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2009 Metro Bus Rodeo

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**VIDEO:** Scenes from 2009 Metro Bus Rodeo>Mechanics race to beat the clock, a spin around the obstacle course with Operator Mimi Pereira, and the winners are ... with emcee Richard Hunt, CEO Art Leahy, Chief Operating Officer Carolyn Flowers and mechanics event organizer Steve Mullaly.

A video by Gayle Anderson

**North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Joe Acosta Scores Top Op;  
Arthur Winston Division 5 Mechanics Claim 6th Championship Trophy**

- [The results are in!](#) Order of finish for best of the best operators and mechanics

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 29, 2009) North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Joe Acosta and Arthur Winston Division 5 master mechanics Enrique Perez, Danny Galindo and Frank Forde emerged as champions in the Operators and Mechanics categories at the 2009 Metro Bus Rodeo, Sept. 26. They'll carry the agency's flag at the 2010 APTA Internationals set for next May in Cleveland, Ohio.

In Saturday's competition, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Joe Acosta emerged victorious with a solid top score of 634 points. The new champion edged out last year's top gun North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Juan Navarro, in second place with 629 points, and San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Operator Erik Maldonado, in third place with 619 points.



**Top Ops:** From left, organizer and Central Maintenance Instruction Manager Frank Cecere, San Gabriel Valley Division 9 Operator Erik Maldonado, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Joe Acosta, North Los Angeles Division 3 Operator Juan Navarro and CEO Art Leahy. New champion Acosta edged out last year's top gun Juan Navarro, in second place, and Erik Maldonado, in third place. *Photos: Gayle Anderson*

Rodeo 2009 scored big in entertainment and fun, too. Metro South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey estimated that some 800 employees, their families and guests came out to Santa Anita Park for the annual event.

The 2009 event, hosted by Metro South Bay, featured the official obstacle course for operators and a mechanic's competition where teams of three raced against the clock to diagnose and repair performance-related bus problems.

Thirty-five operators and 12 maintenance teams competed in this year's event.



South Bay GM Dana Coffey and Lei Leahy lead Division 5 group hug and trophy hoist to celebrate Arthur Winston Division team unprecedented sixth win.

In the periphery of the main events, there were plenty of activities to keep everyone thrilled, happy and inspired: a thrill-filled "Kid's Fun Zone" featuring the spectacular "Metro Experience" traveling safety show, plenty of snow cones, hot dogs and burgers for more than 700 hungry race fans, a row of information booths, the traditional car show and motorcycle exhibit and a huge tented picnic area where everyone could enjoy the barbecue and watch the events underway.



Arthur Winston Division 5 master mechanics, from left, Frank Forde, Danny Galindo and Enrique Perez score top in the maintenance competition to retain the championship crown. Veteran Frank Forde held on to the championship banner with two new members — master mechanics Enrique Perez and Danny Galindo. The Arthur Winston team has represented Metro at the international competitions every year since 2003, with the exception of 2004, and won the national championships in 2007 and 2009.

### **Mechanics were neck and neck to the finish**

Rodeo 2009 was the sixth Metro championship for the Arthur Winston Division team, who inched by the close runner-up team from Division 8. The Division 5 champs racked up 1,230 points to beat out the Division 8 team only 5 points. Third-place winners - the Gateway Division 10 team were hot on the heels with a score of 1,115 points.

The Division 8 team's close second was sweetened with the coveted ABS Brake Board trophy, a replica of a brake pedal atop a walnut trophy base, signifying that the mechanics were the fastest team to correct the electrical portion of the grueling ABS Brake board event.

Mechanics competition organizer Steve Mullaly, senior equipment maintenance instructor at Central Instruction, was amazed to see how close the scores of the top three finishers were in both the operators and mechanics events. "We almost went into tie-breaker mode," he said, noting event times were a factor in a few down-to-the-wire instances.

The close competition was one of the reasons that made 2009 a great rodeo for Mullaly. "The support we got from various operating divisions and departments made it all possible," he said.

The Arthur Winston team has represented Metro at the international competitions every year since 2003, with the exception of 2004. The veteran maintenance team and Operator Juan Navarro took home the Grand Championship Award in the 2009 APTA International Bus Rodeo

held in Seattle, Wash.

Metro San Fernando Valley General Manager Richard Hunt called the play-by-play for the bus operator half of the competition and called out the names of the competitors at trophy time.

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**Credit Roll:** 2009 Metro Bus Rodeo Organizing Committee: Dana Coffey, Cindy Karpman, Alex DiNuzzo, Ken Matsuno, Myrine White, Demetrius Jones, Gary Shiroishi, Margaret Merhoff, Edward Castillo, Frank Cecere, Steve Mullaly, Gwendolyn Keene, Omark Holmes, Esther Carlstone, James Woodson, and Harold Torres