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In the APTA International winner's circle for the second time in three years, the championship Metro Bus team is awarded the coveted Grand Champion Awards in Seattle May 5. Pictured are, from left, North Los Angeles Division Bus Operator Juan Navarro, Metro South Bay GM Dana Coffey, the Arthur Winston Division champion maintenance team of Frank Forde, Rommel Vargas and Andrew Warren Jr. At far right is APTA President William A. Millar. The award recognizes the bus operator and maintenance team that has the highest combined score carved from the grueling obstacle course for operators and the mind-boggling tests of mechanical skills that matches mechanics against the clock to find and fix mechanical defects. *Photo by Heather Trimm, courtesy of APTA.*

Metro Bus Team Wins Grand Champion Title at 2009 International Bus Rodeo in Seattle

- It's the second victory lap for the high-scoring Metro team - Metro brought home the gold in 2007, too.

(May 7, 2009) Metro has won the Grand Champion Award at the prestigious 2009 International Bus Rodeo -- a competition generally regarded as the Super Bowl for bus operators and mechanics.

More than 50 public transportation systems in North American competed this week in Seattle, Wash. Winners were announced at an awards dinner May 5. The annual competition is held in conjunction with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Bus and Paratransit Conference.

The honor recognizes men and women who keep North America's bus systems safe and efficient. It is given to the bus operator and maintenance teams that have the highest combined score in a series of events testing bus operators' driving skills and mechanics' abilities to troubleshoot mechanical problems and fix them quickly.

The Metro maintenance team of Frank Forde, Rommel Vargas and Andrew Warren Jr. along with operator Juan Navarro came in first or second in four of six timed technical events, accumulating enough points to beat out scores of competitors from transit agencies across the country and Canada. Fifty-three bus operators competed in the operator contest for 40-foot buses. Thirty-six teams competed in the maintenance contest.

The Metro team scored highest in the rankings to beat out the second runner up San Francisco Municipal Transportation Authority and the third place Capital Metro Transportation Authority from Austin, Tex.

The Metro maintenance team also bagged a Special Maintenance Award for "Best Score" for racking up perfect scores in two categories of the competition.



Metro takes center stage at the 2009 International Bus Rodeo awards banquet when the Metro team picked up the Grand Championship trophies for the second time in three years. In the winner's circle are, from left, Metro South Bay GM Dana Coffey, Div. 5 Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Marco Pedemonte, Div. 5 Maintenance Manager Alex DiNuzzo, Central Instruction Sr. Equipment Maintenance Instructor Steve Mullaly, Chief Operations Officer Carolyn Flowers (center, back row), maintenance team members Frank Forde, Rommel Vargas and Andrew Warren Jr., Central Instruction Operations Asst. Instruction Manager Frank Cecere, champion Operator Juan Navarro, and Mary Ann and Richard Hunt, Metro San Fernando Valley GM.

Photo courtesy of Alex DiNuzzo.

"This is a wonderful achievement and is a reflection of the skills and accomplishments of the outstanding people who run Metro's transit system," said Metro CEO Art Leahy.

The maintenance team of Warren, Vargas and Forde are assigned to Arthur Winston Metro Division 5; operator Navarro is with Metro's North Los Angeles Division 3.



The home team advantage - from left, Arthur Winston Division 5 champion mechanics Andrew Warren, Jr., Rommel Vargas and Frank Forde and North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Juan Navarro, who claimed victory at the 2008 Metro Bus Rodeo in Los Angeles, went on to Seattle to win the prestigious 34th APTA 2009 International Bus Rodeo held May 3. *Photo by Gayle Anderson*

Metro teams have consistently placed high in the annual competition and won the prestigious Grand Champion award just two years ago at the 32nd International Bus Rodeo held in Nashville, Tenn in 2007.

The 2007 Champion team of Metro mechanics Frank Forde, Rommel Vargas and Andrew Warren Jr., along with top operator Mark Holland, came in first or second in four of six timed technical events, accumulating enough points to beat out 46 other teams and win by a significant margin of 35 points.

"In 2010, Metro will take the field at the next APTA Rodeo as the Defending International Champion! We will be ready!" said CEO Leahy.

-- from Gayle Anderson