

March 12, 2007

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Americans Take More Than 10 Billion Trips on Public Transportation for the First Time in Almost 50 Years

- Locally, L.A. County transit ridership up 5.74 percent systemwide from 2005 to 2006

If you thought you were seeing more riders during your daily transit trip; it's not your imagination. Americans took 10.1 billion trips public transportation nationwide in 2006 – the most in 49 years. Over the last decade, public transportation's growth rate outpaced the growth rate of the population of the vehicle miles traveled on our nation's highways.

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) system ridership increased 5.74 percent from 2005 to 2006, nearly twice the national average of 2.9 percent. Specifically, Metro bus ridership grew 5.28 percent and rail grew 8.07 percent in that time period.

Metro has introduced a host of new services which make public transit use in Los Angeles a better alternative than solo driving for a growing number of Angelenos, including new Metro Rapid Lines, the Metro Orange Line in the San Fernando Valley, and new Metro Express Lines that utilize freeway High Occupancy Vehicle lanes. The agency is currently extending the Metro Gold Line from downtown Los Angeles to East Los Angeles, and construction has begun for the new Expo Line from downtown to Culver City. These rail lines are scheduled to open in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

"Reaching this milestone is a result of the quality of service we provide in helping people get to destinations important to them," said Gloria Molina, Los Angeles County Supervisor and Metro Board Chair. "In addition, many riders realize the benefits of saving money from rising fuel costs and avoiding congestion. They also like knowing that their transportation choice is contributing to help reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and global warming."

Nationwide, public transit ridership use is up 30 percent since 1995. That is more than double the growth rate of the population (12 percent) and higher than the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled on our roads (24 percent) during that same period. In 2006, public transit ridership grew 2.9 percent over 2005. To put the 10.1 billion public transportation trips in perspective, transit trips outnumber domestic airline trips by 15 to one.

"Public transportation is a proven way to meet our national, regional and local transportation goals," said Roger Snoble, Metro CEO. "As Congress and our elected officials look to find ways to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil, we call on them to increase investment and include incentives to encourage further increases in transit ridership."

For additional Metro information and online transit trip planning, visit WWW.METRO.NET. For transit trip planning assistance over the phone, call 1-800-COMMUTE.

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