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Transit Operations Supervisor Donald McKenzie provided Sierra Canyon first graders with some important facts about Div. 8.

## First Graders Learn About Metro Bus Safety During Visit to Div. 8

By Laura Kloth

Staff Writer

(March 2, 2010) An elated group of first graders went on their first Metro bus ride and picked up a lesson in safety during a recent visit to Division 8 in Chatsworth.

Sierra Canyon Elementary School children sat attentively Feb. 25 as Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds welcomed them, and talked about her 24-year career at Metro, which includes 10 years at Div. 8.

"Your school has been here to visit us about 20 years and I have been here for 10. I have been able to welcome you here, and that's been a joy. We're happy that you're here. We're happy that we get this opportunity," Reynolds said.

The children learned that Div. 8 has 350 bus operators with 215 buses that each make about 160

## Safety Lessons at West Valley Division

Photos by Laura Kloth



Transportation Manager Maria Reynolds tells the first graders she has enjoyed working at Div. 8 for a decade, and has spent some 24 years with Metro.

stops a day.

"This is an award-winning facility. We have the lowest accident rate. We have the safest facility and it's because of all of the work they (employees) do that makes us such a good division here and a great place to work," Reynolds said adding that public transportation careers vary.

"You could drive a bus. You could fix the bus. You could supervise employees. You could manage the facility. You could work downtown and be the CEO. We have some 10,000 employees at Metro so we're a big agency," she said.

Transit Operations Supervisor Donald McKenzie gave the children a mini quiz about Metro facts and figures saying the agency carries some 1.2 million riders on buses daily, and Div. 8 transports passengers throughout the San Fernando Valley.

"We actually handle carpool lanes...bicycle lanes and the freeway patrol. Have you ever been on the freeway and seen a tow truck parked on the side?" McKenzie asked.

Bus Operator Shakana Contreras, a 10-year employee, provided the quote of the day when she asked the children if they knew the difference between a bus driver and a bus operator. "Anyone can drive a bus, but it takes a special person to operate it," Contreras said emphasizing also that "Safety is first at Metro so we always try to be aware of everything around us."

The highlight of the visit included a ride around the yard in an articulated bus complete with two trips through a mammoth bus wash. The children also got a demonstration of how a giant vacuum is funneled through the bus door to quickly suck trash off



Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy Darren Martin gave an entertaining lesson on safety, while Transportation Operations supervisors Lois Nesby and Donald McKenzie also emphasized the importance of paying attention while boarding a bus.



Mechanics Scott Lanski, Paul Lacanilao and Larry Remata (driving bus) along with Transit Operations supervisors Lois Nesby and Don McKenzie help board the children for their big ride around the yard.



Not only did Mechanic Scott Lanski prepare children for their bus ride, he filled them in on the steps Metro takes to maintain buses for operation.



The highlight of the trip was riding through the

the bus before its next route.

bus wash twice.

Sr. Safety Specialist David Miklic and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Dep. Darren Martin gave a lesson on safety.

"It's very important to stay back behind the curb when the bus is coming in," Miklic said before explaining other important safety measures Metro has taken like placing internal and external cameras on buses.



TOS McKenzie thanks the children from their visit, and helps board them onto their school bus.

"If there's an accident, that will trigger the camera to take pictures.. and that helps determine the cause of the accident," Miklic said. Martin reminded the children to stay several steps away from a curb while standing near a bus stop.

Mechanic Scott Lanski played tour guide during their ride and talked about how buses must be properly maintained for safe operation, and how Metro strives to Metro helps the environment by using recycled water, and maintaining the nation's largest natural gas fleet.

"We have more than 200 buses here. Could you imagine if you're washing 200 cars, how much water you'd use if you used your garden hose?" Lanski said. Preparation is the key, he said. "We have to fill it up, clean it. We have to fix it. Sometimes they put new tires on. We have to change the oil and all of that stuff. We're open all day. We're open all night," he said.