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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 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

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