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LASD personnel and Metro Transit Security Officers enjoy community spirit during annual National Night Out. Here at Union Station, Sr. Security Officer Loretta Ferem helps staff busy information table.

National Night Out Asks Metro Commuters to Help Fight Crime

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(August 4, 2009) Metro volunteers are joining law enforcement personnel Aug. 4 to promote the 26th Annual National Night Out – a day dedicated to crime prevention.

Organizer and North Bureau Los Angeles Sheriff's Deputy Sgt. Maria Luna said the idea is to remind commuters to be alert and aware of everything around them, and to remind them to call officials if they see a suspicious package or person.

"It's been successful every year, so far," Luna said. She said Metro volunteers work at tables to give out pamphlets to commuters, and explain the programs available. She said, this year, magician Jerry Litt will be performing tricks at the El Monte Station to get more commuters to check it out.



Los Angeles family en route to Lancaster stopped by for a Sheriff's badge sticker and a coloring book, handed out by Sr. Sheriff's Deputy Thomas Rodriguez, above.

• *Photos by Gayle Anderson*

The Union Station table was organized by Fare Inspector Maria Carlin and staffed by Sheriff's Deputy Day Rodriguez, Fayne Tillman Dave Delao, Carl Bernal and Sr. Deputy Thomas Rodriguez, plus Transit Security Sr. Officers Loretta Ferem and Rene Lopez and TSO Gary Carney.

The South Bureau stations will be overseen by LASD Sgt. Steven Rottella. Other stations participating include, Norwalk, Rosa Parks, Warner Center, Inglewood and Union stations.

Volunteer coordinator and Transit Operations Community Relations Rich Morallo documented scenes from the 2009 Metro National Night Out event on Youtube. (Check it out from home at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apry70TyNPk>)

Morallo said "This is a great opportunity for Metro to urge the community to travel safely and securely on public transit, and to help keep crime off of our buses and trains. As in the past 2 years Community Relations has helped with the logistics in setting up the tables, providing safety and security materials, and requesting Metro Volunteers to help with this unique national community outreach initiative."

The idea for National Night Out comes from National Assoc. of Town Watch Executive Director Matt A. Peskin, who held the first one in 1984. The event has since branched out to some 12,000 communities in the U.S. and Canada.

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Central City Division celebrates Operator Gregory Brown's amazing safety record of 27 consecutive years of accident-free operation in and out of the Division's bus yard. From left are Assistant Transportation Managers Regina Bird and Rosa Graciano, Operator Brown, Transportation Manager Sonja Owens and UTU Local 1562 Chairman Robert Gonzalez.

Central City Division celebrates 27-year safety record of Operator Gregory Brown

(August 4, 2009) A day without accidents is a day without injuries, damaged property and extraordinary circumstances that mangle resources and alter lives. So when Central City Division Operator Gregory Brown reached 27 consecutive years of one day at a time with no accidents and injuries, it was great cause for celebration in the division's training room.

Operator Brown, who navigates Line 62 daily from downtown to Hawaiian Gardens didn't know why he was called into the office July 22 by Transportation Manager Sonja Owens until he saw the engraved plaque, which noted for posterity that the division is forever proud of his 27 years of service without a chargeable accident.

Among other honors and tributes, 27 years of accident-free operation earned Operator Brown the top parking space for an entire month.



On hand for the presentation were Manager Owens, Assistant Transportation Managers Rosa Graciano and Regina Bird, and UTU Local 1563 Chairman Robert Gonzalez.

"We are so proud of this operator. To go that many years without an accident is a great achievement," said Gonzalez.

"Safety is what we emphasize in service performance," said Owens, who says Brown's safety record sets the standard for the entire division. "He follows all the rules in the handbook," said Asst. Transportation Manager Rosa Graciano. "That's how we can all get to 27 years."



Co-workers celebrate at the festive cake-eating ceremony that followed the presentation of the official plaque.

Brown, who joined the RTD in 1982, credits his safety record to defensive driving and an excellent training program. What does his achievement mean to him?

"A safe performance for the public," he said, noting the basic principles of safety are the same as they have always been. "We still have a lot of congestion and traffic. The city is still very crowded; we still have to be alert and aware."

— From Gayle Anderson

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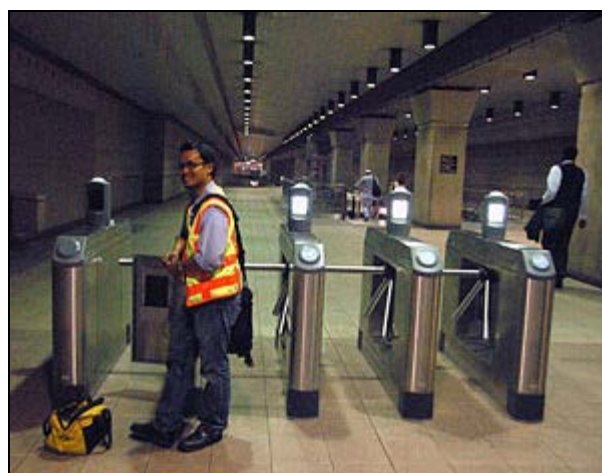
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An additional gate specially designed to accommodate patron-operated devices such as wheelchairs, strollers, walkers and bicycles was installed Tuesday at the west entrance to the Metro Red and Purple Line at Union Station. The gate features a 40-inch wide berth, twice the size of the standard 20-inch entry.

Contractor Cubic Transportation Systems, Inc., headquartered in San Diego, is a leading turnkey solution provider of automated fare collection systems for public transport including bus, bus rapid transit, light rail, commuter rail, heavy rail, ferry and parking. At left, Cubic technician Tuang Nguy checks the software that operates the fare collection system newly installed at Union Station.

Photos: Gayle Anderson



Metro Installing Turnstile Fare Gates at Four Subway Stations

(Aug. 4, 2009) Metro has begun installing turnstile fare gates at four Metro Red/Purple Line subway stations and will monitor progress to make sure passenger traffic moves smoothly while still achieving the goals of preventing fare evasion and improving transit station security.

Turnstile fare gates are being installed at Wilshire/Normandie,

Union Station, Westlake and Pershing Square subway stations. Staff will assist passengers as they get accustomed to the gates, which will be set to “free spin” until patrons become familiar with entering stations through a physical barrier.

The barrier system is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). During the period of equipment installation, the special ADA gates will remain open to permit disabled persons and patron-operated devices such as wheelchairs, strollers, walkers and bicycles to have clear access to the paid areas of the stations. Separate emergency access gates also are being installed to comply with fire-life safety regulations.

This fall, CEO Art Leahy will report monitoring results of the limited installations to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority Board of Directors. If all goes well, Metro will proceed with installing a total of 379 fare gates in all stations on the subway and Metro Green Line and key light rail stations on the Metro Blue and Gold lines. Installation is intended to be completed in six to eight months in early 2010.



Tapping into Metro Rail — Metro intern Alex Sanchez, above, taps into Union Station. Below, passenger enters turnstile at Wilshire/Normandie Station turnstile.



Photo by Luis Inzunza

—from Metro News Release
[online at metro.net](http://metro.net)

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The Creative Services team of Lan-Chi Lam, Doug Goodwin and Sharie Powell, partnered with Service Planning Analysis team of John Fitzgibbon, Susan Phifer, Peishan Wang, Jesse Simon and Rollin Baker, along with Customer Relations team of Gail Harvey, Alonzo Williams and Doug Anderson to corral the massive range of transportation data into a digital downstream. Pictured here, from left, are Peishan Wang, Susan Phifer, Rollin Baker, Lan-Chi Lam, Doug Goodwin, and Sharie Powell.

Google's visual trip emerges from Metro's mountain of data

(August 6, 2009) Google is now offering Metro bus and rail as an alternative form of transportation in the Google Maps application. Google Maps offers users the benefit of their mapping services in 12 different languages, plus all the imagery of a visual trip in advance of the actual ride on Metro.

Last month Metro began making transportation related data available to the public via a developer site on *metro.net*. The site, [developer.metro.net](#), was critical for sharing transportation data on the web.

Metro's developer site is an innovative digital gathering place where individuals and entities alike can access and transform Metro's transportation data into a myriad of uses and applications.

The site includes a variety of types of data including "Trip Planner Info Feed" web services, which provides information from 65 transit agencies needed for regional trip planning, Geographic Information System (GIS) data from Metro's routes, and Metro's latest route, stop, and schedule information in the GTFS

format. The site was also designed to foster a community of developers who work with transit data and includes a blog to allow feedback.

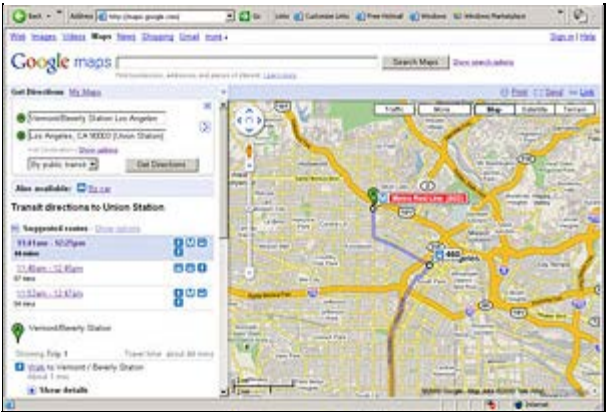
"The site is already proving to be extremely popular with well over 10,000 page views and coverage on several websites and blogs. Creative Services have also received requests from agencies across the country about how we put the developer site together," said Lan-Chi Lam, Creative Services manager who helped develop the site and managed the project through to the Google agreement.

Before there was the development site, there was data, accessible only by requests that had to be fulfilled and delivered one by one. There just wasn't any place where planners, web developers, agencies, and even Google, could easily access.

"The 2.5 million or more points of data generated by Metro's bus and rail system is the heart of Metro's scheduling system," said Susan Phifer, Service Planning Analysis manager.

Every move that's made by every Metro bus pulling up and exiting the 15,000 or so bus stops in Los Angeles County is a point of data. The point of data begins its digital life much like a salmon swimming upstream.

Schedule makers and support staff at the service sectors, who maintain and facilitate the data, update a central database with new and changing information, such as restrictions at certain bus stops, changes in fare, boarding restrictions, and the biannual service changes known as the "shake up."



Try Google Maps to plan a trip on Metro. Click on the link in the [Trip Planner](#) box at [metro.net](#). You can also visit [www.google.com/transit](#) or access Google Maps, the free online mapping service provided by Google, at [www.maps.google.com](#). Click 'get directions' and select 'by public transit.'



Customer Relations team: Director of Customer Relations Gail Harvey, Communications Manager Alonzo Williams and Sr. Departmental Systems Analyst Doug Anderson channeled Metro's Trip Planner data into a web service.

In order to mature into the amazingly complex bus and rail scheduling system, the points of data make a quantum leap to a central database in Hastus, an integrated and modular software solution for transit scheduling, operations and customer solutions.

As the points of data merge into perfectly logical channels of transit information, Hastus exports transit operations data that provides for operation of the Automated Transit Management System, transit network planning, customer information, and performance analysis.

Before all that data became available on the developer site, said Phifer, transportation planners had to transmit the material manually — a "one-off" — to each system that required the data, such as the City of Los Angeles Signal Priority System.



Spatial Analysis Project Leader Jesse Simon adds the geographical component to the database.

"Preparing, compiling, packaging, then sending the data can be a manual and arduous task; this site serves as a repository for commonly requested data to aid that effort," Lam noted.

It took a transit village, so to speak.

"The developer site was a significant step for us as an agency and involved multiple departments across the agency," said Maya Emsden, DEO, Creative Services. "We worked with Service

Performance Analysis, Customer

Relations, County Counsel, and the CEO's office to make this happen. It couldn't have been done without this teamwork."

The Creative Services team, which also includes Doug Goodwin and Sharie Powell, partnered with Service Planning Analysis team of John Fitzgibbon, Susan Phifer, Peishan Wang, Jesse Simon and Rollin Baker, along with Customer Relations team of Gail Harvey, Alonzo Williams and Doug Anderson to corral the massive range of transportation data into a digital downstream.

County Counsel Joyce Chang provided the terms and conditions language for the overall developer site and represented Metro in the legal agreements with Google.

Anderson

—from Gayle

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Check out the new OCI site at <http://mymetro/oci/>

Operations Central Instruction Website Clicking with Users

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(August 6, 2009) With its bright orange colors, simple design and large friendly icons, the recently launched Operations Central Instruction (OCI) intranet website is attracting attention and drawing praise.

That's quite an accomplishment for website containing so much information critical to supporting the heart of Metro operations.

"I'm very pleased with the new site and users have been reacting positively," said OCI Director Doug Middleton. "It's pretty distinctive among the websites. I love it. I think, first of all, in terms of appeal to the eye, it draws you in."

Currently, the website contains information on 18 courses available for bus operators, and 43 for maintenance personnel.

Users can also link to the calendars and registration sites to participate in the courses and Middleton expects, "There's a whole lot more that we could build onto it."

Launched on May 20, the website was designed not only to be user-friendly, it also had to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements – that is, the site had to include bright colors with information that could be scanned by visual readers used by visually impaired users.

In addition, it couldn't have any flashing content, which is known to set off epileptic seizures.

The best part of the website, Middleton said, is that it provides a time-saving resource of information that wasn't readily available before.

"We get called around the clock here," he said, "We get calls about laws

that affect operators and operations, drive times, licensing, Department of Education information and certification. Now, we are making much of this information available on one site."

OCI is among the very first Metro departments to launch a new internal site, and Operations Training Digital Media Coordinator Caroline Mallari said the time spent creating it was well worth it.

"We've been getting a lot of great feedback," Mallari said, adding the site was designed and completed in about a year with the assistance of Creative Services Manager Lan-Chi Lam and Webmaster Joe Simpson, both of whom provided assistance with the final framework.

"I gathered, managed and designed all the contents," Mallari said, noting that she worked to design icons to help convey what OCI offers and that one of the more challenging aspects was creating functional map to comply with Metro's standards.

"The process of mockups and revisions were tedious, but was executed successfully and well worth the wait," she said, "We just wanted it to be as easy and as intuitive as possible."

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New fare barriers are ADA compliant with 40-inch wide wheelchair access.

Metro ADA Rules Apply to Employees, Patrons

- Chip Hazen conducts classes to instruct employees about ADA Compliance

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(August 11, 2009) No one really knows how many Metro employees or patrons have physical or emotional disabilities, and according to ADA Compliance Administrator Chip Hazen, that's exactly the way it should be.

By law, an employer is not allowed to discuss an employee's disability with other employees. The federal confidentiality laws are very strict in this area.

Hazen, who has studied the American Disabilities Act for years, conducts periodic classes to educate Metro employees about important rules related to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In his class, Hazen focuses on the important rules for Metro employees to follow when working or dealing with Metro employees or patrons who have a vision, mobility, hearing, speech or other disability.

So prominent has ADA compliance become across the nation, Hazen notes, that Congress recently amended the ADA Act to further clarify a disability as being "anything that limit's a person's major life activity." For example, if a person is limited from eating, hearing, drinking, talking and even working, the person falls under the ADA category.

Learning about ADA rules is more important today as Metro's employment numbers grow and ridership increases, Hazen notes.

In 2003, Metro had some 10,000 wheelchair boardings per month

compared to the 44,000 it has today. Between 70,000 to 100,000 people ride Metro buses and trains using a Los Angeles County Transportation Operator's Association ID card which entitles riders, many with a disability, to ride at a reduced fare. In addition, another 77,000 patrons are currently registered in the ADA Paratransit Program.



Tether strap program secures wheelchair riders on buses.

Using proper etiquette

When dealing with employees or patrons with a disability, some rules pertain to proper etiquette, Hazen explains.

For example, when you speak to someone who is blind, it is important to make face-to-face contact with them because if you turn away, they may not hear you or know you are addressing them.

Maintaining a normal volume in your tone of voice is also important since raising your volume doesn't make them understand any better.

"Always ask, 'May I help you?' or 'What kind of help would you like?' That's very important too because not all people who are blind, need help," he said.

If you see a person using a service animal or guide dog, don't run up to pet the animal since it may interfere with the animal's ability to assist the person.

Some of the rules are clear while others are not, he explains.

Compliance encompasses everyday living

Hazen notes that not everyone knows that a City of Los Angeles ordinance states that if a person with a disability asks to use a restroom of an employee, and there is a restroom in the Metro facility, the agency is required to allow them to use it.



Safety berms to prevent falls were installed on the Metro Gold Line

ADA compliance now also includes Metro publications and websites. "You'll see a lot more of this coming out. If you want to put anything on the web, you have to create it in an accessible format," he said.

In addition to teaching the course, Hazen oversees projects associated with ADA compliance on Metro's trains, buses and property. Some of the important changes Metro has made include having buses call out stops for patrons; providing ramps, and properly working chairlifts; instituting a tether strap program used as a tool by bus operators to more safely and easily secure wheelchair users; and the installation of rail platform barriers to alert riders with vision impairments where the area is between the rail cars and that this area is not the doorway to board the train.

And most recently, Hazen is ensuring that the installation of the wheelchair accessible turnstiles on Metro's rail lines is compliant with the federal and state accessibility rules and regulations. "We do a number of different things for our customers for accommodations," he said.

Hazen encourages employees to learn more about the ADA rules, and reminds them that the most important rule is to treat people with disabilities like they would anyone else – with respect and courtesy.



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Shahil Patel's Ishaara dance team made such an impression the judges during their first America's Got Talent performance, the team was asked to return. *Photos provided courtesy of Hitesh Patel.*

Metro DEO Patel Roots for Son on "America's Got Talent"

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(August 11, 2009) When young Shahil Patel began attending the University of California at Berkeley, his father, Hitesh Patel, Metro DEO, Project Management, encouraged him to celebrate his ethnicity by joining an Indian cultural group.

Shahil followed his dad's advice by teaming up with other Berkeley students whose passion for dancing resulted in the creation of Ishaara, a Bollywood-style dance group. Bollywood refers to India's booming film industry.

Ishaara's lively synchronized dancing, complete with bright traditional costumes, accompanied by popular tunes like "Jai Ho" not only brought the dancers scores of fans, but also earned them a spot among the quarter-final acts on NBC's "America's Got Talent," a program whose popularity is rivaling that of the iconic "American Idol."

"It's becoming really, really popular in America. People are recognizing the stars on the show," says the proud father.



DEO Hitesh Patel, Project Management, says he was very surprised his son took up Bollywood dancing and became so good at it because young Shahil hadn't dance since kindergarten.

Due to a confidentiality agreement, Shahil Patel is not allowed to discuss the show, but the former Berkeley soccer player, turned choreographer and team leader is elated about being chosen among the finalists, his father says.

The winner of the show is expected to receive \$1 million along with a contract to perform in Las Vegas.

Hollywood meets Bollywood

When Ishaara (means "sign" or "signal" in Hindi) was first introduced on America's Got Talent, Judge Sharon Osborne asked Shahil: So what are you going to do for us? Shahil boldly responded: "Hopefully, knock your socks off."

So far, it appears his team has succeeded by creating a stir for Bollywood dance garnering thousands of viewers by the show's end.

Ishaara will be performing live at one of the quarter-finals being aired on NBC every Tuesday evening for the next several weeks. Viewers get to text or call to place their votes at end of each program.

Ishaara's motto "Bollywood Meets Hollywood" is appropriate since their dance routines essentially fuse traditional Indian dance steps with more modern and Western dance styles.

Ishaara's Bollywood-style dancing has brought the team several dance trophies and a great number of fans across the world.



The team's unique style has impressed judges at university dance offs, where the team has picked up an unprecedented seven first place prizes under Shahil's leadership.

"I am very proud of Shahil's achievements given that he never had any dance training, and in only two short years, he created various dance stories, choreographed, and led eighteen dancers to perform together as a team and win so many first places – all whilst studying for a double major," said Patel.

Their professional appeal even brought the team a summer gig performing on many venues such as Carnival cruise ships and a DIRECTV corporate dinner event in San Francisco.

That's surprising to Patel who says, "Shahil never had an interest in Bollywood or any kind of dancing. In fact, I do not recall ever seeing Shahil dancing since kindergarten, even at parties."

Patel credits movies like *Slumdog Millionaire* and the popularity of Bollywood -style dancing for some of his son's success.

"A lot of this Hollywood meets Bollywood is going on and it's just starting to take off now," he said.

Click on image to
view on YouTube:

Or watch at home at
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7-uRbOq5aU>



[This youtube link is being provided for the purpose of viewing this video only. Metro employees are subject to the Employee Code of Conduct that generally restricts the use of company time/equipment to conducting Metro business. Please click on icon to view the video.]

A parent's pride

Just getting chosen to perform on "America's Got Talent" was a feat since Ishaara had to compete against over 100,000 applicants across the nation.

Typically, the 18-member dance team practices together during the college dance competitions about three to five times a week for about six months.

They create their own costumes and props, work out their own lighting and edit their own music. They even have their own website Ishaaradance.com.

"They put so much effort into. Sometimes, I think they are better than professional dancers in terms of the time they put into it," Patel said.

Patel said he and his wife are very proud of their son, though they've encouraged him to keep up with his education. Shahil graduated in May from UC Berkeley with a double major in economics and psychology.

"We give him a lot of support – in fact we have traveled to Chicago, Philadelphia, Sacramento, San Francisco, in addition to L.A. to watch his performances," he said. "I think he would like to take this to a different level."

"America's Got Talent" airs on Tuesday and Wednesday.

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Judges keep Bus Operator maneuvers in accurate line of sight at 2008 Metro Bus Rodeo.

Call for Judges: Here's your chance to get on the field for the annual Metro Bus Rodeo competition.

- **You be the judge:** The roar of the crowd - the thrill of the left-hand reverse, the events at the 34th Annual Metro Bus Rodeo will showcase the skills of some of the finest Operators and Mechanics in the transportation industry.

(Aug. 13, 2009) Metro South Bay, the host of the 34th annual Metro Bus Rodeo, is recruiting employees to act as judges for the preliminary Operator's competitions Sept. 16 -19, and the main event on Sept. 26.

The judges will observe 11 driving tests, ranging from serpentine turns to under control stops, plus close observations of safety habits, personal appearance and smoothness of operation.

The events require at least 40 judges per day, said organizer Gwen Keene. The tallies provided by the judges will determine this year's champions, who will represent Metro at the 2010 APTA International Bus Rodeo set for April 30 through May 4 in Cleveland.

**Adrift in a
sea of traffic
cones,** teams
of Rodeo
judges
monitor 11
driving tests
at umbrella-

shaded
stations set
up on the
Rodeo
obstacle
course.

*Photos by
Gayle
Anderson*



The position requires no special training, said Keene. "You don't have to be in Operations to qualify," she said, "just being a little adventurous will do." Although it's not exactly "Survivor Island," judges can expect to spend most of the time under an umbrella in the middle of Santa Anita's massive parking lot. The experience and the camaraderie make up for lack of pampering, Keene notes.

All events are held at the Santa Anita Race Track parking lot, Gate 6. The site is located just off Colorado Place in Arcadia. See [map](#) online. UTU and ATU personnel are not eligible to judge the event.

Typically, the competition begins at 8 a.m. and lasts until about 3 p.m. each day. Because the events occur during scheduled work shifts, employees must have their supervisor's approval prior to volunteering for the Rodeo.

Volunteer judges will receive a 2009 Rodeo baseball cap, shirt and lapel pin. Lunch will be provided during the preliminaries and the traditional BBQ lunch will be served at the final competition.

Volunteers must register prior to Monday, Aug. 31. Register online at on the [Metro Bus Rodeo](#) webpage or contact Gwen Keene at 922-7148 or e-mail keeneg@metro.net.

— from Gayle Anderson



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[Metro News Briefs]

Sheriff's early morning raids track vandals caught on tape during Laker's victory melee

Click 'next' and 'back' buttons above to view all 19 photos released to the media. ^

(August 13, 2009) Sheriff's deputies today arrested four people during early morning raids conducted to nab suspects accused of damaging a Metro Bus, Metro Blue Line train and a supervisor's vehicle in the melee that broke out in downtown Los Angeles on June 14, the night the Los Angeles Lakers won the NBA championship.

Metro Transit Service Bureau Sheriff's Lt. Erik Ruble said deputies were hunting for a specific man identified through videotapes as having taken part in the violence. The Sheriff's teams didn't find him during a search of nine locations, but the raids turned up four other reputed gangsters. One suspect was taken for a parole violation and the others on warrants for crimes unrelated to the Lakers violence.

Sheriff's Transit Service Bureau
deputies, relying on Metro

surveillance video and news media tape, were able to determine those believed responsible for the vandalism to Metro and City of Los Angeles property, which is estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$80,000.

Lt. Ruble said deputies are targeting a specific South L.A. gang, whose members are suspected of damaging several buses, rail cars and other transit property during the downtown riots.

The early morning raids were conducted at nine locations in Southern California, including Reseda, Van Nuys, Hawthorne, Los Angeles and a halfway house in Porter Ranch, said Lt. Ruble.

The videos collected from news media and other sources were handed over to LASD technical services, who extracted and printed the frames that clearly revealed individuals in the act of vandalism.

The Transit Services Bureau is releasing the photos extracted from news videos to ask the public for help in identifying the vandals pictured damaging Metro property, said Lt. Ruble.

News of the stepped-up pursuit of the vandals spread throughout Metro on Thursday. "It's great to know that we have the dedicated staff willing to put the time and effort into finding these vandals," said Division 10 Transportation Manager Alva Carrasco. "Their antics overshadowed a time of great pride and joy from Angelinos." Division 10 is the home base for Metro Bus 6549, which was ransacked by rioting Laker fans when the victory celebration spiraled out of control.

Metro sustained an estimated \$58,000 in damages to eight buses with broken windows and graffiti, the burnt-out Vehicle Operations unit, and the Metro Blue Line car at the Pico Station pelted by objects large enough to break the train windows.

KNX news radio, City News Service, the Los Angeles Times, and Channels 2/9, 7 and 34 are among the media outlets covering the story.

— from Gayle Anderson



[See myMetro.net report 06.18.09](#): Division 10 Bus Operator saves the day in a tight clinch with rioting Laker fans. (Online: CBS2 Evening News interview with Operator Jose Recino)



Bus 6549, operated by Jose Recinos, was ransacked by rioting Laker fans, who pelted the bus with debris and objects strong enough to break every window with the passengers still inside.

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Human Resources Supervisors Janet Chu-Hooker and Bruce Moore and Senior Programmer Analyst Matt Varughese test out Metro Careers website on newly installed computers at the Metro Headquarters Employment Office.

Metro's Human Resources Website Gets Digital Makeover

- Applicants, Hiring Departments Benefit from Quicker, Automated Process

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(August 18, 2009) A newly updated and upgraded Metro Careers website has been launched by Metro's Human Resources Department, under the direction of Stefan Chasnov, Deputy Executive Officer, Human Resources.

The new site promises to "make a world of difference" by completely digitizing and streamlining the application process for both applicants and hiring departments, explains Human Resources Supervisor Bruce Moore. The new site was officially launched Aug. 17.

Metro's Applicant Tracking System (MATS) online component merges intranet and internet versions of Metro Careers into a single website for all applicants, Moore said. This allows applicants to apply for Metro positions from any computer that has internet access.

Some of the benefits of the new site are that it allows applicants to create an account using their email so they can apply for more than one job opening by completing just one application.

"You build a work profile and may attach your resume to the profile. You

can update your work profile and resume at any time. Whenever a position is posted, you then apply for the position with your existing work profile/resume," said Moore.



Check it out: Online applicants can keep a work profile current and apply for more than one job opening at the click of a submit button.

Previously, applicants had to create a new application for each position. Applicants will receive an email confirmation whenever they apply for a posted position, and may elect to receive all further Metro employment correspondence through e-mail.

Similarly, hiring departments will benefit by being able to submit employment requisitions electronically and screen employment applications/resumes on-line.

"No more need to mail or walk documents to the Human Resources Department," said Moore. In addition, the new process will save money by eliminating the need to perform a variety of data entry tasks.

Not only will the process become more streamlined and efficient, it will create a "richer database of electronic information" for the Human Resources Department, he said.

Four more computers were installed recently, adding to two existing already at the plaza-level employment office of Metro's Gateway H.Q.

Candidates applying for represented positions will still be able to fill out applications on paper, and for those who would like to use the new system, all they need is an email account which can be obtained online for free.

The new website was put together with the technical leadership of Senior Programmer Analyst Matt Varughese and Human Resources Supervisors Bruce Moore and Janet Chu-Hooker, and the support of Senior Departmental System Analysts Forrest Miller and Jerry Lindsey.

Webmaster Joe Simpson provided website assistance with ADA compliance, email subscription implementation and testing while Creative Services Consultant Sharie Powell also provided CSS support.

Human Resources staff also wishes to thank project sponsors Lonnie Mitchell, Don Ott and Elizabeth Bennett for their on-going counsel and commitment to this project, and ITS Director Steve Timberman and ITS

Manager Norm Haddock for their on-going project management support.

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OBITUARIES

Services are Saturday for Non-revenue Mechanic Timothy Melvin Grodeland

- Services are planned for Saturday August 22, at Forest Lawn in Hollywood Hills. Viewing is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. The service will follow at 10 a.m. [Information/Directions](#)

Contributed by Harold Torres

(August 18, 2009) Tim Grodeland passed away after a long courageous battle with brain cancer at his home this past Saturday, August 15, 2009.

A native Californian, Tim was born November 26, 1959. He joined Metro as a Mechanic C on March 1, 1999. Nine months after being hired, Mr. Grodeland transferred from Arthur Winston Division 5 maintenance into the Non-Revenue department, where he made a home.

Mr. Grodeland, a certified ASE Master Automobile Technician in all eight disciplines, came to Metro with over 15 years experience in the automotive field. He attended Glendale City College where he studied Aviation Mechanics.

Fellow mechanic and close friend Boguslaw Twardowski remembers Tim as a very good friend that got along with everybody. "He was a nice guy and I love him. I am going to miss him for sure."

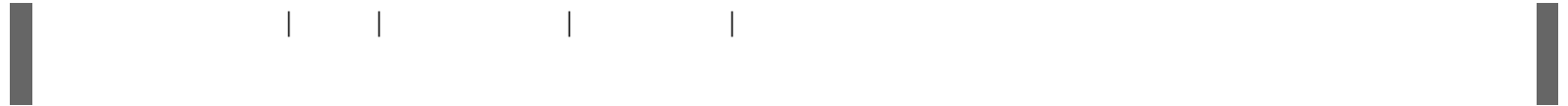
Equipment Maintenance Supervisor Rudy Melendez noted that he would have long talks with Tim about spending time with his family and the vacations that they took. "He loved being with his family camping and fishing."

Mr. Grodeland is survived by wife Kathy, daughters Nichole and Jessica, and son-in-law Charlie Fender. He leaves behind his parents, Bob and Barbara, brother David and sister Judy and in-laws David and Gail Lee. David Lee is also a Metro mechanic, who works at Cypress Park Division 3.

Services are planned for Saturday August 22, 2009, at Forest Lawn in Hollywood Hills. Viewing is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. The service will follow at 10 a.m. [Information/Directions](#)



Timothy Melvin Grodeland



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Carson Division Operator Keeps Passengers Safe after Freeway Blowout

By TCAP Intern Casandra Escobedo and Rich Morallo, Community Relations Manager

(August 18, 2009) It was just past midnight on July 14. Metro Bus Operator Kenya Allison was on her last run with her Line 446 assignment on the 110 Freeway when she heard the left front tire blow out and felt the shudder beneath her as the entire bus sank down.



Operator Kenya Allison

Knowing the 25,000-pound bus was still moving but dropping at the same time, the Carson Division 18 operator thought, "Oh my God, I'm gone." Allison, a nine-year veteran with the agency, was heading south on the Harbor Freeway in her orange 40-foot bus and was just about to enter the Manchester Transitway Station when the tire burst open. Kenya knew she only had seconds to react.

"I remembered a supervisor telling me to hold the steering wheel steady and steer straight for front tire blowouts," Allison recounted.

Passengers looking out the left window could see the rubber separate from the bus and sparks flashing from the rim grating on the road. Traveling at 55 miles-per-hour, Allison focused on keeping her six passengers and herself safe.

Allison was also concerned about the safety of the moving vehicles around her. She steadied the steering and kept the bus traveling straight ahead and waited until the rumbling coach had slowed down before finally stepping on the brakes.

The bus, amazingly, slid right into the regular pickup location for passengers at the station. "God is good," Allison whispered when she checked to see her passengers were fine.



Metro South Bay Governance Council commends Operator Kenya Allison.

At the August 14 meeting of the Metro South Bay Governance Council, Chair Ralph Franklin and General Manager Dana M. Coffey commended Allison for her heroism and professionalism in keeping her passengers safe and preventing a major accident on the freeway.

"I had never had a tire blowout before," remarked Allison who started driving buses 12 years ago. " I was so thankful we were all safe and I didn't crash in the freeway, the station or collide into the freeway walls, " she added.



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Metro Snapshots by Rich Morallo

[This YouTube link is being provided for the purpose of viewing this video only. Metro employees are subject to the Employee Code of Conduct that generally restricts the use of company time/equipment to conducting Metro business. Please click on icon to view the video.]
Watch at home at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tj9miGpNqak>

Metro Provides 24-Hour Service on Line 115 for Free Clinic

By Rich Morallo
Special to myMetro

(August 18, 2009) The bundled-up lady carrying a shopping bag stepped down from the Line 115 bus on Manchester Avenue on Wednesday, August 12 at 4:35 a.m. and crossed the street to make her way to the Inglewood Forum.

Nora had travelled from the San Fernando Valley early that morning to reach the Remote Area Medical (RAM) free health clinic in Inglewood. Medical staff start seeing patients as early as 5:30 a.m. and are providing free dental, medical and vision checkups for a week at the Forum. As many as 1500 residents show up each day before 5 a.m. to wait in line for the clinic.

Nora and other Los Angeles residents are using increased bus service set up by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Metro from August 11 to 18 to help transport people to the clinic. "We are scheduling extra bus service starting midnight to 5 a.m.," remarked South Bay Services Development Manager Madeline Van Leuvan. "Metro is providing 24-hour service on

Manchester for the duration of the clinic," she added.

The added service runs every 30 minutes from Firestone and Atlantic in South Gate to the Inglewood Transit Center in Inglewood.

"We didn't hesitate to step up to the plate when the community needed public transportation in the early hours of the day to get to these medical services, " said South Bay General Manager Dana M. Coffey. "We are delighted to join the RAM organizers, medical staff and volunteers in helping the public," the general manager said.



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Former Metro Employee Sentenced to Repay Metro

(August 19, 2009) A former Metro employee was sentenced Aug. 12 to repay Metro more than \$18,000, after pleading guilty to misappropriating petty cash funds at Metro’s cost centers, according to Chief Ethics Officer and Acting Inspector General Karen Gorman.

The employee was charged July 21 following an investigation by Metro’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) which involved questionable petty cash documents submitted by the employee.

Specifically, the OIG investigation revealed that between 2002 and 2009 the employee submitted more than 240 duplicated and/or falsified documents from 42 vendors to support more than \$18,000 in bogus petty cash purchases.

The long-term employee immediately terminated his employment with Metro, after OIG Investigators met with him to discuss the evidence. A felony complaint was filed by the Los Angeles County District Attorney on July 21, and the employee surrendered to authorities.

At his sentencing, the employee was ordered to pay back \$18,435.95 in restitution to Metro, three years probation, and 400 hours of community service. Any violation of probation can result in actual jail time being served.

“I am sad to see an employee end their many decades-long career at Metro by making such bad choices,” said Gorman.



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Photos by Jon SooHoo/Courtesy of the Los Angeles Dodgers

During his brief baseball career – throwing out the first pitch at Metro’s Dodgers’ Night -- Metro CEO Art Leahy (at right) receives support from Metro employees in the stands, and a few fans on the field including (left to right) Northrop Grumman Federal Credit Union (NGFCU) Board Member Roberta Currier, Metro Human Resources Manager and NGFCU Board Member Kathi Harper, NGFCU Board Member Mitchell D. Mroz, and NGFCU President/CEO Stanley R. Swenson, Jr.

Metro Dodger Night Could Become Annual Event

- Dodger Trolley May Be Back Next Season

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(August 19, 2009) The recent Metro Dodger Night was such a success that the event may become an annual night-out for Metro employees.

“We sold out on tickets and people were calling the week of the event for more,” said event organizer Jim Barnfather, Northrop Grumman Federal Credit Union Vice President of Marketing and Business Development.

On Aug. 8, hundreds of Metro employees glued their eyes on the jumbo screen at Dodger Stadium and cheered as CEO Art Leahy threw the traditional first pitch of the game to Northrop Credit Union CEO and stand-in catcher, Stanley

R. Swenson, Jr.

"Art and his wife had such a great time. He just talked about how great it was," said Barnfather, neither confirming or denying persistent rumors that the Dodgers are seriously thinking about adding the Leahy/Swenson combo to their regular pitching rotation.



The crowd also cheered when the sons of Division 8 Steno Lorraine Fierro and Div.7 Steno Abby Amaya were allowed on to the field to collect autographs from a few of their favorite Dodgers – a memory the two boys will cherish for a lifetime.

"It's just a nice kind of life time memory," Barnfather said.

This Metro Dodger Night was the second time the credit union hosted the event to honor Metro employees. In 2003, former CEO Roger Snoble threw out the first pitch in front of hundreds of employees and guests.



It's the top of the first at Dodger Stadium. No outs; no one on base. Leahy takes the mound for the Dodgers. The catcher gives the signal. And the pitch is ...

In other baseball news, rumor has it that the Dodgers Trolley which was not available for the 2009 baseball season, may be back for 2010 depending on funding. The Dodgers Trolley offers free round-trip service between Union Station and Dodgers Stadium.

According to a source in the Dodgers' offices who asked not to be identified, the trolley which was partially funded by the Dodgers and the City of Los Angeles, may be available again next baseball season with an extended pick up route.

"We learned that it wouldn't be available this season literally on opening day. That's when they (city) told us," the source said. During the 2008 season, the trolley operated between Union Station and Parking Lot G, behind center field at Dodger Stadium.

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The bus stop location display provides a physical reference point to riders leaving the station.

Rail-to-Bus Connection Program Now Being Tested

- Riders See Real-Time Bus Arrivals On Screen

(August 20, 2009) Metro riders using the Red and Purple Lines at Wilshire/Western and Wilshire/Vermont stations can now access real time, rail-to-bus connection updates, officials announced.

The new five-month pilot program – overseen by Metro's Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) – provides rail riders with arrival information for connecting Rapid or Local bus, explains ATMS Supervising Engineer Al Martinez.

"The visual display provides a physical reference point to riders leaving the station. The bus arrival table provides bus arrival time for the next two buses by line and destination," he said.



The bus arrival screen provides arrival time for the next two buses by line and destination.

Working in sync with existing GPS technology on Metro buses, the ATMS system displays real-time bus fleet location information on large screens located at Metro rail station exits.

Currently, Metro’s GPS technology allows bus locations to be updated every five minutes, but that will be reduced to three minutes in the coming months, said Martinez.

If the demonstration project is successful, and if there is funding available, the technology will be expanded to other rail stations and the real-time bus arrival information will also be made available to cell phone users as well as the web, he added.

The pilot program is a partnership effort between ATMS Engineering, who handle bus fleet status information; Rail Communication, who oversees platform displays and network communication; and Metro’s design group, which is responsible for the actual design of the visual display.

“The goal of this proof-of-concept demonstration is to determine the feasibility, reliability and functionality of the joint effort with the intent of implementing similar rail-to-bus connection information displays on all appropriate stations along Metro’s rail network,” Martinez said. “The rail-to-bus connection information system will be monitored from the BOC (Bus Operations Control) to provide bus passenger alerts whenever necessary.”

The program will likely be reviewed in December to determine if it will be expanded further throughout the Metro system. — *from Al Martinez*

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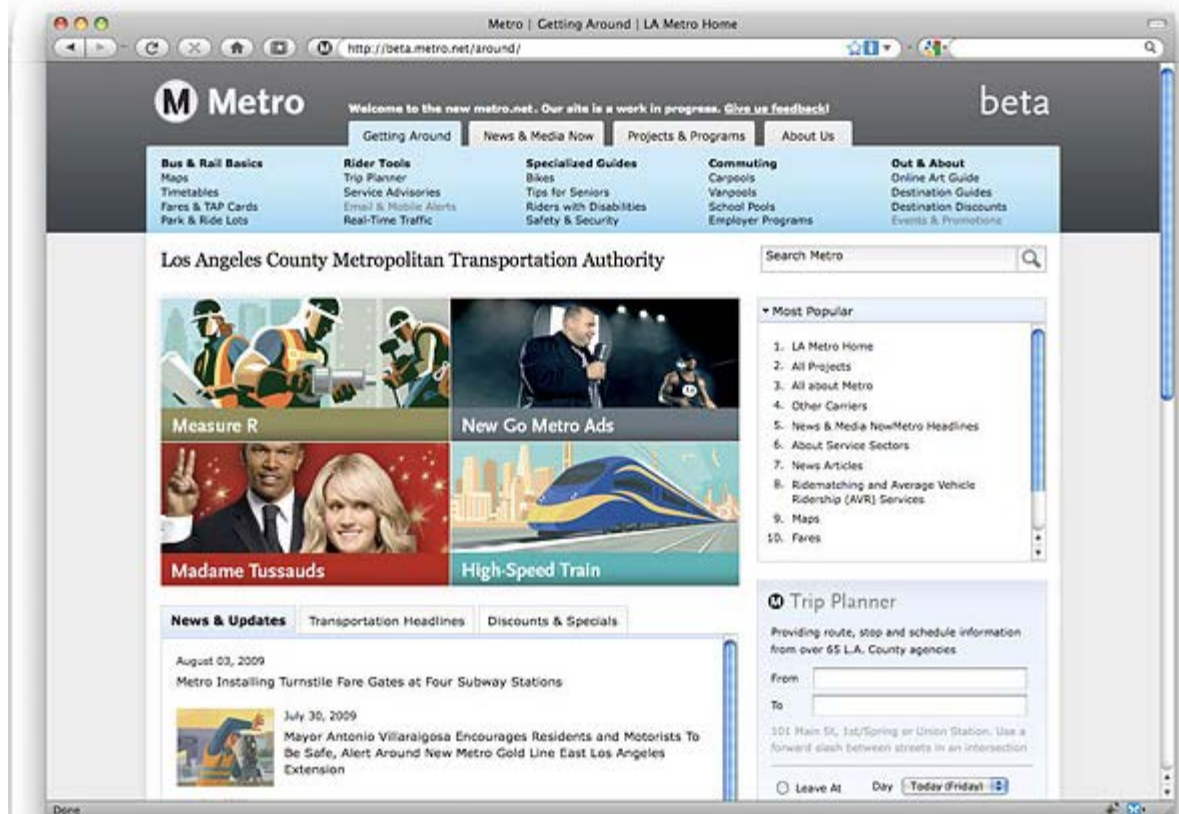
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Feedback wanted: Check it out at beta.metro.net/around

Metro.net beta takes a new direction with fresh look, richer content – and it's easy to use and access anywhere, anytime.

By Vivian L. Tran
Web Content Manager

(August 20, 2009) Get a sneak preview of the new *metro.net* now.

The retooled website rolls out this week as a test version with easy to read and use web pages, greater access to a wide variety of information, a fresh design and extra features.

Focused on the customer, the website is a comprehensive, one-stop destination site that showcases Metro as a world-class transportation agency.

"We want to take the lead with a cutting-edge website that is easy to use and easy to navigate through information. It's not just about updating a website," says Chief Communications Officer Matt Raymond.
"Metro.net should be available to anyone

who wants to access our information anytime and anywhere they want it.”

The test version provides Metro with an opportunity to share the new site and develop it further based on customer comments and feedback via an online survey.

Customers will be able to access *metro.net* from their desktop computers or any personal hand-held devices, including cell phones, Blackberries and iPhones. Special features such as RSS feeds will help disseminate and push out information to online users.

“We want *metro.net* to be an active site where online visitors can come each day and find interesting, new information,” Raymond says.

The popular *metro.net* site currently receives more than 500,000 online visitors each month and provides information that serves the needs of transit riders, voters, taxpayers, stakeholders, planners, businesses and other constituent groups and communities.

What’s new on the site?

The beta website at <http://beta.metro.net/around> was developed using visitor metrics and is rich with content, including tools for riders, more trip planning options with Google Maps, service advisories, videos and movies, top news stories, photo galleries and slideshows, interactive maps, RSS feeds and much more.

The new [Getting Around](#) homepage features four new tabs, dozens of links for fast and direct access to information, and a parade of appealing graphics. It’s easier for online customers to browse all the information they need to know about how to ride Metro, including maps, timetables, fares & TAP, park and ride lots, and rider guides. It also offers destination guides, promotions and links to popular pages.

So what is a beta version?

Quite simply, a beta version means that the new site is a first, trial phase. Rebuilding *metro.net* is a multi-year project that will be rolled out incrementally in phases. This first test phase will require the web staff to fix bugs on a daily basis. Not all the web pages are fully polished. Some may seem plain or lack corresponding images, interactive functions, and Flash videos.

Why rebuild *metro.net*?

Metro.net was originally built on older web technology that consisted of static webpages, which required manual updates. As *metro.net* grew too large with about 8,000 webpages and more than 8,600 pdfs, it became more difficult to maintain. The new beta *metro.net* is built on a Content Management System called Django that will allow for easier updates



Beta test site may load slowly on Explorer 6 browser

If you are accessing the beta version of the new *metro.net* from your work computer, you may see a slight delay for the screen to completely load if you are using Internet Explorer 6 (IE6). As some of our business applications require IE6 to function, ITS is working with various vendors to obtain a software patch that would allow their product to work with IE7. You will only notice this slight delay in loading the screen if you are viewing the site from within Metro and have IE6.

and maintenance of the site.

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ITS Software Engineer Vath Nguon and Systems Project Manager Richard Bezjian at ITS Data Center. Nguon will supply the code to implement the new password security procedure.

Password Protected

Metro's new log-in procedure wants security-strength passwords that refresh every 60 days.

By Elizabeth Bennett
ITS Chief Information Officer

(August 25, 2009) Information Technology Services (ITS) is launching a new password procedure designed to strengthen security measures that protect Metro's network against unauthorized access.

Last week, many U.S. news services reported a 28-year-old hacker has been charged in what federal prosecutors are calling the largest case of identity theft ever seen. The hacker and two others were arrested for stealing 130 million credit card numbers from several retail vendor networks.

Incidents like this highlight the ever-present threat of cyber attacks and network security breaches.

To keep Metro's network and systems secure, ITS utilizes a variety of security methods, one of which is the use of log-in passwords to validate an employee's identity.

The new password log-in procedure, which begins Thursday, August 27, will require employees to enter a "strong" password when their current password expires. The new password will be valid for 60 days. Previously, passwords had a 30-day time limit. As before, invalid password attempts are limited to three.

Be strong! When you enter a 'weak' password ...

the directions get specific.

"The password supplied does not meet the minimum complexity requirements. Please select another password that meets all of the following criteria: (The password) is at least 8 characters, has not been used in the previous 12 passwords, must not have been changed within the last 8 days, does not contain your account or full name, contains at least three of the following four character groups: English uppercase characters (A through Z) English



lowercase characters (a through z)
Numerals (0 through 9)
Non-alphabetic characters (such as !, \$, #, %). Type a password which meets these requirements in both text boxes."

Roll your mouse over image to see message box that comes with an invalid password.

What is a strong password?

Strong passwords use length and a mix of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and special characters to create complexity in the structure of the password and are considerably harder for an attacker to "crack" and have these traits:

Length: Passwords must contain a minimum of 8 characters and a maximum of 14 characters.

Use the entire keyboard: Create your password by selecting from three, or all, of the following four groups:

- Upper case letters – A to Z
- Lower case letters – a to z
- Numerals – 0,1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
- Special Character - symbols found on the keyboard that are not characters or numerals, such as # @ & *

Tips for creating a strong password:

Create a strong password by thinking of a short phrase you can remember and condense it by removing vowels and substituting numerals and special characters for some of the letters. For example: "C\$200wpGO" would represent the phrase "Collect \$200 when passing go"; or, "Spd>\$100Tx" would represent the phrase "Speeding costs more than a \$100 Ticket."



Think out of the box: Put a little *Piz@zZ! in your password, says Vath Nguon.

Do not use your user name, real name, or company name, do not use words that are found in a dictionary in any language and avoid using sequences or repeated characters or numerals, such as qqqq, 1234, or abcd.

Password change

To keep your password secure, it will expire every 60 days. When you create your new password, it will be validated for the traits of a strong password. Your password will not be accepted if it fails the validation.

Forgot your password?

If you forget your password, enter "password" for your ID and "password" for the password and a temporary password will be generated for you to log-in. After you log on, you will be asked to create a new, personal password.

Reminder: After three invalid password attempts, your account will be locked out. To unlock your account, please contact the Help Desk at 922.4357(2HELP).

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[News Briefs]

First Steps: Test results from exploratory drilling in West Los Angeles will determine below-ground soil conditions for subway planning

(August 25, 2009) Joined by local elected officials from Los Angeles County and nearby cities, Los Angeles City Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa announced the completion of exploratory drilling in West Los Angeles at a news conference held in Westwood Aug. 20.

The exploratory drillings are a key part of the planning and environmental process for the proposed Westside Subway Extension, a regionally beneficial Measure R transportation project.

Metro has conducted soil samples at approximately 70 Westside locations over the last two and a half months and has sent those samples to labs for analysis. The testing will assess below ground soil conditions to allow planning for the subway route and the use of drilling and construction techniques/technology.

The testing is required to prepare the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR) now in progress. The Draft EIS/EIR is evaluating all aspects of the proposed subway extension including identifying benefits and impacts once it is in operation, potential construction impacts, and identifying potential mitigations.

— from Metro News Release

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Sheriff's Tagging Investigation Leads to 12 Arrests

By Laura Kloth
Staff Writer

(Aug. 27, 2009) Seven adults and five juveniles accused of causing more than \$100,000 in vandalism to Metro property were arrested Aug. 19 following a two-month Los Angeles Sheriff's Department investigation, officials announced.

The alleged taggers are accused of tagging and damaging property along the 110 Harbor Freeway which is shared by the Harbor Busway, said Metro Transit Service Bureau Sheriff's Lt. Erik Ruble.

The tagging suspects are apparent members of the "ECM", or Evil Criminal Minds/Every Cops Misery street gang, he added.

Among those arrested was Jorge Medina, alleged leader of the group, who uses a moniker that begins with the letter "K," and who turned himself into police after the warrants were issued.

Deputies also confiscated three guns, marijuana plants, paint cans and stolen car parts that were apparently part of a "chop shop" operation.

"ECM is a tag-banging crew, meaning they have converted over to a criminal element," Ruble said.

There is, he said, a "military-style hierarchy as well as gang-style rituals," that include mandating new members be "jumped-in," he said. "Orders are sent down from higher ups to go hit-up the freeways."

The suspects are accused of being involved in 60 tagging incidents, mostly along the 110 and 91 (Gardena) Freeways.

The investigation was led by Los Angeles Sheriff's Deputy John Apostol along with teams from the North and South transit bureaus.

"John Apostol and his support staff worked very hard and put together a very difficult investigation in a short time," said Ruble.



Metro buses and property were vandalized with the alleged tagging crew moniker "ECM" (Evil Criminal Minds/Every Cops Misery) and "K" for the alleged leader. *Metro Transit Service Bureau photo*



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OBITUARIES

Gil Olivarez, Retired Sr. Auditor

- Services: Visitation will be held from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Aug. 31, at the Sunset Chapel, Sunset Hills Memorial Park, 24000 Waalew Road, in Apple Valley, Calif. 92307. A Rosary will be recited at 7 p.m.
- The funeral is planned for Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 10 a.m. at Holy Family Catholic Church, 9974 I Ave., Hesperia, Calif. 92345.
[Info/Directions](#)

(Aug. 27, 2009) Retired auditor Gil Olivarez, a 10-year employee in Management Auditing Services, died August 21.

Mr. Olivarez began his Metro career as an auditor on Dec. 14, 1998, and was promoted to senior auditor on Feb. 17, 2003. He retired in June of 2007 and resided in Hesperia with his family.

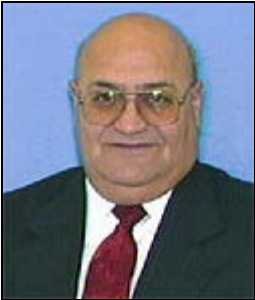
Writing a memory in the online guestbook, fellow auditor Gene Hargreaves said: "Gil was an honest and good person. Although I only knew him through work, he became an instant friend. If you asked, Gil, he would give you a straight answer with no pretense. What we all saw was a sincere, honest family man who talked a lot about his family and loved them very much." [Read more memories.](#)

Mr. Olivarez was born on Sept. 1, 1945, in Ostotan, Jalisco in Mexico.

Mr. Olivarez is survived by wife Alicia and their children.

Visitation will be held from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Aug. 31, at the Sunset Chapel, Sunset Hills Memorial Park, 24000 Waalew Road, in Apple Valley, Calif. 92307. A rosary will be recited at 7 p.m.

The funeral is planned for Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 10 a.m. at Holy Family Catholic Church, located at 9974 I Ave. in Hesperia.



Gil Olivarez



Click on image to see in full. Retirement party collage by Audit Manager Sangeeta Patel reveals friendship and high regard of colleagues.



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Slide show: Click on 'next' and 'back' arrows to view

'Carnival' Puts Rideshare Week Message in the Fast Lane

- [Check it out](#): Pledge online to share the ride during Rideshare Week Oct 5 - 9

(August 27, 2009) Metro Commute Services staged a Diamond Lane Carnival, complete with spinning game wheels, basketball hoops, celebrity photo ops, and prizes galore, to get Rideshare coordinators to the top of their game for Rideshare Week.

Rideshare Week, which begins Oct. 5 this year, is an annual statewide campaign designed to encourage commuters to take personal responsibility for reducing traffic and smog by pledging to rideshare.

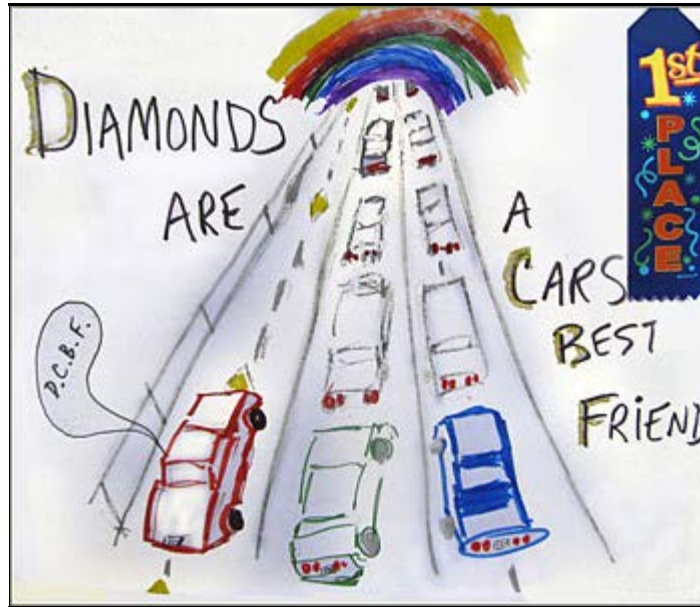
That is when the coordinators, who manage Rideshare options for employees for more than 150 major employers in Los Angeles County, are challenged to increase the legions of commuters cruising in the region's HOV "Diamond Lanes."

The game plan was to generate marketing ideas that Rideshare coordinators could develop to get the "Share the Ride" message out to some 70,000 employees still in the solo driver mode.

It's worth the effort, says Commute Services Director David Sutton.

According to a Caltrans study, 60 percent of commuters who try ridesharing for the first time during Rideshare Week continue to rideshare, at least occasionally.

Last year, Metro collected 5,574 online pledge cards and over 7,000 paper pledges during the 2008 Rideshare Week pledge drive.



For the 'Design a Diamond Lane Flyer' contest, Rideshare coordinators created great themes in short time. The first place entry, pictured here, went to Wayne Clark from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Using diamonds as a visual, the carnival gave coordinators ideas on how to market Rideshare Week with games and booths one would likely find at a county fair.

On the Plaza level, various vendors provided information on marketing, vanpooling, bicycling. Other booths included Foothill Transit, FlyAway, AQMS Automotive, Association for Commuter Transportation and Metro's TAP Validator and Commute Services staff.

Currently, eight in ten commuters drive alone to work and traffic congestion is growing by 3% each year, according to the [Commute Services](#) website.

Nationwide, The overall cost of congestion, based on wasted fuel and lost productivity, reached \$87.2 billion in 2007 – more than \$750 for every U.S. traveler, according to the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI)'s 2009 Urban Mobility Report.