



NEWS

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MTA'S BUS OPERATOR OF THE MONTH: A THREE-TIME WINNER AND A REAL TEAM PLAYER

Whether you're playing sandlot baseball or running a big city transit operation, team play is the name of the game; and you'd be hard pressed to find a better team player than Juan Pena, MTA's Bus Operator of the Month for February.

A former truck driver, Pena had plenty of mileage on his resume when he came to the Authority in 1974. Twenty-three years and nearly a million miles later, Pena is still proving that if the MTA team wins, he wins too.

"Juan Pena has an excellent attendance and safety record," says Harold Hollis, Service Operations Director at MTA's Division 7 in West Hollywood. "But what makes Mr. Pena stand out from the crowd is his selflessness. Time and time again he's taken younger bus operators under his wing and helped communicate MTA's goal of satisfying our customers."

Pena, 55, says he doesn't really look at what he does as a job, but instead as a service. He recalls an occasion when a blind passenger missed his stop on his first trip to the Braille Institute on Vermont Avenue. "I got off my bus and waited for another bus traveling in the opposite direction and made sure the operator knew where the man needed to go."

"It made me feel really important," says Pena. "And that's how I try to make the people feel who board my bus. It's amazing how another person's bad day can be turned around if they feel someone else is listening to them."

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Pena and his wife Maria live in North Hollywood and have reared six children. They enjoy sports, and in the past Pena has served as a Little League coach.

This award marks the third time since Pena came to Division 7 in 1979 that he has been chosen Bus Operator of the Month. He will be honored at MTA's Operations Committee Meeting at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, February 20 at the Gateway Center on the third floor in the Board Room.

"One of the keys to being a model bus operator is understanding that every minute of every day on the job, you're an independent agent," said Rick Hittinger, Regional General Manager for MTA's Western Region. "We believe the realization will make an operator more likely to serve his passengers well."

"Juan Pena, MTA's Bus Operator of the Month for February, truly is a shining example of that ideal," Hittinger said.

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