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Metro Transportation Contract Services Manager Shannon Anderson hands over the keys to brand new 32-foot CNG bus to Veolia Transportation General Manager Hector Fuentes. The bus is the first of 50 low-floor buses purchased with ARRA funds for a fleet operated by Contracted Services. *Photos: Juan Ocampo*

ARRA Funds Put New Buses in Motion for Contract Services Fleet

(Feb. 23, 2010) In a low-keyed but definite celebratory fashion, Metro Transportation Contract Services Manager Shannon Anderson Tuesday delivered the first of 50 CNG buses purchased with ARRA funds to Veolia Transportation, one of three transportation providers under contract with Metro to operate 22 lines throughout Los Angeles County. The buses are designated to replace 33 diesel buses and 17 propane-fueled shuttle buses currently in service within the Contracted Services fleet.

The delivery of the first bus was met with a celebration in the Veolia Division yard, where a gathering of Veolia employees poured over the new bus, inspecting the shiny new engine, technology features and sleek interior.

"The new buses will provide a better quality ride experience for our customers and improve our ability to provide reliable, on-time service," said Anderson. "They also contribute to Metro's goals for maintaining the largest clean-air transit fleet in the nation."

Veolia GM Hector Fuentes took the arrival of the first new bus as proof that the new fleet will soon be up and running. "Mechanics, staff, operators, everybody - we were all really looking forward to this," he said. "We put up

photos, signs, all kinds of messages that the new buses are coming but they didn't really believe it until now. Now we know it's really here."

Anderson thanked Michelle Caldwell, Executive Officer in charge of the Office of Management and Budget, and Countywide Planning Director Gladys Lowe for identifying the bus purchase in an application for ARRA funding, which ultimately rescued the project from dwindling state transportation funds.



Transportation Contract Services Manager Shannon Anderson gives Veolia employees a tour of the new two-door, low-floor CNG bus.

The Board action in April 2009 provided for the purchase of 50 CNG 32-ft buses in the amount of \$24 million. The low-floor, CNG-fueled buses have the same technology features of Metro-operated buses, including an interior video surveillance system. Veolia will receive 35 of the buses. Fifteen buses will go to First Transit, Inc.

Anderson currently oversees about \$40 million in contracts with three transportation providers: Veolia, First Transit, Inc., and Southland Transit, Inc. The companies operate 22 lines with 181 buses ranging in size from 16-passenger vehicles to full-size, 40-foot coaches and account for an annual ridership of some 16 million.

--from Gayle Anderson