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Top Transit Official Picked to Head Metro in Los Angeles County

- Art Leahy began career as bus driver

Arthur T. Leahy, 60, one of the nation's leading transportation executives who started out as a bus driver in Los Angeles 38 years ago, today was hired by the Board of Directors of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) to become the agency's new chief executive effective April 6.

For the past eight years Leahy has headed the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), where he has overseen planning, financing and coordination for Orange County's freeway, street and transit development as well as managing the 12th busiest bus system in the country last year along with commuter rail, and paratransit services for the disabled, among other transportation programs.

Leahy spearheaded such major highway projects as the \$550 million widening of the Garden Grove Freeway (SR-22) and the current construction of the Santa Ana Freeway (I-5) in Buena Park. He also directed OCTA's purchase and operations of the 91 Express Lanes toll road and aggressive work to widen the Riverside Freeway (SR-91), Southern California's most-congested highway. OCTA bus ridership has reached record levels during Leahy's tenure, and he successfully led voter renewal of Orange County's Measure M, a \$12 billion transportation sales tax measure that will fund a variety of local highway and transit projects.

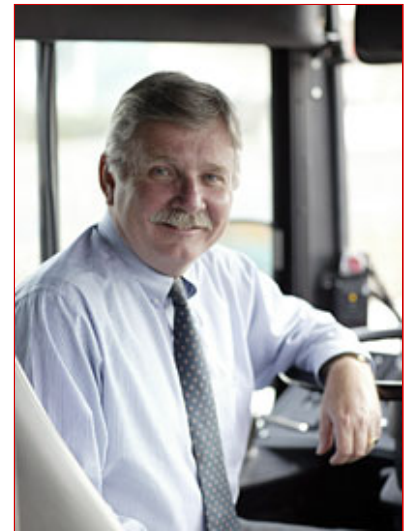
Prior to OCTA, Leahy served as general manager of the transit agency in Minneapolis-St. Paul between 1997 and 2001. Under his leadership, both agencies as well as Leahy, himself, garnered top national transit industry honors. Leahy began his transit career in 1971 driving a bus for the Southern California Rapid Transit District, a predecessor of Metro, while attending college. He worked his way up through the ranks to head operations for Metro, overseeing bus operations and activation of the Metro Blue Line, before taking the Minneapolis chief executive job.

"We conducted a nationwide search to find the brightest and most innovative leaders in transportation," said Mayor and Metro Chairman Antonio Villaraigosa. "I am happy to say that we have found that leader in Art Leahy. Art will lead the efforts to reduce congestion and expand public transportation in Los Angeles County, and ensure that funding from the federal stimulus package and Measure R goes towards creating a sustainable future for Los Angeles."

"I have known and worked with Art Leahy for nearly 25 years and know his extensive knowledge of the transportation needs and issues facing Southern California will benefit him greatly as he takes the top job at Metro. He's delivered a number of innovative and cost-effective projects in Orange County and the same talents will soon benefit us here in Los Angeles County. I have every confidence that Art will do an outstanding job as our new Chief Executive Officer," said LA County Supervisor and Metro Board Vice Chair Don Knabe.

"I am excited to return to Los Angeles, where I began my career nearly 38 years ago," Art Leahy said. "I am looking forward to helping deliver on the promise to voters when they supported investment with Measure R – to make transportation improvements by delivering more mass transit options, repairing streets, reducing congestion on freeways and maximizing carpool lanes."

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Arthur T. Leahy becomes Metro's new chief executive effective April 6.

Metro CEO Roger Snoble, who will retire once Leahy is on board, noted that his successor brings continuity to the job.

"Art's very familiar with Metro operations as well as regional mobility issues in Southern California," Snoble said. "Working with me and many other transit officials in the region, he played a critical role in securing state and federal funding to address our goods movement issues, which stem largely from the burgeoning truck and rail traffic from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. He also has considerable expertise on the highway side and with Metrolink, the commuter rail network."

Both of Leahy's parents and his wife and brother worked for Los Angeles public transit agencies, and he started his transit career in Los Angeles almost four decades ago, so he's come full circle.

Leahy was selected by the Metro Board following a two-month nationwide search. He was given a four-year contract with a base salary starting at \$310,000.

The new Metro CEO earned a bachelor-of-arts degree in political science from California State University, Los Angeles and a master's degree in public administration from USC.

Metro is the third largest public transportation agency in the United States. It has a \$3.4 billion annual budget and more than 9,000 employees. It operates approximately 200 bus routes serving a 1,433 square mile service area and five subway and light rail lines that crisscross Los Angeles County. Metro's total annual bus and rail ridership exceeds 400 million boardings. In addition, Metro is the lead transportation planning and programming agency for the county and funds construction of numerous street, highway and transit improvements running the gamut from bike and pedestrian improvements to new busways and rail lines to freeway carpool lanes and sound walls.

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Editors: A photo of Art Leahy is available for downloading [here](#) or call Gayle Anderson at Metro at (213) 922-2702. To schedule an interview with Leahy prior to his arrival at Metro, please call Ted Nguyen at OCTA at (714) 560-5334.

Editors Note: "Metro" should be used when referring to this agency.

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