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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **New Metro Ridership Campaign Targets Commuters Seeking Relief From Latest Escalation of Gasoline Prices**

- Metro's service improvements help post strong annual ridership gains, ongoing marketing efforts increase public awareness for transit services

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today announced the launch of a new ridership campaign to attract L.A. commuters rendered 'speechless' by the chronic rise of gasoline prices.

Ads which ask "Gas Prices Leaving You Speechless? Go Metro," will appear on Metro buses, local billboards and in more than 100 newspapers beginning today.

The agency has observed higher ridership levels that often parallel the cyclical escalation of gasoline prices, which have exceeded \$3 per gallon for the past several years. The \$3 price point is the threshold that makes Metro's \$3 pass for unlimited daily travel on L.A. County's Metro system a more logical, cost-effective choice for cost-conscious commuters.

The agency recently reported that its system ridership increased 5.74 percent from 2005 to 2006, representing an annual addition of more than 26.6 million boardings. The agency's total ridership increase was twice as large as the national average. (Measured separately, Metro Bus system ridership grew 5.28 percent, and Metro Rail system ridership grew 8.07 percent).

However, Metro's ridership gains can be attributed to more than fluctuations in auto fuel prices. The agency has recently made strong service improvements, including the addition of new Metro Rapid Lines and its popular Metro Express Lines. Metro Express Line ridership has itself posted a 9 percent increase between 2005 and 2006. Express Lines serving the Harbor Transitway showed a 7 percent year over year growth.

New customer service improvements on the way include a "NexTrip" service for web-enabled cellular phone users. The service will provide real-time notices to alert riders when Metro buses are coming. A similar service is currently being tested for several Metro Rapid lines. Metro Rapid customers can try the system out at [www.rapidbus.net](http://www.rapidbus.net).

Metro's marketing efforts also have helped drive increased public awareness of its services and resulting ridership gains. In 2006, for example, 73 percent of people surveyed by Metro said they were aware of Metro bus routes in their area, up from 55 percent in 2004. Additionally, when asked if Metro's image was better than the previous year, 84 percent of respondents said yes, up from 74 percent in 2004.



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Metro found that its advertising prompts great interest in the agency's public transit options. Survey respondents who saw Metro advertising were twice as likely to try going Metro in the next six months than those who had not.

For additional Metro information and online transit trip planning, visit [WWW.METRO.NET](http://WWW.METRO.NET). For transit trip planning assistance over the phone, call 1-800-COMMUTE.

Editors 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.

**Metro-046**

