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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Go Metro to Thai New Year's Festival April 1

Feast on delicious Thai dishes, listen to traditional Thai music, shop for colorful Asian art and explore Los Angeles' Thai Town on one of the best days to do so, Sunday, April 1, during Songkran, the annual Thai New Year festival celebration. Avoid traffic and the high-price of gas by taking the Metro Red Line to the heart of the action, all around the Hollywood/Western Metro Rail Station.

Los Angeles is home to the largest Thai community outside Thailand so it is natural that the annual Water Splashing Festival of Songkran – one of the most celebrated holidays in Thailand -- is a major event here, weaving together traditional observances and contemporary performances.

This year's festival will be 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., April 1, and will include a huge multicultural parade of more than 1,000 participants from local and neighboring communities and nearby schools. It will showcase the costumes and customs of Thailand's four regions, as well as those of the Armenian, Laotian, Hispanic, Burmese, Pilipino, African-American and Korean communities. Also included will be a water blessing ceremony, a health fair and dozens of food and arts and crafts booths. Songkran celebrates the new year as the sun progresses through the vernal equinox and into spring. Traditionally it is celebrated for three days, April 13, 14 and 15 and is commonly referred to as the water festival. Water is considered a symbol of renewal.

One of the festival's two stages -- Stage II -- will showcase traditional performances at Hollywood and Western, near the Metro Red Line station. The other stage will host contemporary performances at Hollywood Boulevard and Kingsley Avenue.

For information on taking Metro to the Thai New Year Festival, go to www.metro.net or call 1-800-COMMUTE. For information on the Thai New Year Festival go to www.thainewyear.com.

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