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First in North America: Innovative Digital Advertising Display Debuts in Metro Red Line Tunnel

- Metro's latest effort to increase agency revenues turns to innovative tunnel advertising

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) today pushed the technology envelope by debuting a new electronic LED display for advertising purposes on the Metro Red Line subway, the first such system in North America.

The two-year pilot project, installed and operated by Sidetrack Technologies, Inc, will display 15-second advertisements visible to passengers on northbound trains between the Hollywood/Highland and Universal City stations. Advertisers are expected to include motion pictures, television shows, retailers and other national advertisers.

The project will generate at least \$240,000 per year in additional rail operating revenues for Metro. All fabrication, installation and maintenance costs are borne by Sidetrack Technologies; Metro pays nothing. The two parties have arranged an additional revenue sharing structure if ad revenues exceed certain benchmarks.

"This is a no-cost, revenue generating agreement that will bring in critically needed operating revenues," said Pam O'Connor, Metro Board Chair. "It may not be a fortune, but it is a step in the right direction as the agency pursues a host of new funding avenues to help maintain the transit services it provides to L.A. County."

The dark subway tunnels briefly turn trains into mobile movie theatres where passengers are dazzled by colorful, live-action video segments. The LED system is composed of 360 digital strips that light up at timed intervals as the train passes the subway wall, blending together to form a smooth-flowing video presentation.

The system will be controlled remotely via internet from Sidetrack's headquarters in Winnipeg, Canada. It has the capability to rotate ads, show different ads at certain times of the day, or specific ads for passengers going in different directions.

"We know the displays will engage and entertain the riders, providing our clients – the advertisers with an extremely effective medium for reaching the Metro audience," said Rob Walker, President of Sidetrack Technologies.

Passenger feedback during initial tests was positive. Riders described the advertisements as cool, engaging and a stimulating change from the typical subway commuting experience. The test ad featured a preview of the just launched Warner Brothers movie "Speed Racer".

The launch advertiser featured beginning today is the latest in a series of multiple "Bull's Eye" images from retailing giant – Target who has consistently used tunneling advertising in its media mix. Tens of thousands of Metro Red Line commuters are expected to see the new display as they travel between Hollywood and Universal City every day.

Digital tunnel advertising displays have been installed in other international cities, including London, Singapore and Beijing. Los Angeles is the first North American location for Sidetrack's digital displays. Within the next two years, the company expects to install them in Boston, San Francisco, New York, Chicago and Washington.

Editor's Note: Media interested in obtaining B-Roll footage of the new ad system should contact Metro Media Relations, 213-922-3007

Metro-076

Editors Note: Metro is the official name of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority as adopted by the Metro Board of Directors in December 2004. To be consistent, we ask that "Metro" be used when referring to this agency. We ask for your cooperation in updating your style guides. If you need to update your files with the current Metro logo, please call Metro Media Relations at 213-922-2700.

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