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Ride America's Best Metro Named North America's Top Transportation Agency Of 2006

[Video](#)

• Metro shares transit industry's highest honor with customers and employees, announces new "America's Best" ridership campaign

In a first for Los Angeles County, Metro has won a prestigious award for Outstanding Public Transportation System of 2006, beating out 50 of the largest transit properties across North America for the honor to be named No. 1.

The award, given by Washington, D.C.-based American Public Transportation Association (APTA), is given to U.S. and Canadian public transportation systems that have demonstrated achievement in efficiency, effectiveness and innovation in public transit. The award was presented today by APTA officials at historic Metro Bus Division 1, the original transit yard in downtown Los Angeles that has been in continuous operation for more than 100 years.

The award is considered the Pulitzer Prize of the transit industry, with only the best-run organizations presented with the designation each year. Metro is the winner of APTA's largest category – 30 million or more trips made on an annual basis.

"It is important to recognize organizations that are doing a superb job in delivering public transportation service," said APTA President William W. Millar. "This award distinguishes the many unsung heroes at Metro who work day in and day out to provide excellent service."

Metro's outstanding customer service and growing ridership base was a key success factor leading to the award. The agency is concluding one of its most productive years in its history. Ridership is two times the national average, discretionary riders have grown by 40 percent, customer satisfaction is at an all-time high and complaints are at an all-time low. Revenues are up, and Metro has kept costs below inflation.

As a sign of its appreciation to customers, top agency executives will randomly board Metro buses and trains in the coming days to meet and thank customers face-to-face. They will be handing out passes, coupons and other gifts to thousands of riders.

"Ten million people in Los Angeles County depend on Metro for mobility – from taking public transit to driving the streets and freeways," said Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Chair. "Every day they can see Metro is making a difference through improved customer service, the offering of new routes, and the emergence of innovative ways to ease traffic congestion. Though we can't afford to rest on our laurels, it is gratifying to be recognized nationally for the tremendous progress we have made."

Metro also will be launching a new "Ride America's Best" campaign to further boost transit ridership. Special ads will appear in Metro buses and trains and in local newspapers. A special "America's Best" video presentation will appear on the agency's popular Transit TV system, and transit vehicles will bear the decal of "America's Best" to commemorate the award.

"This award helps give us the confidence we need to face the challenges ahead," said Roger Snoble, Metro CEO. "It bolsters the agency's morale and gives us the knowledge that we can accomplish even more."

During the award ceremonies at Division 1, special recognition was given to Metro's employees. John Catoe, Deputy CEO for Metro, said the agency's mechanics, service attendants, bus and rail operators, supervisors, staff and others, deserved high praise for their daily efforts. "It's a positive recognition for our nearly 9,000 employees, whose efforts and commitment have carried out the vision to reach Number One," Catoe said.

Other criteria that led to Metro's award included the overwhelming success of the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley. Since opening last fall, ridership has soared to more than 20,000 average weekday boardings, about triple the number of passengers projected for the first year of service.

Improvements in customer service, including new pass programs, better signage, telephone information enhancements and other amenities have received high marks.

The agency also was commended for its 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.

Also cited was Metro's 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.

Ridership systemwide continues to see strong growth. The Metro Blue Line between downtown Los Angeles and Long Beach, for example, reached record ridership with more than 80,000 average weekday boardings, making it the second most successful light rail line in the nation.

The agency has moved aggressively forward with the extension of the Metro Gold Line into East Los Angeles and construction of the Exposition Line to Culver City, both of which are scheduled to open in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

Agency achievements go beyond public transit services. Metro's Freeway Service Patrol, for instance, has aided 350,000 stranded motorists on local freeways and helped fund the growth of the region's High Occupancy Vehicle Lane network to 425 lane miles.

Metro also has made significant gains in safety, operations, financial management, minority and women's advancement, marketing, policy and administration and community relations.

APTA is a nonprofit trade association that represents and supports 1,500 members who serve more than 90 percent of the public transit riders in the United States and Canada. APTA and its members serve the public by providing safe, efficient and economical transit services, and by improving those services to meet national energy, environmental and financial concerns.

For more information, visit WWW.METRO.NET.

Editor's Note: Metro is the proper name in referring to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority of Los Angeles County. For the past three years Metro has been changing all its signage and other materials to reflect the name change. If you need a current Metro logo, please call Metro Media Relations at (213) 922-2700.

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