



NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MTA THROWS THE SWITCH ON THE VERMONT/HOLLYWOOD EXTENSION OF THE METRO RED LINE; SYSTEM TESTING BEGINS

With the flick of a switch Wednesday, a rail startup crew member sent 750 volts of direct current coursing through the third rail of a 7,000 foot section of the Metro Red Line's Vermont/Hollywood Extension between the Vermont/Beverly and Vermont/Sunset stations. This latest construction milestone signals the beginning of several months of testing of the 4.6-mile leg of the subway and the start of service next spring between the line's Wilshire/Vermont Station and Hollywood and Vine via Vermont Avenue and Hollywood Boulevard.

"Energization of the third rail is a very significant milestone," said Bill McCann, MTA startup program manager. "It's the prelude to eventual revenue service."

The first order of business is to test the third rail for its capacity to supply the electric current to power the Metro Red Line cars down the tracks, and to make sure that the "third rail shoe" on each rail car is at the proper height to draw current from the rail.

By mid-September, testing will begin on the cab signal, automatic train control and software support systems.

MTA expects to complete the testing of this first 7,000 foot section of third rail in about a month. Third rail testing will then get underway between the Hollywood/Vine and Hollywood/Western stations, followed by another month of similar testing between the Vermont/Sunset and Hollywood/Western stations.

More...

Page 2 MTA Energizes Third Rail

All testing will take place between the hours of 3:30 p.m. and 5 a.m. after which time the third rail will be de-energized as a safety precaution to allow other startup related work to resume. In addition, security on the project has been increased.

The opening of the Vermont/Hollywood Extension in May 1999 will expand the Metro Red Line to 11.1 miles. The 6.3-mile North Hollywood Extension, which will extend service from the Hollywood/Vine Station to Lankershim and Chandler in North Hollywood, is due to open in May 2000.

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