



NEWS

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A GLIMPSE AT L.A.'S PREHISTORIC PAST, EARLY YEARS & FUTURE FEATURED IN L.A. UNDERGROUND, MTA'S NEW EDUCATIVE WEBSITE

The fossils of a towering Mastodon and giant Ground Sloth unearthed during the construction of the MTA's Metro Rail subway are just a small fraction of what awaits journeyers, especially children, to the MTA's new website, L.A. Underground.

Like an H.G. Wells' time machine, the latest user-friendly MTA website chronicles, in one long continuum, the city's prehistoric, ancient and modern day history and offers a look at tomorrow.

People of all ages will find the website, accessed by visiting www.MTA.net or www.mta.net/LAUND/index.htm, academically stimulating and fun-filled with link-ups to over 30 websites, including national and international museums such as the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the Smithsonian Institution, and the Discovery Channel.

"The MTA has long been committed to protecting and preserving the history of the city," said Los Angeles Mayor and MTA Board Chairman Richard J. Riordan. "We are pleased that during subway construction over 2,000 scientifically important fossils have been recovered."

"As families with children turn increasingly more to computers and the Internet as their educational resources, L.A. Underground serves as a natural extension of the classroom," added Riordan. "Presenting these fascinating and educational discoveries on the information superhighway is an excellent way of teaching as many children and grown-ups as possible about L.A.'s rich history."

MORE...

Page 2 L.A. Underground

In addition to the section Fossil Fantastic, which features photographs of Ice Age mammal fossils up to 280,000 years old and descriptions of those species, and of plants and sea life, the MTA website includes a section on the city's early years. An illustrated history of Chinatown in Los Angeles Yesteryear is replete with photos of such items as toothbrushes, a pharmacy bottle, bowl and figurine and is a sample of the 6,000 artifacts found near Union Station in Downtown Los Angeles. Equally vivid is Campo de Cahuenga in Universal City where the Articles of Capitulation was signed in 1847 and led to the ending of the Mexican-American War.

The new website is, quite literally, a cyberspace museum that will stimulate one's imagination for hours on end. Among the more unusual artifacts that can be observed are a 1876 Budweiser bottle and a variety of other 19th century items discovered at the former site of the La Grande Railroad Station; turn-of-the-century remnants of the Hollywood Hotel; 9,000-year-old pollen (nothing to sneeze at); a perfectly preserved portion of a 45,000-year-old cedar tree; and extinct herring 7 to 8.5 million years old (sounds fishy).

Other highlights range from a review of the completed and under-construction Metro Rail subway work, including a dramatic video clip of a tunnel boring machine connecting the North Hollywood Metro Rail subway tunnel still under construction with the separate Hollywood segment and a look at subway stations due to open in 1999 in Hollywood and 2000 in North Hollywood. Children can even print pictures of extinct mammals grazing in Kids Corner, take quizzes and hear firsthand from a paleontologist.

Upon entering the site, users will have the option of exploring the following three different historical sites where there are more than one dozen areas to explore:

MORE...

Page 3 L.A. Underground

- **Fossil Fantastic:** includes an historical perspective; photo gallery; an interview with a paleontologist in **Dig It**; an interview with a tunnel boring machine operator who discovered rare fossils in **The Bone Man, How Old is It?** which explains the science of carbon dating; and the fun-filled **Kid's Corner**. In **Photo Gallery**, extinct creatures that inhabited Los Angeles 10,000 to 280,000 years ago, marine life 7 million to 8.5 million years ago when Los Angeles was underwater and nearly completely preserved 45,000-year-old plant life are among the highlights to be found.
- **Los Angeles Yesteryear:** features a look into the city's early years with stops at **L.A. Origins, Campo de Cahuenga, Chinatown, Nickelodeon**; images of L.A.'s past from 1857 to 1930, an interview with an archeologist in **Piece by Piece**; in **A to Z** fun facts and trivia from the man who wrote the encyclopedia on our city's past history, Leonard Pitt; and a look at our city's transit history in **Rolling Along**.
- **Los Angeles Tomorrow:** offers users a look at the Los Angeles transportation system of the future when Metro Rail construction is completed in the year 2000. A firsthand video look of when two ends of the Metro Rail tunnel came together connecting Hollywood with North Hollywood and sneak preview of stations featuring Metro Art also are among the highlights.

Those visiting the MTA's website at *www.MTA.net* can learn much more about some of the MTA's current projects, including progress on the Metro Red Line, job openings and business opportunities.

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