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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LA County's Metro Cited as Nation's 2006 Outstanding Public Transportation System

Metro has earned the 2006 Outstanding Public Transportation System award for large transit properties given annually by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).

The award -- which some refer to as the Pulitzer Prize for transit -- is given to public transportation systems that have demonstrated achievement in efficiency and effectiveness. It was the first such award for Metro.

We're honored to have received this award -- an award that was richly earned by the hard-working and dedicated Metro staff," said Roger Snoble, Metro CEO. "We see it as national recognition of our goal which was, and remains, building the best possible transportation network for Los Angeles County. This isn't the time, however, to rest on our laurels. We have big challenges ahead but we're up to it."

Among the achievements that earned Metro the award:

- The overwhelming success of the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley. Since opening last fall, ridership has soared to 18,700 average weekday boardings, about triple the number of passengers projected for the first year of service
- Commencement of tunneling for the underground portion of the Eastside Extension light-rail project that will link the Metro Gold Line between Pasadena and downtown Los Angeles with Little Tokyo, the Arts District, Boyle Heights and East Los Angeles
- Expansion of the Metro Rapid system, which operates about 25 percent faster than local bus service. Metro is at the halfway point in creating the most extensive such network in the country, with the goal of 28 Metro Rapid lines with more than 700 vehicles by 2008.
- The Metro fleet of clean-air Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses. Metro now operates 2,000 CNG buses and plans to have a 100 percent CNG fleet by 2008.
- The Metro Blue Line light rail line between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach reached record ridership with more than 80,000 average weekday boardings, making it the second most successful light rail line in the nation.
- Planning continued for the Exposition light rail line, which will break ground later this year and by 2010 link downtown Los Angeles with Culver City. A planned extension will continue the line west to Santa Monica.
- Customer satisfaction is at an all-time high. The latest survey showed that 84 percent of customers were satisfied with Metro service and 83 percent believed service has improved over the previous year.

Snoble also cited a number of other factors that he said helped Metro qualify for the APTA award for 2006. Among them were service innovations, technological advances, customer-focused initiatives and improved public recognition and acceptance of Metro services.

The award will be presented to Metro at the APTA annual convention in San Jose, California in October.

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