street and highway improvements in the county over the next 30 years.

During his seven and a half years at Metro, CEO Snoble launched the opening of the Metro Gold Line and Metro Orange Line and the expansion of Metro Rapid, and broke ground for the Expo Light Rail Line and the Eastside Extension of the Metro Gold Line. In 2002, CEO Snoble co-founded the Mobility 21 Coalition which today has expanded to encompass transportation advocacy in the entire region of Southern California.

— from Gayle Anderson

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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](#)

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Employees rally around CEO Snoble for a fond farewell. [Find yourself](#): Click on the image to download print-sized version. *Photo by Gary Leonard*

Employee Send-off Pays Heartfelt Tribute to Departing CEO Roger Snoble

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

Inching closer to a life of leisure in Palm Springs, Metro's CEO Roger Snoble received a train-load of accolades complete with a red carpet event, a few gag gifts and a slice of chocolate cake at the first of two farewell events planned for the departing CEO.

At Thursday's board meeting, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa presented Snoble with a resolution calling him a "great and public servant," who "cleaned up the city's bus service, expanded rail, and spearheaded the passage of Measure R, the 30-year sales tax that is expected to further improve public transportation."

Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Member Zev Yaroslavsky said, "I think the most significant thing you've achieved for this agency is ultimately restoring the credibility of this agency with our taxpayers, with our constituents."

Snoble received a standing ovation upon accepting the mayor's gift and said, "Serving as Metro's CEO for the past seven-and-a-half years has been a tremendous honor as well as my capstone to my 45-year career in transportation."

He likened Metro to a "transportation laboratory" where he had the "privilege and pleasure of living, working and playing."

"I feel sort of like Moses. With the passage of Measure R, I helped part

the seas, but I'm not going on to the promise land with you. Art Leahy will have that privilege," he said, referring to Metro's newly-hired CEO who is expected to take over April 6.

"We had a great ride together. Thank you," he said.

Later, CEO Snoble and his wife, Kit, greeted scores of Metro employees from the red carpet in front of the Gateway building where he received tearful hugs, handshakes and more words of appreciation along with a few gag gifts.

General Manager, Rail Operations Mike Cannell said Snoble was a major reason why he chose to take his Metro job because he'd be working with "one of the most honest, humble persons" in the industry.

Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers provided Snoble with a service award thanking him for his leadership. "We're going to miss you," she said.

Chief Administrative Services Officer Lonnie Mitchell presented Snoble with two versions of a retirement badge, one with his early Metro mug, and the second with today's photo.

Snoble thanked everyone again saying, "No one person really does anything by themselves. It takes a lot of people."

He said Metro's employees accomplished a lot, and he rallied everyone to continue their hard work. He was moved to tears when the thanked his immediate staff.

"I'm going to keep an eye on all of you. I going to make sure that I know what's going on and hear what's going on," he said.

Snoble's final farewell is set for Thursday, April 2, in the Walt Disney Concert Hall Blue Ribbon Garden on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles.

Stayed tuned for continuing coverage. Next up: Slide show of employee tribute and event video.

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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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Among the tributes honoring CEO Snoble at the Board meeting March 26 was a framed "YES on Measure R" poster presented by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. *Photos by Gary Leonard.*

CEO Snoble's last Metro Board meeting is first for two new Directors

(March 26, 2009) It was CEO Roger Snoble's last board meeting Thursday as two new Board members made their first appearances.

At a news conference held in the Patsaouras Plaza moments before the start of the March 26 Board meeting, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announced the appointment of Los Angeles City Councilman Jose Huizar and Department of Transportation General Manager Rita Robinson to the 13-member board of directors.

Huizar replaces Councilman Bernard Parks, who stepped down in January, and Robinson replaces former Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce Chairman David Fleming, who resigned after the mayor appointed him to the Metropolitan Water District's board of directors.



Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announces the appointment of Los Angeles City Councilman Jose Huizar and Department of Transportation General Manager Rita Robinson to the Metro Board of Directors at a news conference held today.

CEO Snoble will introduce his successor at an all-staff meeting on April 6. The Board of Directors announced, March 5, the selection of Arthur T. Leahy, currently the head of Orange County Transportation Authority, to serve as Metro's chief executive.

Snoble, 63, announced his retirement in December after leading the transportation agency for seven and a half years. In his departure, he expressed a desire to have consistent leadership over the next few years as Measure R-funded projects get underway.

CEO Snoble played a key role in securing last fall's passage of Measure R, a new half-cent sales tax that will fund a comprehensive package of new rail and bus and street and highway improvements in the county over the next 30 years.

Included in the presentations honoring CEO Snoble at the Board meeting was a framed "YES on Measure R" poster. — *from Gayle Anderson*

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[Obituary:](#) Brian Soto, General Service leader leaves Gateway legacy.

Remembering

Brian Soto

1962 - 2009



Metro employees share their memories of Brian Soto

- Metro employees and friends are mourning the loss of Brian Soto, DEO of General Services, who died Sunday, March 29, of cancer. MyMetro.net invites you to submit your thoughts and memories here on these pages. The collection of your memories of Brian will be printed and given to the Soto family in commemoration of our friend and co-worker.

[Submit your memory here](#)

Genuine. Honest. Responsive. Professional. Positive. Optimistic. Dedicated. Honorable. Friend.

—Maya Emsden

As the Labor representative for all of Brian's employees from 1991 to 2006, I got to deal with Brian on a regular basis for 16 of his supervisory and managerial years. Truly one of the fairest people I had the opportunity to deal with in all of my years.

As lead negotiator for TCU's labor agreement's during those years, I sat across the negotiating table well over 150 times during that same time. Once again, Brian Soto's consideration for other's and desire to achieve a successful and fair contract for his employees made our goals very similar, and allowed us to both achieve our goal while making our bosses happy.

I was on many "committees" over that 16-year period and so was Brian Soto, especially the transition committee. People are right on- his best work was probably - the move to Gateway. A plaque somewhere in that entryway should recognize Brian's commitment to the people and visitors of the LACMTA Gateway complex.

As a casual friend, I had the opportunity to meet Brian at social events and his smile and positive outlook were his trademark. That is what I will miss the most.

—Raymond Huffer

I will always remember Brian as a great person to work with. We both go back to the old "RTD" days at 425 S. Main Street. We often looked back and remembered how we both survived the earthquake, the dead bodies and the windowless offices of the old building. Life at 818 West 7th was a great change and life here at Gateway was a special blessing.

Brian always had a positive response to any request or situation. Even when we were working with USG and its problems, Brian was a shining light! He was loved by his staff and all who knew him. He will be truly missed!

—*Velma C. Marshall*

What a wonderful colleague and friend. He was always helpful and had a great sense of humor. He took care of the things that improve your work environment. He understood the "Dilbert" factors and characters in our work life. Brian you were the best concierge at Metro and I will miss you.

—*Diego Cardoso*

In 1994, after working many years in maintenance supervision and student intervention for city and school districts, I heard of an opening for General Services Supervisor at the 'new' MTA. I was ready for a change and applied for the position.

A month or so later, I, along with eighty-five others, tested for the job. After a few weeks, I was called for an interview. Brian Soto and Bob Lewis were my 'panel.' After the interview, Brian walked me to the elevator (818 Building). He asked, if I was selected, when could I start? I stated three weeks. I drove directly to my employment with the City of Cerritos. As I walked into City Hall, I was informed I had a phone message. It was MTA's HR Dept. I'd been offered the job. I accepted.

Brian Soto was the first Metro manager I worked under. The Red Line was new and we were taking over the subway's custodial function. We were placed at Division 20 in a large room with one phone and nothing, and I mean nothing else. We had no equipment and our thirty new employees (custodians) were on their way. Somehow, with Brian at the helm, and with great help from Joe Coleman, we put everything together.

Our paths crossed many times over the years. Each and every time, Brian greeted me with that patented smile and laugh and strong handshake. I'll always remember Brian Soto as an intelligent, quick-witted, honest, tough, funny and driven professional. He loved this place. I thank him for bringing me here. He's one of the best people I've ever known.

—*Ron Trimble*

Just a small memory because it was so characteristic of Brian. Several bicyclists use the showers at Gateway. Some mold was growing in one of them. I told him what I thought it was beginning to look like, so before he ordered it removed he came to see. After snorting at the mold (I lied) he took a look around and said that there could be some improvements made. Very soon there were towel hooks between the showers. No one asked him for them. A small considerate thing. A Brian thing.

Brian was not a bicyclist but he was kind to them. He was not Jewish but the Menorah at Hanukkah was his initiative. And when my fellow recipients of his kindness said he had to turn on an additional light of the Menorah each night of Hanukkah rather than all at once, he consulted a rabbi who said it was not necessary, the thought was enough. But that was not enough for Brian. He determined that it was the custom and he had his staff follow it. In little things you find character. There couldn't be a kinder, more considerate, man.

—*Jesse Simon*

During the Tower attacks in New York, employees in the Gateway were understandably nervous and in need of information to feel calm.

There were some TV rooms made available to us but they were full. Mr. Soto saw us craving for news and he invited a group of Schedule Makers into his office to see first hand as the news unfolded.

—*Edward De Hoyos*

I worked for Mr. Soto back in the early 90's as a Lead Mopper Waxer.

His disposition was such that when he asked you to do something, you did it - no question. And once you did it, he would always follow it up with a heartfelt "Thank you". He was a "gentle giant" of sorts, because his position at MTA was of authority, yet he NEVER belittled your ideas and he valued your input as an employee as well as an individual. I do believe that the Gateway building and Brian Soto are synonymous with each other.

In remembrance of Brian, it would be nice if MTA could honor him by a plaque of some sort at the Gateway building.

Is calling it the "Soto Building" going to far?

I will miss him and his smile.

—Paul C. Arndt

Memories of Brian

By Raul Pedroza & the Guys)

INTRODUCTION:

I have known Brian Soto for over 21 years. We met when he was hired in as an RTD General Services Supervisor @ the 425 Bldg. As most of you know, Brian was a very private person. Brian had an aura about him that made him very special. Once you got to know Brian, you found that he was a very special person with a big heart. He would do anything for his friends. If you had a problem, he would try to help you find a solution for your problem & not judge you. I loved Brian like a brother, & I believed that he felt the same. He always had a way of making you feel comfortable & at home around him.

Most people who worked with Brian knew what kind of Businessman he was. He loved his job & the people he worked with @ the RTD & MTA. Brian was one of the Guys. We spent many vacations & special times together. I would like to give you some special personal stories & memories about Brian & his life with my family & our friends (The Guys).

LAKE MEAD TRIP:

There are so many memorable moments we had with Brian. I remember our Lake Mead trip with Brian. It took a bit of convincing, but we finally talked Brian into joining us for a long weekend at Lake Mead (with the Guys). Brian was having a great time until he found that the sun on the lake burned his face. It was the funniest thing to see him placing ice on his face with the ice melting like you placed the ice on a hot skillet. On that same trip, another friend of ours wanted to tow his 27-ft boat home & we took turns driving. Brian looked at me & said "You want me to drive & tow that boat & get that boat home in one piece?" Well as a trooper, Brian did tow the boat, but I never saw a guy place so much attention on his driving. Well needless to say, Brian decided not to go out on the boat again in the middle of summer.

CAR & BOAT SHOWS:

Brian loved to hang out with the guys & go to the Car & Boat Shows on a yearly basis. We very rarely missed the LA or Pomona Boat Shows. We always tried to talk Brian into getting a boat, but he always said "Why would I want to buy a boat if I just need to call you & Louie up to go out on your boat?" He was right. He needed only to say the word & all of the guys would be ready to hit the lake.

LA COUNTY FAIR:

Another yearly trip, was the LA County Fair. Brian loved to go to the LA County Fair with the guys to eat & look at all of the new gadgets. I remember this one year that we went to the Beach Boys Concert with Irma and Brian. Brian was walking around with a turkey leg looking like the King of the Fair giving directions with the turkey leg.

MEETING MY FAMILY:

One thing I remember most of Brian was how he respected other people & their family. I remember when Brian came to our first Family gathering where he met my Mom & Dad. (He would join us on many family gatherings). He gave the utmost respect to my mom & dad that my Mom & Dad would call him Mijo & he would call them Mama & Papa. I feel that my parents also felt that they lost a Son with Brian's passing. Brian left an impression with my kids (Stephanie, CJ, & Raulito) they would always ask on how Brian was doing & what he was up to, because Brian was always up to something & traveling somewhere.

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL, CHRISTMAS PARTIES, BEACH HOUSE, & BBQ'S (with the guys):

One of the things that the guys really enjoyed doing with Brian was having Monday Night Football & BBQ's at my house. Brian really liked the bar atmosphere in the house & boy did he like his Doritos & Louie's BBQ Chicken & Pork Shoulder. When I knew Brian was coming over, I would always buy the biggest bag of Doritos that I could find. He got a lot of the guys hooked on those Doritos.

The Guys would always traditionally get together for a Christmas dinner every year. I remember one Christmas when Louie threw a Christmas Cigar Party for Brian & the Guys at my house. We had steak, lobster, cigars & sampling of tequilas. Brian could not believe that Louie could pull this off, but surprisingly he did & Brian said that was one of the best Christmas parties he had ever attended.

Another yearly tradition was Ray's Beach House in Newport Beach. Brian was always the life of the party. I remember he would sit there in front of the boardwalk (front of the beach house) with a cigar & a beer, watching the people walk & ride their bikes by. I would always try to get Brian to go for a bike ride down the boardwalk, But Brian being Brian, would say, "Why would I want to ride the bike when the people are coming to me?"

Brian would make as many family & friend gatherings as he could which I will always appreciate and never forget because I know how busy he was with his own work & social life.

A cute story about Brian & his truck. We use to tease Brian about driving a cheap economical car for years. We use to say a man of your status should drive a nice cool car. I remember the day that he showed up to a Monday Night Football game with a beautiful fully loaded Black Denali Truck. He said he bought the truck because he liked the chrome rims. We called the truck his "Pimp Truck"!!! Boy did he love his truck!!!!

HAWAII TRIP (Guys' Trip):

The most memorable trip that the guys took with Brian was our "Guys Trip" (Louie, Ricky, Brian & I) to Maui, Hawaii in December of 2000. We had such a great time and experienced several funny & memorable experiences. Brian & I spoke several times over the years about how great & relaxing that trip was. We always said we would have to make another Guys' Trip, but we could never get our schedule coordinated. We did plan almost a year ago a "Guys' Trip" to Cabo San Lucas, Mexico for April of this year. The Guys & I are very sad that Brian will not be able to make the trip. He will be severely missed. We will be dedicating this trip in Brian's honor.

CONCLUSION:

Well I can go on for hours on the great time Brian & I had over the years. But the one thing about Brian that will always stand out to me is how much he Loved his Mom, more than life itself. He was the only guy I know that would openly say that he was a "Mama's Boy". And knowing Brian, you would not question him. He spoke of the great vacations he would take with his Mom and that his greatest pleasure was taking care of his Mom. She would always come first (His number one)!!!!

In conclusion, Brian was more than a great friend. He was like a brother to me. Anyone who knew Brian like I did, would really appreciate all the things he did for his friends & family. He knew how to make you feel very special. I was amazed on how many people he knew all on a first-name basis. He knew everyone by name. This was amazing since I can never remember peoples' names.

It has been an honor & a pleasure being called Brian's Friend. He will be missed & never forgotten!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thank you Brian for being my friend & sharing your life & experiences with me & the Guys.

—Raul Pedroza

From my first time meeting you at Metro, you never failed to greet me with a smile and a kind response. Your job here at Metro and in Life was "Well Done!" I will see you later.

—Carnell Parks

Dear Brian,

Thank you for being such a good man. You were always there for everyone including me. My family and I will always keep you in our thoughts and prayers. We will always remember your generosity and kindness. I am so sad that you are no longer with us. May God continue to Bless you and your family.

Very Truly Yours,

—Robert Calix and Family

Brian was always pleasant and approachable, which can be atypical of someone at his level of management. In his role on the Board of Directors of the NGCU, he gave me advice on the NGCU appeal process. I truly believe that if he had not given me the advice (I won the appeal) - the result of not winning the appeal would have had a detrimental effect on my finances.

Brian was a great example of how one person taking the time to help another person can have a positive influence on the world. Because of his act of kindness and his positive attitude, his example encourages me to help others.

—Susan M. Dove

I worked with Brian Soto for almost 17 years and during that time, I found Brian to be a true professional and a real friend. Brian's easy outgoing attitude will truly be missed. On several occasions, I had the opportunity to work very closely with Brian on facility related projects. I found Brian to be very goal-oriented and very knowledgeable in this area of expertise. Brian will truly be missed.

—Michael Davis

I was very privileged to have the opportunity to work with Brian and to have him as a friend. He was not only a wonderful boss, but a wonderful person; always there and available to listen.

I will miss his positive, happy go-luck personality.

I will miss having Brain come over to my cubicle and looking over the panel to say good morning. He was so tall, but his height could never match his heart in grandness.

I will miss his wonderful laughter.

—Ilda M Licón

I will always remember Brian's smile and kind demeanor. He was a wonderful person.

—Juanita Wright

Dear Friends:

Brian Soto was a wonderful person. He embodied a can-do spirit and always, and I emphasize always, greeted you with a smile. Metro was very fortunate to benefit from Brian's expertise, his dedication, his thoughtful commitment to excellence, and his positive demeanor. I will miss Brian and I know many people here at Metro will do the same. I want to convey to his family that Metro is diminished by the loss of Brian, and the light he brought to work with him each and every day.

—Raffi Haig Hamparian

I have known Brian since our SCRTD days and will always remember him for his outgoing personality, willingness to get the job done and taking pride in his job as Deputy Executive Officer of General Services.

He has definitely left us a legacy.

Brian, you will be missed. A friend and colleague.

—Lynda C. Reed

I met Brian at the 425 RTD building in 1985. He was very warm and friendly and we became quick friends. Brian was always very professional and a very hard worker. I will miss seeing him and hearing his deep voice. He was a wonderful person and will be missed by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. I will always have a special place in my heart for him.

—Frances E. Calzada

Brian Soto what can I say about him:

- always pleasant
- never showed any signs of his difficulties
- always helpful
- always respectful

- always willing to help
- treated everyone with respect
- after talking with Brian you always felt better
- very dependable
- no matter how busy he was he always found time for you
- always listened to you
- he was a role model
- he was a friend

I will miss Brian, I have lost a good friend and co-worker.

—John McBryan

I really enjoyed working with Brian Soto. He was very helpful, supportive and very attentive to my requests. I will miss him here on earth dearly!

—Lisa Rose Martinez

Dear Soto Family and Friends,

I have two sons and if they could grow up to be like any Metro employee, Brian comes to mind. What a man! It was so obvious that he loved life. Brian exuded confidence without arrogance and he was well respected by everyone, regardless of rank. He will be missed.

God Bless You.

—Kimberlee Vandenakker

I first met Brian during the merger when he became my supervisor. We dealt with the merger, two rented facilities, and relocating into an owned, new headquarters building. I was proud to be part of Brian's Gateway team from the first occupancy of the building. We both learned together the joys and issues of operating a high rise headquarters building. Brian was always supportive and trusted me to do the best job I could to support the department's mission. He encouraged and allowed me to grow both professionally and personally. I have lost a friend and a great supervisor. He will be missed. No one will be able to fill his shoes.

—Phyllis Meng

In 1990, when I worked at 427 S. Main Street where I initially encountered Brian, the first thing I noticed about him was his big smile. It was always a joy to cross his path his contagious smile was always welcoming of a greeting when I saw him. I hope all the wonderful memories his family has of him will comfort them during this challenging time.

—Estella (Gail) Ligon

I never worked much with Brian, but from our limited engagement, I admire him for his openness to listen to new ideas.

He is a very respected gentleman that will surely be missed by all!

—Cris B. Liban

I enjoyed working with Brian. He was always willing to accommodate a reasonable business request, because helping you get the job done was most important to him. Our work paths did not cross much in recent years, but whenever I would run into him he had a smile and a laugh ready for me. My deepest sympathy goes to his family and friends and I will miss him.

—Susan Chapman

I will truly miss Brian Soto. He was a special and dear friend to me. I will always remember our wonderful lunches we shared. Brian, rest in peace.

—Liz Silva

His Laughter -Brian-

Even though you're not here,
your laughter keeps singing in our ear.
A sound one could only know
as they pass your office door.

We share these things of you today
now that your pain is done.
See, your laughter, is one of our fondest memories
as we remember your days in the sun.

We watched you fight, and you fought hard,
so we summoned the Security Guard.
We fought and prayed with you and hoped
It would see you through.

But there's only one Winner who we knew
Protected, Comforted, and finally Rested you.
He was the One who really saw you through.

This is something no one can ever be ready for,
the last hour, minute, or day through that final door.
We miss you already, from your direct reports,
administrative staff, maintainers, mopper/waxers,
to the custodians on the 15th floor.

We'll truly miss seeing that glow; this is why our
spirits are low.

Our EO said, "We'll get through it 'cause
that's what you expect." He's right.
We haven't let you down yet!

Your laughter -- so robust, so hearty, so jovial, so you!
Left alone, hushed and still, in one small room.
Who would have thought it be silenced so soon.

We will always remember you!

—General Services

Brian was such a kind person. He always greeted me with a warm hello. He was always professional, and quickly responded to the needs of the METRO employees at Gateway. He will truly be missed. He was a wonderful person; a true gentleman and a scholar.

—Alicia Walker

I only knew Brian Soto about 10-years and during that time, he was always a person of commitment, dedication and support, not just to me and my staff, but to anyone he could help and he always went out of his way to help you. It was a pleasure knowing him and he will be truly missed.

—Gail M. Harvey

I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest sympathy in the loss of Brian Soto. The Design Studio was in Administration/General Services years ago when I was the Senior Graphic Designer. At that time, his leadership was a very steadying force to us. I know it is a cliché, but his door was always open and his guidance was very instrumental to my development during that period. I remember having an issue that was troubling. I remember sitting in his office and talking it out — I'll never forget his firm handshake, how attentive he was in listening to me and how fair he was in providing a solution.

His kind and gentle manner was always on display despite what must be daily challenges in maintaining our buildings and leading such a large team. My experience with everyone in

General Services have always been positive and it must be a reflection of Brian. *I will miss him very much.*

—Joe A. Simpson, Jr

Even though I'm retired now, I'm going to miss Brian. It's a shock to hear that he's gone. He was such a great guy and so very responsive to whatever needed to be done at Gateway. I always referred to him as "The Illusive Brian Soto," because he would turn up on our floor or drop by my office when I least expected it. His team of custodians and other employees also were always friendly and helpful, and I attribute that to Brian's leadership and bright, sunny personality. What a nice man. He'll be missed.

—Bill Heard

Brian is one of my hero's. In his position of responsibility and authority, he gave "heart" to the people and the world around him. He added human warmth to professional treatment, he added charm and care to the ordinary handshake and honesty to his daily smiles. One knew about Brian in any engagement, there would be no mischief or malicious undertones coming forth from him. Brian sincerely gave from the heart. I will always be grateful for what he did for me.

—Ferrol J. Yeakle

So, how long does a man live after all?
And how much does he live while he lives?
We fret and ask so many questions -
then when it comes to us
the answer is so simple after all.

A man lives for as long as we carry him inside us,
for as long as we carry the harvest of his dreams,
for as long as we ourselves live,
holding memories in common, a man lives.

By Brian Patten – "So Many Different Lengths of Time"

I will miss his hearty laugh and smiling face.

—Mercedes Meneses

Brian Soto was my first boss in General Services at 425 S. Main. I thank him for his guidance, wonderful demeanor and patience through my learning process. I'm deeply saddened that his contagious smile will no longer be with us. Brian, your smile and generosity will never be forgotten. I, for one, am glad to have had the opportunity to work with Brian.

—Jessica Acosta

I will miss Brian's great smile and sunny disposition - thanks for sharing your light with us.

—Renita Anderson

I know I could always count on whenever I met up face to face with Brian he would always flash that fabulous smile and say "hello Edith, how are you?" Well, from that point on, my day was bound to be a good day! Brian was a wonderful person to everyone and the Metro family was blessed to have had the opportunity to share a smile with him.

—Edith A. Goff-Youngblood

Ever since 1990, whenever I would see Brian, he always had a pleasant smile and greeting. He had a calmness and easy-going way of doing business. A true professional – Brian will be missed greatly. God bless his family and friends.

—Dixie Dorsett

I found Brian to be a present person. Always smiling...also spoke to everyone in the hallways, elevators, etc. A great guy with a big heart, I'm sure.

—Barbara A. Gatewood

My name is Robert Ketring, I'm the only one left of the original General Service staff from 425 S. Main St. I have worked with Mr. Soto from day one

Mr. Soto was my Boss on the job and my friend off the job, my Mother always said Bobby there will come a day in your life that you will meet someone that will change your life forever. That person was Mr. Brian Soto. I will never forget Mr. Soto and I know in my heart that we will meet again.

May he rest in peace; I will truly, truly miss him and the times we had together on the job and off.

—Robert Ketring

As a former employee of Brian Soto, The Gentle Giant, I extend my deepest sympathy to the family. Peace unto you.

—Martha Williams

Angels must be on short supply in Heaven. We will all miss you Brian.

—Dana L. Williams

I remember the first time Brian came back from the beginning phase of his illness. I nearly ran to give him a big hug, but I wasn't sure how strong he was. So, I held back and asked, "Can I give you a hug, because I'm so glad you're back." He leaned down and said, "Sure!" I gave him a firm, but gentle hug to welcome him back. I wish I could do that again.

—Wadree Daniels-Smith

It's impossible to put into words what he meant to me and me to him. I will never have a better friend, boss, colleague, big brother, partner in crime, confidant –

Brian and I worked together for ten great years. They were great because we had each other to rely on, trust, lean on and laugh with. Coming into this space, everyday, knowing he'll never walk through my office door again is almost unbearable. I will see you in my dreams, my dear friend, and carry you in my heart always. Travel well and may your journey be spectacular.

—Irma L. Licea
Manager, General Services

Dear Mrs. Soto and Family,

I had the unique opportunity of being located in-between Brian and Irma for seven years. The level of professionalism, camaraderie and respect I had the rare opportunity of experiencing, was a gift. The pleasure was all mine.

Brian, I will remember your gift of laughter. I will remember your gift of expecting the best from me every day. I will never forget how you supported Irma, therefore supported me.

Coming into work with Brian's office next to me vacant is something I never thought I'd experience. Brian is General Services and he is this building. Rest in peace, Brian. Your spirit lives on in us.

—Melinda Perrier



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Brian Soto, General Services Leader Who Died Sunday, Leaves Gateway Legacy

- Services are planned for Friday, at 10:30 a.m., at the Guerra Gutierrez Mortuary, 5800 E. Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles.
- Friends, co-workers remember a friend, good boss
- [Remembering Brian Soto](#) - Share your memories here.

By LAURA KLOTH
Staff Writer

(March 31, 2009) Brian Soto, 46, Deputy Executive Officer of General Services, is being remembered by friends and colleagues as a good friend and a fair boss who had a "get the job done" attitude.



Brian Soto
1962 - 2009

Mr. Soto died March 29 following a 10-month battle with cancer. Mr. Soto is survived by his mother, Lolita Soto of Long Beach.

Irma Licea, General Services Manager, General Services Administration, said the outpouring of calls and emails are a testament of "how well-loved Brian was" by co-workers and friends.

"He was my best friend. He was my champion. He was my biggest supporter," she said, "He was an amazing, caring, wonderful presence on this earth who changed my life forever, and he will be a part of me always."

Mr. Soto's legacy points to his unrelenting efforts and leadership in helping to coordinate the transition of Metro employees into the Gateway building.

"He loved this building as if this was his own home. This building was really the Brian Soto building in so many ways," Licea said.

As the head of general services, Mr. Soto played a major role in the construction and later the upkeep and maintenance of the 26-story building after employees moved into it in 1995, following the merger of the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) and the Southern California Rapid Transit District (SCRTD) in 1993.



Brian Soto introduces speakers at program he coordinated to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Metro Headquarters building in October 2005.

Gary Spivack, East Valley Transportation Division Manager, remembers that Mr. Soto was a “nuts and bolts” employee, who took charge despite Gateway’s challenges. Spivack was head of General Services after the merge, when the construction of Gateway was first proposed, and Mr. Soto worked directly under him.

Spivack recalled how Mr. Soto persevered despite a busy and quick-changing environment, like dealing with the changing CEOs, handling other Metro facility leases, and at the same time dealing with new building issues like office space allocation, and a cooling system that didn’t work properly.

“He basically accepted any assignment I gave him. He saw his duty and he did it,” Spivack said. As a friend, Mr. Soto was gregarious and easygoing with a good sense of humor, he noted.

Don Ott, Executive Office, Administration lauded Mr. Soto’s efforts as well.

“Brian managed the Headquarters building from the day it opened. Every person who has worked here, and people who visited, benefited from Brian’s knowledge of facilities management, the pride he took in running the building, and his friendly and helpful demeanor. He touched all our lives in one way or another. His passing was a great loss for us,” Ott said.

At a 10-year anniversary party coordinated by Mr. Soto in 2005 for Gateway, Mr. Soto touted the building as “holding up great” and he said, “employees seemed to really enjoy it.” When Gateway was first proposed, the \$145 million project brought out many critics who challenged the cost and its location.

Kelly Patton, Network Support Supervisor, Operations and Service Delivery, worked for Mr. Soto when he became head of general services following the merger of the LACTC and SCRTD.

“It was just so much between the architect’s office, the contractors, all the different things coming together, pulling it all together And then when the first truck rolled here to start moving people in, it was very cool,” Patton said. “I would say it’s probably a once in a lifetime thing he did,” she said.

“This was going to be our home. This is where everyone was coming together for the very first time under one roof which was a big deal between the two agencies,” she said.

"A lot of people, when they think of this building, think of Brian because he pulled it all together," said Dan Colonello, General Services Supervisor, Mail Services.

Colonello said Mr. Soto was looking forward to going on a chartered fishing trip with him and his family in September. "He liked to go saltwater, but he used to get seasick," he said.



Program marking the 10 anniversary of the Gateway Building was attended by individuals instrumental in accomplishing the construction of the region's foremost transit center. From left, Laurie Fox and Tony Gonzales, the interior design team from ACG Environments, now HNTB; Thomas Verti, President of Charles Pankow Builders, Ltd., the building's construction contractor; Marvin Holen, chairman of the SCRTD Board that authorized construction, former SCRTD Board Member Gordana Swanson; Brian Soto, director of General Services, and Nick Patsaouras, former chairman of the SCRTD Board and president of the building project corporation.

Colonello said he first worked for Mr. Soto in 1993 and remembers him as "a good boss" who rose through the ranks and maintained a likeable spirit.

"He was fair, knowledgeable and if you did something wrong, he told you," Colonello said. And then, as an employee, you would correct the problem because "you didn't want to disappoint him."

A resident of Long Beach, Mr. Soto graduated from Montebello High School and later from California State University, Los Angeles. He was a board member of the Plaza De La Raza Cultural Center and the Northrop Grumman Credit Union.

Mr. Soto began his career as a mail services supervisor for SCRTD on Nov. 30, 1987.

He spent eight years working in General Services, first as supervisor, and then as a manager in 1990 and remained through the 1993 merger until he was named director in 1997. Mr. Soto was named deputy executive officer on Dec. 7, 2006.

A memorial is planned for Friday, April 3, at 10:30 a.m. at the Guerra

Gutierrez Mortuary, 5800 E. Beverly Blvd., Los Angeles. A Metro caravan is not planned, due to the limited size of the facility.

In lieu of flowers, a donation can be made in Mr. Soto’s name to the USC Norris Cancer Center.

- Portrait of Brian Soto, top, was composed by Metro Design Studio, Oct. 4, 2007.


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Click on image to keep up with the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project on the project's website at metro.net.

Metro to buy 41 new CNG Buses for enhanced service as part of Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project

By RICK JAGER

The Metro Board of Directors approved the purchase of 41 compressed natural gas (CNG) buses at the Board meeting March 26. The buses will be used to enhance public transit service as part of the Congestion Reduction Demonstration Project (ExpressLanes).

These new state-of-the-art CNG buses will be used to support the ExpressLanes demonstration project, a federally funded project aimed at testing pricing strategies to alleviate congestion, maximize freeway capacity usage, and fund additional transit alternatives on High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes along the I-10 (El Monte Busway) and I-110 (Harbor Freeway Transitway) corridors.

Funding for this new project is being provided by a special \$210 million grant from the US Department of Transportation. These expansion buses will increase the size of Metro's bus fleet and will be used in late 2010 to enhance transit service along these two heavily traveled corridors.

The ExpressLanes project is a one-year demonstration program that will convert existing HOV lanes on the I-10 and I-110 freeways to toll lanes. The project is expected to be in operation by December 2010. Present day carpoolers, vanpoolers and public transit users will not be charged a toll. Solo drivers, who currently are not allowed to use the lanes, will be allowed to use the ExpressLanes by paying a toll.

The new 45-foot buses will be manufactured by North American Bus Industries (NABI) at a cost of \$28.4 million. A total of 57 new buses will be used as part of the ExpressLanes project with Foothill Transit scheduled to purchase 10 additional buses, Gardena Transit will buy two and Torrance Transit will purchase four new buses in addition to Metro's fleet.

The project will provide the opportunity for individuals to choose better transportation alternatives and provides a choice for solo drivers to shift to more convenient express transit options and vanpools that serve the

corridor route.

The new buses will be assigned to a new Bus Rapid Transit Line which will operate on the HOV lanes along the I-10 and I-110 corridors.

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