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Metro Employees Urged to Participate in 2010 Census

By Michael D. White, *Staff Writer*

(March 11, 2010) The ancient Egyptians and Romans did it. So did the early Britons. And Americans joined in more than 200 years ago after becoming an independent nation.

It's "counting noses," or, as we know it, taking a census, something that Americans have been doing every ten years since 1790.

The 2010 "Rock the Count" campaign reminds everyone to fill out their census forms and return them to help determine how Congress apportions and distributes more than \$400 billion in federal funds annually to state, local and tribal areas.

"The importance of everyone participating in the upcoming U.S. Census can't be overstated," said Marisa Yeager, Metro Government Relations Administrator, noting that the demographic information collected during the census is "critical to Metro being able to plan, fund and complete critical new transportation projects which will help address Los Angeles County's projected population and economic growth."

An involved, multi-dimensional process, census taking has evolved dramatically as both the information gathered and the technology used to gather that information has evolved over the years.

Up until now, questionnaires were filled out in person on paper with workers tabulating the collected information by hand in offices across the country. The data was then sent on to Washington, D.C. where it was totaled and tallied by a small army of harried, eye-strained clerks.

Today, the latest technology is being brought into play with plans calling for the upcoming 2010 census to be conducted for the first time with sophisticated GPS technology. The census will still be conducted on paper forms, but in a form pared down to only ten questions. Census forms are mailed out rather than having to be filled out in person by temporary census takers trolling communities door-to-door.

Get Ready to 'Rock the Count'



Metro is inviting customers to the *Rock the Count: American Indian Music Festival* celebration, sponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau, on Saturday, March 27 from 12-5 p.m. at the Los Angeles State Historic Park. The first 100 riders to show a valid Metro pass, Metro Rail ticket or Destination Discounts card to the Census Booth at the entrance to the event will receive one free genuine leather personal planner.

By law, the Census Bureau must count everyone and submit state population totals to the White House by December 31, 2010. Individual states would then receive the results the spring of 2011.

Federal law establishes stiff penalties for the disclosure of the information gathered to entities or agencies including the IRS and the FBI. Another layer of protection is provided with all census employees required to sign a sworn affidavit of non-disclosure prior to their being approved for employment.

In addition, only after 72 years does the information collected become available to other agencies or the general public.

In a news release, Dr. Robert Groves, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau urges everyone to 'Rock the Count' saying, "We want the 2010 Census to be the most accurate yet, and we are again calling upon Complete Count Committees to help us achieve that goal."

And Yeager adds that like voting, "participating in the Census gives everyone the opportunity to take an active part in planning for the future of their community," said Yeager. "It's a great way to make sure we get federal highway, bus, rail, bike and pedestrian funds that we deserve to have here in Los Angeles County."