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West Hollywood Division 7 Transportation Manager Grant Myers and Metro Westside/Central General Manager Mark Maloney flank Operator Lorenzo Morrison as he collects award for 19 years of operating on the road and in the yards without an accident or lost-time injury. Background: Asst. Transportation Mgr. Johnny Lindsey sorts it out.

West Hollywood Division Tops the Safety Charts in May

- Transportation side goes 90 days without a single injury resulting in lost time; 212 operators collect safety awards for one to twenty years of accident-free operation

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(May 28, 2009) Grant Myers, the perennial transportation manager back from retirement, say, four years now, stuck to his script at the West Hollywood Division safety awards program on Tuesday. With a list of 212 operators up for individual safety awards, Myers was there to announce the considerable feat of having accomplished, as a group, ninety consecutive days without an injury that resulted in lost time for any of the 430 or so bus operators on the job at West Hollywood Division 7.

"I want to thank you all for working safely during that period and for working safely all the time," he said. Then he made an astounding announcement that brought the training room to cheers: "We've been going over the numbers and actually – in the last 5 years – we've reduced our injury rate by two-thirds. We're doing really well on reducing injuries, and, we've reduced our accident rate by one whole point."



Asst. Transportation Manager Alicia Walker, center, and Transit Operations Supervisors Victoria Graham, Shametha Wallace, Tamika Batiste and Shanay Velasquez reward everyone with a celebration luncheon.

If the ninety days achievement was the reason for the El Pollo Loco luncheon (laid out buffet style by Asst. Transportation Manager Alicia Walker and Transit Operations Supervisors Tamika Batiste, Shametha Wallace, Victoria Graham, and Shanay Velasquez), it was also the opportunity for Myers to hand out 212 individual safety awards for operators with one to twenty years of accident-free operation on the road and in the yards.



Operator Walter Clayton, accident-free for 3 years, above, and, Kelli Fisher, with a one-year badge, at left, were among the 212 operators collecting safety awards at West Hollywood Division.

Who all? See [Roster of safety awards](#).

Here's where the script came in handy. Myers, assisted by Assistant Transportation Manager Johnny Lindsey behind the window sorting out the prizes by name and year, began the roll call. But since all the operators couldn't be there at the same time – several were out on a run or on a different shift – Myers had to skip through the names of those operators until he called out a name that drew thumps, cheers and whoo-hoos. That meant the award recipient was present and on his or her way to the front of the room to get congratulated by Manager Myers and Westside/Central General Manager Mark Maloney, who never stopped smiling at the abundance of grit and professionalism in the long list of safe and sure operators.



"These awards demonstrate that safety is our No. 1

priority," said GM Maloney. "And, it's a reward for how operators stay safe on the buses, coming in and out of yards and the many transitions. It is truly significant when you have this many operators running in this type of environment and not having any lost-time injuries.

"And, it has to do with our customers, too," he said. "When the operators are there safe and on time, that means the service is more efficient, more effective. Customers get the rides that they need."

Although the award recipients couldn't all be there, everybody on the safety honor roll receives a baseball cap embroidered with a Metro corporate safety logo and personalized with the number of years of driving safely. Those with safety records amounting to milestone years of 5, 10, 15 and 20 also receive the coveted Metro belt buckle.



Operator Larry Crane, a 27-year Metro veteran, collects embroidered trophy for 18 years of accident-free operation from West Hollywood Division 7 Transportation Manager Grant Myers and Metro Westside/Central General Manager Mark Maloney.

And what does all that mean to the operators behind that big wheel? "A lot of hard work, but I enjoy it," said Operator Larry Crane, a 27-year veteran of Metro there to pick up an 18-year award for accident- and injury-free operation. "It's not easy to drive a bus," he said. "You always have to watch out for the other drivers, always someone trying to cut you off, trying to beat the bus." As for bicyclists, "They don't behave well at all! They're not afraid of the bus, don't care about it," he said.

Myers is in agreement. "Operators need to drive defensively, especially on

the Westside where the lanes are narrow, where there's lots of pedestrians and where there's a lot of traffic. Operators have to anticipate what the other drivers are going to do around the bus and constantly protect their area."

At West Hollywood Division 7, they do. There are 212 embroidered baseball caps to prove it.

Photos: Gayle Anderson