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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Multilingual Pocket Guide Brochures Latest Metro Outreach to LA's Rich Blend of Nationalities

Like Los Angeles County itself, Metro riders are a rich blend of nationalities and languages. With that in mind, Metro has just published a collection of Metro Pocket Guides in 10 different languages to make travel easier for its multilingual customers.

The handy new guides -- in Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese -- are compact enough to fit into a shirt pocket or wallet yet large enough to provide a wide selection of basic information, including Metro bus and rail fares, safety tips and contact numbers for lost-and-found and customer service trip planners. More than 54 percent of households in Los Angeles County speak a language other than English at home, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The multilingual guides are being distributed at ethnic festivals and community events, as well as through the Los Angeles Convention and Visitor's Bureau's mobile visitor information center -- a unit that is expected to visit 100 cultural events throughout the county this year. The guides are also available at Metro's four Customer Centers: Wilshire/La Brea, East Los Angeles, Baldwin Hills Crenshaw and Union Station and on the web at www.metro.net.

The Metro Pocket Guides are the latest in Metro's efforts to make travel easier and more accessible for non-English speaking customers. Nearly all of Metro's printed materials are written in English and in Spanish, including ads and informational signs on buses and trains and on Transit TV on Metro buses. Metro ads are run in 109 Los Angeles County newspapers in eight languages, in addition to English: Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Thai and Spanish. And meeting notices and brochures are printed in various languages as the need arises.

Metro's customer service call center (1-800 COMMUTE) employs operators fluent in English and Spanish, as well as in Tagalog, Mandarin, Hungarian and French. Aboard Metro buses, many drivers are fluent in Spanish and other languages.

For community members attending Metro Board and committee meetings, simultaneous Spanish translations are provided, while other languages are accommodated upon request with 72-hour advance notice.

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