

MTA Honors Operators, Mechanics, Service Attendants for Excellence in Performance

(Los Angeles) - MTA recognized 256 of its Metro Bus and Rail operators, mechanics and service attendants from all five service sectors for their excellent performance over the past five years.

During an awards ceremony, dubbed "A Night of Stars," each honoree was presented with a bronze medallion and a 2002 Metro Gold Star Award. In order to qualify for the recognition, operators and maintenance employees could have no lost work time injuries, no disciplinary actions and no more than 30 days absent in five years. In addition, operators could have zero preventable traffic collisions and no more than three customer complaints over the award period.

"You are the reason we have steady customers who feel good about coming on board our trains and buses every day," said MTA CEO Roger Snoble during his remarks. "You are the friendly faces, the steady hands. You keep the buses and trains clean and you make sure they're in top working order."

Among the recipients was Arthur Winston, who joined MTA in 1934 and will celebrate his 97th birthday, March 22.

"As a service attendant leader, Arthur runs circles around the younger folk," Snoble said. "He never misses a day of work - never takes a sick day. Like that rabbit, he just keeps going...and going...and going."

Winston says he only knows one way to do the job. "I don't feel like staying home and doing nothing," Winston said. "If you're used to getting up every morning for almost 70 years to go to work, like I am, you can't think about lying in bed."

Other honorees included Clarence Pearson, a South Bay Division 18 operator, who said he puts "a lot of emphasis on safety, control and courtesy toward the passengers. If it weren't for them we wouldn't be here."

Equipment Maintenance Specialist John Tena has worked both sides of maintenance. A frequent award winner, he recently switched to Metro Rail after 15 years as a bus mechanic. He and his team members represented MTA at the American Public Transportation Association International Bus Roadeo in 1999.

In his 29 years of operating a bus on some tough lines, Bacilio Cortez of Metro San Gabriel Valley Division 9 has never had an accident. "You've got to be aware of bad drivers on the street at all times. I've been pretty lucky and I keep praying all the time."

PHOTO: CHRIS LOVDAHL



MTA Equipment Maintenance Specialist John Tena, center, is one of 256 Transit Operations staff honored for excellence in performance. Pictured: From left, MTA CEO Roger Snoble, Tena, and MTA Deputy CEO John Catoe.

Closing the presentation, Deputy CEO John Catoe thanked the honorees on behalf of those who rely on Metro service.

“We carry more than 400 million people a year to jobs, to schools, to health care and to recreation,” Catoe said. “The only reason we can do that is because of the efforts and hard work of the people in this room.”

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